CHAPTER IV

PIONEERING RESEARCH ON HISTORICAL GEOGRAPHY OF ODISHA
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For the scientific study of the history of a land, a broad and thorough knowledge of its geography is indispensable. It would certainly be difficult on the part of a scholar to write the history of a region if he does not possess accurate information about various places of that land. Geography, as observed by K.M.Panikkar,\(^1\) "has been at all times one of the great and regrettable gaps in Indian history". This statement is also applicable in case of Odisha in the ancient period. Prof.N.K.Sahu was well aware about this. He had realized that one can not overlook the immense influence of the physical features of Odisha in the past which had played a vital role in shaping the character of its people and their socio-economic, political and religious destiny. Odisha, in the past was variously known as Utkala, Kalinga, Odra, Tosali, Kosala, etc. Many Mandala states also appeared during that remote phase of history. Prof.Sahu has vividly analysed about these physical features of Odisha in the ancient period which help a lot in comprehending the history of Odisha in the remote past.
Utkala

Prof. N.K. Sahu, taking the puranic tradition into account, states that the territory of Utkala is older than that of Kalinga, Odra and Kosala. The origin of Utkala is associated with Vaivaswata Manu who was one of the earliest kings of India. He had ten sons and Ila-Sudyumna was one of them and in fact was a Kimpurusa. He was becoming woman and man alternately for sometimes. As Ila she became the mother of Pururavas and as Sudyumna he was the father of three sons named Utkala, Vinitasva and Gaya. When Manu divided India among his ten sons Ila-Sudyumna got the portion out of which Pratisthana was given to Pururavas, Utkal got the Utkala country Vinitasva the western territory and Gaya got the City of Gaya and the city of Eastern Regions.

Prof. Sahu refers to the early Pali literature which clearly shows that Utkala Janapada or Utkala, as a political entity was existing during the time of Buddha. The Vinaya Pitaka and the Jatakas mentioned that Tapassu and Bhallika were two merchant brothers who were regularly going from the Utkala Janapada to the Majjhimadesa for trade. It indicates that the Utkala Janapada was outside the limits of the Buddhist Majjhimadesa which extended up to Kajangala-nigama on the east and the river Sallavati on the south-east. Kajangala is the same as Ka-chu-wen-ki-lo of Yuan Chwang and it was located near Rajamahal on the south bank of the Ganges, while Sallavati is identified with
the river Suvarnarekha. Again, the *Majhima Nikaya* states that the Utkala was inhabited by two tribes, the Vassa and the Bhanas.⁴

Further, it is found from the *Mahabharata⁵* that, the territories of Odras, Mekalas, Kalingas and Andhras were associated with Utkala. The *Ramayana⁶* associates Utkala with Mekala and Dasarna whereas the Puranic tradition identifies the Utkalas along with the Karusas, Mekalas, Uttamarnas and the Dasarnas inhabiting the Vindhya region. Pargiter⁷ suggests that Utkala comprised of the southern portion of modern Chhotanagpur and Prof. Sahu thinks that, he may be correct if the Chhotanagpur hills are considered to be an extension of the Vindhya ranges. The 'Vana Parva' of the *Mahabharata* seems to indicate that Utkala formed a part of Kalinga which extends upto the mouth of the Ganges. But Kalidasa in his *Raghuvasam⁸* represents Utkala as neighbouring state of Kalinga to the north with the river Kapisa (modern Kasai in Midnapur) as the common boundary.

Prof. Sahu finds the earliest evidence of the extent of Utkala from the Midnapur copper plates issued by Somadatta in the 18th regnal year of Sansanka. It states that Dandabhukti comprising the present Midnapur district of West Bengal formed a part of Utkaladesa in the 7th Century A.D., but the name Utkala was missing in epigraphic records for a long time thereafter. Therefore, it appears that for a time, Utkala came to be known as
Uttara Toshali comprising the north, eastern part of Odisha. During the days of Bhauma-Karas, Tosali was considered synonymous with Utkala for which the Bhaumas called themselves as Utkala-Kula.

The Chaurasi Copper Plate⁹ of Sivakara-II gives Subhakara-I the epithet of 'Utkalendra' and declares the Bhaumakaras as 'Utkala-Kula'. It may be mentioned that no other Bhauma charters after the Chaurasi grant of 809 AD name his empire as Utkala but when the Bhaumas were supplanted by the Somavamsis their empire was referred to as 'Utkala' in the records of Somavamsi kings. Again, Yayati II Mahasivagupta who was responsible for unification of the Bhauma-Karas empire with Somavamsis declares himself as the Lord of Kalinga, Kangoda, Utkala and Kosala. However, during the reign of Uddyota Mahabhavagupta, the Somavamsi empire was divided into two parts¹⁰ and the portion comprising the empire of the Bhaumas retained the name Utkala while the western portion comprising the Sonepur-Sambalpur region came to be known as Kosala. It was this Utkala that passed to the hands of Chodagangadeva during the first part of 12th Century A.D. But the Kosala kingdom under the rule of Kalachuris defied the aggression of Gangas until it was occupied by Anangabhima III (122-1238 A.D.).¹¹

Prof.N.K.Sahu, referring to the Mahabharata speaks that Viraja flourished as the capital of Utkala since earlier times. The Vana Parva of Mahabharat declares it as a famous place of
pilgrimage and considers the river Vaitarani as a sacred river capable of washing away all sins.\textsuperscript{12} The Gayasura episode of the Visnu Purana also testifies to its sacredness by pointing out that it is the famous 'Nabhigaya' where lies the naval portion of the demon Gaya. Brahminical Hinduism recommends oblation to be offered to the departed souls of forefathers at Nabhigaya on the bank of Vaitarani. The Buddhist tradition also corroborates the Brahminical belief as also in the Pali work \textit{Samyutta Nikaya}\textsuperscript{13}, the Vaitarani is regarded as Yama's river and the jataka declares that in this river the hellish creatures suffer.

As per the earliest epigraphic evidence regarding Viraja as a political headquarters of Utkala is known from the Parlakimedi Copper Plates\textsuperscript{14} of Sri Prithvi Maharaja belonging to the 2nd half of the 6th Century A.D. But the Soro Copper Plastes\textsuperscript{15} of Bhanudatta reflects that Viraja was the Capital of an extensive territory in the middle of 7th Century A.D. It was the administrative centre of both Daksina and Uttara Tosali when the Bhauma-Karas ruled over it. But the copper plate charters of the Bhauma-karas does not mention the name Viraja but in the name Guhadevapataka which was later changed into Guhesvarapataka and Prof. Sahu thinks it might have been due to the political supremacy of the ruling family.\textsuperscript{16} When the Bhauma-karas were supplanted by the Samavamsis during Yayati-II Mahasivagupta, the Samavamsis shifted their political headquarters from
Yayatinagara of Kosala to the Capital of Bhauma-Karas. Here Prof. N.K. Sahu says:

From this time onwards the name Guhesvarapataka was probably renamed as Abhinava Yayatinagara after the old Yayatinagara on the banks of the river Mahanadi. This Yayatinagara which lie in between Kalinganagar and Vijayapura may be identified with Abhinava Yayatinagara. As the Muslim Chronicles called Yayatinagara as Jajnagar and they very often named the territory after this capital city, it is evident that in course of time Yayatinagar came to be known as Jajnagar and subsequently the suffix 'nagar' was replaced by 'pur' and it came to be known as Jajpur.

In this way Prof. Sahu reconstructed the historical geography of Utkala.

Kalinga

Prof. Sahu projects that the origin of Kalinga like Utkala is also derived from puranic sources. Ila-Sudyumna was related to the ancestors of Bali who was the father of Anga, Vanga, Kalinga, Pundra and Sumha. The fourth son of Ila-Sudyumna was Anu who ruled over Anava. This Anava territory was sub-divided into Usinara and Tikiksu. King Bali was born in the fifth generation of Tikiksu and ruled over Eastern India. He was childless, but the Sudra nurse of his queen Sudesna had five sons named Anga,
Vanga, Kalinga, Pundra and Sumha. As per the law of levirate Bali begot on queen Sudesna and these five sons were called Baleya-Ksatriya or Baleya-Brahmana. After the death of Bali, the Eastern Anava kingdom was divided among these five sons and these divisions were named after them.

In the enumeration of Prof. Sahu, out of the four political units – Utkala, Kalinga, Odra and Kosala, Kalinga was the most powerful unit and it overpowered the other three by force and succeeded in building up an empire in ancient times. The rich and fertile coastal plain, stretching from the Ganges upto the mouth of Godavari with a hinterland of wild mountains and uplands formed the traditional homeland of *the Mahabharat* sage Lomasa pointing to Yudhisthira says.¹⁹

... this is the territory of the Kalingas where flows the river Vaitarni.

This statement led scholars like, B.C.Law and H.C. Raychoudhury²⁰ to believe that Kalinga comprised the Eastern Coast of the river Vaitarani to the borders of Andhra. But Prof. Sahu reinterpreting the puranic version of sage Lomasa indicates that, Vaitarani is referred to as flowing in Kalinga not in its border, rather river Ganges constitutes the territory of Kalinga.²¹ Again, the Greek traveller Megasthenes²² states that the river Ganges formed the Eastern boundary of Kalinga. Pliny gives a comprehensive account of the boundary of Kalinga and the capital known as Parthalis. At the southern side he finds Yule
with point Godavari at the mouth of the same river. In regard to the western boundary the traditional sources fixed it at Amarkantak hills and puranic literature also corroborates it. Thus, the territory of Kalinga as opined by N.K.Sahu, \(^{23}\)

May be said to have extended as far as the Gangetic valley in the North the Godavari in the South, the Amarkantaka hills in the west and the sea in the East. Too much emphasis can not, however be placed on traditional accounts as political geography has frequently been disturbed in course of history leading to changes in territorial limits.

Kalinga during 4th Century B.C. was under the rule of Mahapadmananda and he excavated a canal in the heart of Kalinga which was not far away from Kalinganagari, but it was Kharavela who extended the canal upto Kalinganagari. It implies that, Mahapadmananda occupied only a part of northern Kalinga, therefore when Chandragupta Maurya occupied Magadha from the Nanda King. Kalinga was not under it. It was only during the invasion of Ashoka in 261 B.C. that Kalinga came under the Maurya rule. At that time Kalinga extended from the Hindukush in the North-West to modern Mysore in the South. Its political headquarter was at Tosali and Samapa was the seat of administration. \(^{24}\) As per the Special Kalinga Edict II of Asoka, the Atavika territory was left unconquered by Asoka which probably comprised of the hinterland of Kalinga lying to the West of the coastal region.
Kalinga regained her independence after the downfall of the Mauryas in first century B.C. and King Kharavela is known to have extended its territory from Mathura in the north to the Pandya Kingdom in south and upto the territory of the Rathikas and Bhojakas in the west. N.K. Sahu further taking the Hathigumpha Inscription into account states that, Vidyadhara territory was an invincible land founded by the former kings on Kalinga. B.M. Barua and D.R. Bhandarkar also agreed upon the fact that this Vidyadhara territory comprised of small kingdoms extending from Bhaghelkhand upto the sea coast of Odisha. Prof. Sahu feels inclined to identify these eighteen forest kingdoms or Sarvatavika Rajya with Vidyadhara Settlements of Jaina work and with the Vidyadhara territory of the Hatigumpha Inscription.

Kalidasa in his Raghuvamsam speaks of a period when river Kapisa (modern Kansai) in the Midnapur district formed the northern and southern boundaries of Kalinga and Utkal respectively. But, the Allahabad Inscription does not mention even the names of these territories. Therefore, Prof. Sahu assumes that Kalinga at the time of invasion of Samudragupta was divided into a number of smaller states and Harisena, the author of Allahabad Pillar Inscription mentions the names of some of these states as Kottura, Pistapura, Erandapalla and Devarastra. Kottura can be identified as Kothoor in Ganjam, Pisthapura in modern Godavari district of Andhra while Erandapalle and Devarastra in Visakhapatnam district. These
Kalinga emerged as a powerful kingdom during Mathara rule. During the rule of Saktivarman the territory of Kalinga extended from the river Mahanadi in the north to the Krisna in the south comprising of modern Visakhapatnam, Srikakulam, Ganjam and Puri districts. The Matharas after their rise called their kingdom as 'Sakala Kalinga' and their capital Simhapura was designated as 'Vijayasimhapura'. Thus, the modern district of Ganjam in Odisha and Srikakulam in Andhra formed the very heart of Mathara kingdom. The Matharas were defeated by the Vasisthas and they were again defeated by the Gangas. These Ganga rulers assumed the title of Kalingadhipati and ruled over the kingdom comprising of modern Visakhapatnam and Srikakulam districts. The Vigrahas became powerful in the northeast of Ganga kingdom comprising of the modern districts of Puri, Ganjam and a part of Cuttack. Thus, the Sakala Kalinga of the Matharas was shared by the Estern Gangas and the vigrahas, while the southern part was occupied by the Visnukundins of Vengi. The Eastern Gangas and the Vigrahas proclaimed themselves as the 'Lords of Kalinga' but the Visnukundins never assumed such a title. Prof.Sahu things that the territory enjoyed
by the Eastern Gangas and Vigrahas in the 6th Century A.D. formed the main land of Kalinga.\textsuperscript{28}

Prof. Sahu after analyzing the historical evidences comes to the conclusion that, in the Post-sixth Century A.D., 'Kalinga' represented only the territory of the Eastern Gangas that remain confined to the narrow coastal strip extending from the northern part of Ganjam district.\textsuperscript{29} Thus the name Kalinga which in ancient times was applicable to a far-flung empire from the river Ganga in the north, to the Godavari in the south denoted from the 7th Century A.D. onwards to the small kingdom of the Eastern Gangas. This territory continued as Kalinga till the end of the 11th Century A.D. In the 12th Century A.D. the Ganga Kingdom under Chodagangadēvaā rapidly expanded capturing the area of ancient Kalinga from the river Ganga to the Godavari. It was further enlarged by Anangabhima III and continued as a political unit upto the middle of 16th Century A.D. But the name 'Kalinga' was never applied to this kingdom most probably because of its long continuation as the name of a small kingdom under the Eastern Gangas.\textsuperscript{30} But during the rule of Suryavamsi rulers Kalinga was reduced to the position of a Dandapala, (a fiscal division) and continued as such upto the rule of Mughals.

As per the description of \textit{Kumbhakara and Kalingavadhi Jatakas}, Dantapura flourished as the Capital of Kalinga during the pre-Buddhist period and continued as such in the Buddhist era. The place 'Dantapara' or 'Dandagula' or 'Pallura' whatever
the historians named it was the same place which Prof. Sahu identified with modern village Palura in the Ganjam district of Odisha.\textsuperscript{31}

Again, as per the Hathigumpha Inscription the City of Pithunda was the capital of ancient Kalinga. Ptolemy identified Pithunda near Chicacole and Kalingapatnam to the south of Palura-Dantapura, while the Jaina \textit{Uttaradhyayam Sutra}\textsuperscript{32} states that Pithunda flourished during the days of Mahavira in Kalinga. B.M. Barua\textsuperscript{33} identified it with Prusthurastra as described in \textit{Gandavyuha} and as Parthalis of Pliny. But after the conquest of Kalinga by Asoka in 261 B.C. Tosali became the Capital of Kalinga which is situated only six miles to the south of Bhubaneswar and Somapa became the second seat of administration.

When Chedis came to power in 1st Century B.C. Kalinganagari became the Capital of Kalinga and the fortified township excavated in Sisupalagarh near Bhubaneswar is the proof of it. After Kharavela, Dantapura again became the Capital City only for few years. With the rise of the Matharas Simhapura and Pistapura became political headquarters. When the Eastern Gangas came to power they made Kalinganagar their new capital and Dantapura as the headquarters of Trikalinga. The city of Kalinganagar flourished as the new capital of Kalinga till the time of Chodagangadeva who after his conquest of Utkala shifted the
The origin of the Kosala territory is also considered to be mythical. It is said that Rama was the Prince of Kosala and when he was banished from that place with his wife and brother they travelled from Ayodhya to Prayaga and passing through the Narmada Valley came to Chhatisgarh area of the modern age. As per the description of the *Ramayana*, after Rama the kingdom of Kosala was divided between his two sons Lava and Kusa. Lava ruled over North Kosala while Kusa got South Kosala. In view of the terror created by Jarasandha, the people of East Kosala migrated to South Kosala and stayed there for which it became a developed kingdom.

Prof. N.K. Sahu after examining the Puranic sources relating to the origin of Utkala, Kalinga, Odra and Kosala provides a hypothesis of his own that, these kingdoms were most likely named after various stocks of people rather than monarchs because both the Brahmincal and Buddhist literature repeatedly refer to the people rather than to the land. The Buddhist Sutta Pitaka and Vinaya Pitaka speak about Okkala or Utkala whereas in the *Apadana* of the *Khuddaka Nikaya* of the Sutta Pitaka the Okkala are mentioned as a people along with the Mekala. The *Mahachattarisaka Sutta* of the *Majjhima Nikaya* states that Vassa and Bhanna are the two tibes of Ukkala people. B.M. Barua
finds if ambiguous but Buddha Ghosa says that, Ukkala are the people who form Ukkala Janapada. From this analysis, Prof. Sahu infers that both Okkala and Utkalah were the same people and the land inhabited by them was known as Ukkala or Utkala. Taking reference from Pali and Sanskrit texts and examining the case of Utkala and Kalinga, Prof. Sahu arrives at the conclusion that, the territories of Kosala also named after the tribes inhabiting the land.38

As far as the extent of Kosala is concerned it is mentioned mostly as 'Daksina Kosala' or South Kosala in Puranic literature and it can be identified as Chhatisgarh region. However, H.C.Raychoudhury39 identifies that Kosal with the territory of modern Bilaspur, Raipur and Sambalpur districts.

During the 6th – 7th Century A.D. Kosala was under the rule of Sarbhapuriya rulers who used the Gupta era and issued Gupta coins. Basing on the description of the Chinese Pilgrim Hiue Tsang, Cunningham describes the boundary of Kosala as comprising the whole of upper valley of Mahanadi and its tributaries from the source of the Narbada from Amarkantak in the North to the Mahanadi near Kanker on the South and from the valley of the Wen Ganga on the West to the Hasdo and Joank rivers in the East. But, Hiralal in modification of Cunningham says that, the States of Patna, Bamra, Sonepur and Rairakhol comprise the Kosaladesa. It remained the same during the rule of Panduvamsis.40
The Allahabad Pillar inscription is silent about the Capital of Kosala, but it was Sarabhapur during Sarabhapuriya rulers. Sten Konow identifies it with Sarabhavaram to the North-West of Rajahmundry while Cunningham identifies it with modern Armi in Wardha or Sambalpur in Odisha. However, L.P. Pandeya says, it may be modern Sarabhagarh in Sundargarh and N.K. Sahu finds this view more acceptable because of similarity of names. Later the capital was shifted to Sripura in Raipur district of Madhya Pradesh. It continued to be the capital even during Panduvamsi rule. Sripur is 37 miles north-east of Raipur and it is full of relics and some early medieval temples. When the Pandu Vamsis were driven away by Kalachuris in 9th Century A.D. the Capital was shifted to eastern part of Kosala comprising of modern Sambalpur-Bolangir districts. When the Somavamsis came to power the first ruler Janmejaya Mahabhavagupta had no fixed Capital City but his son Yayati I Mahasivagupta made Vinitapura his capital and stayed there for long after that established a new township called Yayatinagar.

During the rule of Yayati-II Mahasivagupta Kosala and Utkala were united as a result the Capital was shifted from Yayatinagar to Guhesvarapataka which was renamed as Abhinava Yayatinagar. Prof. Sahu thus, finds the modern Jajpur on Vitarani river bank of the Abhinava Yayatinagara. The communication of this town has to be suspended during flood therefore, King Yayati-I was attracted towards Gandhatapati built by Bhanja.
Kings for its strategic location. A new headquarter of Kosala was built between this town and the river Mahanadi and it was named as Yayatinagara.\textsuperscript{43}

After the death of Yayati-ll Mahasivagupta his son Uddyota Mahabhavagupta came to power and he treated the old Yayatinagar as his capital. The Chola King Rajendra Chola destroyed it in 1023 A.D. and Kosala came under the Telugu Chodas and they made Sonepur their new Capital.

\textbf{Odra}

As per the \textit{Bhagavata Purana}, Dirghatmas had a sixth son named Odra who was assigned a division of the Anava Kingdom Odra to rule over it. As per the description of the \textit{Mahabharata}\textsuperscript{44}, the Odra people are associated with the Paundrakas, Dravidas, Kamboja, Yavanas, Sakas, Paradas, Palhavas, Chinas, Kiratas, Daradas and Khasas. As per the Greek source the Odras lived in the Malayagiri region identified with Pallahara. Now it is inhabited by the Mundas and Savaras in the tribal regions of Odisha.

The Soro Copper Plates indicates that Uttar Tosali with Sarepahara, first of all, belonged to Odra-visaya in 7th Century A.D. and as Prof.Sahu suggests it can be identified with modern Soro in Balasore district of Odisha and Midnapur in West-Bengal.\textsuperscript{45} The Chinese Pilgrim Yuan Chwang who visited Odisha in 636 A.D. named the territory as 'Wu-Cha' which is almost the same place as Odra-visaya. The pilgrim gives description of Odra as such,\textsuperscript{46}
Wu-Cha (Wu-tu) country was above 7,000 li in circuit and its Capital above twenty li in circuit. The soil was rich and fertile yielding fruits larger than those of other lands, and its rare plants and noted flowers could not be enumerated; the climate was hot; the people were of violent ways, tall and of dark complexion.

It was a fertile land with dark skinned people. Cunningham in an attempt to define the political limits of Odra-desa states that, it comprised of the whole of Cuttack and Sambalpur districts and a part of Midnapore. But his view can not be accepted fully as the district of Sambalpur formed a part of South Kosala.47

Chinese Pilgrim Yuan Chwan locates a famous Port to the south-east of 'Wu-Cha' desa and it is identified by Cunningham with Puri while Waddel identified it with Chitrotpala. But, Prof.Sahu examining these interpretations from different angles agrees with Cunningham.

But, as regards the location of Pue-sie-po-ki-li, it is considered Pushpagiri and again Cunningham identified it with the hills of Udayagiri and Khandagiri. R.L.Mitra on the other hand identifies Pushpagiri with Dhauligir. R.P.Chanda and R.D.Banerjee do not accept the view of R.L.Mitra rather they identify it with Jajpur (Viraja) as the Capital of 'Wu-Cha' and identify Puspagiri with Ratnagiri. But, N.K.Sahu does not agree with the above scholars for the reason that Pushpagiri can not be placed on the south-west frontier of Odra desa. A Ganga king of Kalinga named Devendravarman registered a Copper Plate grant
in Pushpagiri Panchali visaya and it indicates that Pushpagiri which was on the South-West Border of Odra desa was not far-off the Northern boundary of Kalinga. Thus, Prof. Sahu agrees with the fact that, Pushpagiri like Mahendragiri occupied a very important place in the historical geography of early medieval Odisha and Prof. Sahu thinks that its location may be identified with the modern Phulbani-Ghumsur area.  

As per the epigraphic records of the Somavamsis 'Odradesa' extended in between the borders of Kosala and Tosali. The Brahmeswara temple inscription reveals that the territory of Khinjali belonged to Odra desa. Another Copper Plate Charter issued in the 9th regnal year of King Yayati-I states that a Brahmana named Samkhapani belonging to Chandragrama belonged to Odradesa. The Somavamsi inscription also indicate that Airavatta Mandala formed a part of Odradesa. The Adipur grant of Narendrabhanja, the ruler of Khijjinga Mandala suggests that the Brahmana Bhatta Devadevadama hailed from Odra desa.

Prof. Sahu, in the light of this discussion, concludes that, the Odra desa was more or less bounded by the river Mahanadi in the north, Tosali in the east, Kosala in the west and parlakimedi to the south-west of it.  

**Origin of Odisha**

The origin of Odisha (Orissa) can be derived from the territory named 'Urshin' or 'Ursfin' as dictated by muslim geographers from Russia, Portugal and Pessia also have their
own views on it. But, the famous Muslim writer Alberuni has referred to a territory called Urdabishau situated about 200 miles towards the sea in the south from the Tree of Prayaga.50 This Urdabishau can be identified as Odra-visaya, says Prof.Sahu.51 He further says that when Chodagangadeva conquered Utkala he brought Utkala, Kalinga and Odra under his empire with his capital at Jajpur. But, as regards the extent of the Capital city different historians have given their own interpretation. It was Anangabhimdeva who conquered the Sambalpur-Sonepur region in 1212 A.D. and his capital was shifted from Yayatinagar or Jajpur to ‘Baranasi Kataka’.

Prof.Sahu from the Mahabharata of Saraladasa finds clear evidence that Jajnagar was a part of Odradesa ever since the 15th Century A.D. Thus, the word ‘Udisa’ of Afif is a variant of the word ‘Urshin’ of Ibn Khurdadhbih and Urshin’ of the Hudud-al-Alam and ‘Wu-Cha’ of the Chinese. The origin word is Odra or Odra desa as found in medieval epigraphs and ancient literature. The ‘Odra-visaya’ of the Soro Copper Plate Inscription and subsequent medieval epigraphs like, ‘Urda bishau’ in Alberuni and Odda visaya in Tirumalai Inscription of Rajendra Chola, all take the interpretation of Odivisa’ or ‘Udivisa’ in the traditional records consulted by Lama Taranath. Thus from all these sources Prof.Sahu clarifies that the word ‘Uddisa’ or ‘Udisa’ was developed by the 15th Century A.D. and Poet Saraladasa identifies ‘Odisa’ with Odra-rastra, from the time of Kapilendra.
Mahendragiri

Mahendragiri or the Mahendra mountain range of the Eastern Ghats forms an important geographical feature of Kalinga. It was an important seat of political activities and became famous as a centre of religious and cultural life of the people of Kalinga. Originally, it was inhabited by aboriginal savaras and pulindas in the ancient era but in the early Christian era civilized races began to settle there and in the 2nd Century A.D. Gautami-Putra Satakarni is known to have extended his empire in the East upto Mahendragiri. In the *Raghuvamsam* Kalidasa calls the King of Kalingas as a Lord of Mahendra, hence it suggests that Mahendra hill was the seat of political headquarters of Kalinga rulers. Again, as per the Dhavalpeta grant, during Mathara rule in Kalinga in the past Samudragupta age a district called Mahendrabhoga surrounded the Mahendra hill. It is said that, the Eastern Gangas installed their family deity Lord Gokarnesvara on the crest of Mahendragiri as it was a religious-cultural centre of Kalinga. The Sailodbhavas of Kangoda also paid due respect to this hill as their Kulagiri. The Puranic sources further describes it as the seat of a Saivite Culture.

Trikalinga
The territory of Trikalinga was also an important political city in ancient period. Though the Pali and Sanskrit literature are silent over it, however, McCrindle has explained Modogalinga as the Hellenic form of Trikalinga. Gerini also in his book *Researches on Ptolemy's Geography of Eastern Asia*, identifies Trikalinga as a kingdom consisting of three districts. Prof. Sahu after analyzing the available sources states:

It appears that a territory named Trikalinga or Trilinga was existing in Southern Orissa and Northern Andhra Coast by the middle of the 2nd Century A.D., when Ptolemy wrote his Geography. No epigraphic records of this period have come to light to corroborate the writing of the Greek Geographer. But at a later time when we find epigraphical references to Trikalinga, this territory is then known to be situated not on the sea coast but at a little further to the west in the rocky hinterland of Kalinga.

The Allahbad Pillar Inscription clearly denies the existence of Trikalinga. However, in the earliest epigraphic Copper Plate Charters of Eastern Gangas there is mention of Trikalinga. Indravarman-I and Samantavarman of the Eastern Gangas assumed to them the title of Trikalingadhipati which further confirms it. However, N.K. Sahu after thoroughly examining the copper plates of Vajrahasta V, Rajaraja I and Chodaganga reveals that Kamarnnava, one of the earliest Gangas, when deprived of the throne by his uncle he along with his brothers
founded a new kingdom like Trikalinga. From there he proceeded to the East and worshipped Lord Gokarnesvara and went to the Eastern side and occupied Kalinga defeating Savaraditya. Thus, it can be assumed that Trikalinga territory located to the west of Kalinga. G. Ramdas derives the name Trikalinga from 'Tiru' means (high), that means it was higher in location to Kalinga that means comprising of the upper course of the Easter Ghats.

A palmleaf manuscript of the *Brahmanda Purana* preserved in the Manuscript Library of Odisha Museum, Bhubaneswar states that the territory extending from the river Rusikulya to Jhanjavati was calld Kalinga, while Trikalinga extended from Jhanjavati upto Vedavati. Thus, the period refers to the rule of early Eastern Gangas from the 5th Century to Mid 11th Century A.D.  

**Tosali**

Tosali or Tosala was a territory adjacent to Kosal. As per the *Natyasastram* of Bharata, Tosala or Tosali is a different territory from that of Kalinga and Kosala. The city of Tosala is most likely the same as that of ancient Tosali and it was the political headquarters of Kalinga under Asoka during 3rd Century B.C.

As per the *Gandavyuha* \(^{60}\), the city of Amita Tosala has been divided into Uttara Tosali and Daksina Tosali. Prof. Sahu examines the Soro, Patiakela, Midnapur and Kanasa Copper Plates which give idea regarding the extent of both the Tosalis. As per the information, Uttara Tosali comprised of Modern
Midnapur, Mayurbhanj and Balasore districts, the northern part of Cuttack district, while Daksina Tosali composed of the districts of modern Puri, parts of Cuttack and Ganjam districts upto Rusikulya river. The river Mahanadi appears to be the dividing line between the two territories. Both the Tosalis were united and passed on to the hands of Sasanka just before 620 A.D.61

The Tosali city was revived with the coming of the Bhauma-Karas to power in 736 A.D. The Bhauma empire extended from Dandabhukti in the North to Kangoda in the south and it was divided into Northern and Southern Tosali's in traditional lines. The territorial division of Uttara and Daksina Tosalis continued till the Bhauma-Karas were supplanted by the Somavamsis about the middle of the 10th Century A.D. after which the entire Tosali assumed the old name Utkala.62

The Mandala States

Prof.N.K.Sahu analyses a very peculiar physical feature of ancient Odisha, the Mandala States. Mandalas, in that period were known to be semi-independent states which flourished in Odisha. According to Dharmasastric tradition, State is called a 'Mandala' when its area is either 20 or 40 Yojanas. The Mandala States in Odisha were Kongoda, Svetaka Kodalaka, Yamagartta, Airavatta, Khijnali, Khijinga, Dandabhukti, Chakrakotta, etc.

Kangoda Mandala

Prof.Sahu first analyses about the Kangoda Mandala which flourished during 6th-7th Century A.D. during the rule of
Sailobhavas. It comprised of the territory of Kalinga and Odra known as Kailingoda. The Chinese Pilgrim Yuan Chwang who visited Kongoda about 638 A.D. described that the country contained some tens of town to the edge of the seas. That means it was a hilly area on the bay of the sea.\textsuperscript{63}

According to B.Misra, the territory of Kangoda Mandala extended to Nayagarh State in South-East, Mahendra hills in the South, ex-Kalahandi State in the west and Kaluparaghat in the north. Its capital was Bijaya-Kongodavaska and its headquarters was located on the bank of river Salima, a rivulet leading to the Chilika Lake\textsuperscript{64}. It was a hilly-forest-clad area identified with Kanhagiri situated near Phasi village. After the downfall of Sailodbhavas in the 1st half of the Century A.D. the Kangoda Mandala was reduced to a mere district of Daksina Tosali.

**Svetaka Mandala**

'Svetaka Mandala' refers to a territory to the North-East of Mahendra hills, popularly called Svetakadhirajya. Prof.Sahu presumes that it was founded by the Bhauma rulers.\textsuperscript{65} It was located in the South-East of Ganjam district comprising of the ex-Zamindaries of 'Shankhimedi', Badak himedirand Chikiti. Its capital city was Svetaka of Vijayasvetakapura. Subha Rao\textsuperscript{66} identified it with modern Srikurum while Somasekhasra Sarma\textsuperscript{67} identifies it with Chikiti in Ganjam district. R.C.Majumdar\textsuperscript{68} says, it is same as the modern village of Sadaka near Chikati. There are some other scholars who consider Chikati as a variant of
schetaka or svetaka. However, *Mahabharat*, *Harivamsa* and *Shiva Puran* refer to Chikit which has been identified by Prof. Sahu with Svetakapura of the gangas.  

**Kodalaka Mandala**

The Kodalaka Mandala, as per the Copper Plate grants of Sulki rulers of Odisha, comprised of the modern Dhenkanal and Angul districts of Odisha, opines Prof. Sahu. Hara Prasad Sastri while editing the Jaragrama grant of Sulki King Ranastambha regards Kodalaka Mandala in modern Midnapur district of West Bengal on erroneous suppositions. R.D. Banerjee in his *History of Orissa* supports the view of H.P. Sastri as to the location of Kodalaka Mandala in a place near Midnapur and Hoogly districts of West Bengal.

Prof. N.K. Sahu does not agree with the views of H.P. Sastri and R.D. Banerjee as he finds no connection between Radha Mandala and Jara Khanda. He finds the record clearly mentioning that a Brahmana named Panchuka has donated the land in village Jara in Jara-Khanda in Radha Mandala. The Brahmana of Radha Mandala migrated to Kadalaka Mandala and got the grant-of-land in village Jara. This village may be identified with Jarapada in the Dhenkanal district not in Hooghly district. Again the name of those places mentioned in Sulki Copper Plate grants are found in Dhenkanal district of Odisha not in Midnapur and Hoogly districts of West Bengal. The Capital of Kodalaka Mandal was Kodala or modern Koalu of Dhenkanal. The river Sankhajoti is the river

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Brahmani which in its upper course known as Sankha. The Sulkis of Midnapur are the descendants from Kodalaka Mandala existing in Dhenkanal region of Odisha not of West Bengal, affirms Prof. Sahu.

Yamagartta Mandala

The fall of the Sulkis gave rise to two new Mandalas, the Yamagartta Mandala and Airavatta Mandala comprising parts of Kodalaka Mandala. The Yamagartta Mandala comprised of the northern part of modern Dhenkanal district and the Gangas were the ruling family of the Mandala. It consisted of some portion of Keonjhar District near Pallahara region. According to Dhenkanal Plates of Jaysimha the capital of this Mandala was located on the bank of river Mandakini.

Airavatta Mandala

As per the Copper Plate records, the Airavatta Mandala extended up to the southern part of Dhenkanal district, western part of Cuttack and almost the entire part of the Nayagarh district. Its head-quarter was Jayapura and it was ruled by the Nandobhavas. The Airavatta Mandala was bounded by Yamagartta Mandala in the North Ranapur and Nayagarh in the south. According to some scholars the Airavatta Mandala comprised of the modern Ratagarh near Banki in Cuttack district. In the Narasinghpur Charter of Udyotakeshari, the Airavatta mandala includes the village Kantalanda and Lavakarada identified with modern Kantilo and Karada, opines Prof. Sahu.
**Khinjali Mandala**

The Khinjali Mandal was under the rule of the Bhanjas during 8th and 9th Century A.D. Hiralal identifies Khinjali Mandal with modern Keonjhar but his identification is not satisfactory, says Prof. Sahu because the places and rivers mentioned in the Copper Plates Charters of the Bhanja rulers can be found here.77

However, historian B. Mishra holds the view that Khinjali Mandal is in Hinjili, in Angul district. But Prof. N.K. Sahu citing the Bhanja Copper Plate grants states that, Khinjali Mandala comprised of the territory of modern Sonepur and Baud region. The places like, Royara, Sivira, Kumurkela mentioned in the Bhanja Copper Plate can be found today having names Rahila, Subulia and Kumarkeli respectively. The rivers like, Tel, Vyaghra and Salanki mentioned in the Chapters are even today found with the same name, flowing in Baud region. But, the capital of the Mandala Dhirtipura could not be identified yet. The rich antiquities make a strong supposition for Sonepur and Baud to be regarded as Khinjali Mandal.78

This Mandala marked the synthesis of both Saivism and Vaisnavism during Bhanja rule. When the Bhanjas were replaced by Somavamsis in 9th Century A.D. the former migrated to the South-East and settled at the Ghumsur – Daspalla region.

**Khijjinga Mandala**
This Mandal was located in Northern Odisha comprising modern Mayurbhanj under the rule of a branch of Bhanja family about the 10th Century A.D. Its headquarters was at Khijingakotta where extensive ruins are seen. The place Kottasnama was regarded as the cradle of this family. A number of places like Jambupadraka, Timandira, Korandiya, Devakunda, etc. are respectively located in same district. The present Singhbhum, Keonjhar districts formed a part of this territory.79

**Dandabhukti Mandala**

Prof. Sahu discusses about Dandabhukti Mandala. He says that, it is a separate political unit during the time of Sasanka, the ruler of karma-suvarna. At the time of Bhaumakara dynasty Dandabhukti flourished as a mandala probable under the rule of the Bhanja family. Dandabhkti Mandala roughly comprised the modern Midnapur district of West Bengal and it was divided into a few visayas or districts out of which only two-Tamalakhanda and Daksina-khanda are known from Baud Copper Plates of Tribhuvana Mahadev.80

**Banai Mandala**

Banai Mandala came into light about the 10th Century A.D. under the rule of Mayura family. It comprised the Eastern portion of modern Sundargarh district and a part of Deogarh Subdivision of Sambalpur district. According to Banai grant81, Rourkela was one of its visya. So there was close relationship between Mayuras of Banki Mandala and Bhanjas of Khijjinga Mandala.
B. Misra\textsuperscript{82} rightly believes that the name Mayurbhanja of the State which came into existence at a subsequent time, owes its origin to the names of Maurya and Bhanja families. The name of Banai continues till the present time as the name of administrative unit.\textsuperscript{83}

**Khindirasrnga Mandala**

The Pandiaphathara Copper Plate Inscription\textsuperscript{84} reveals that during the first-half of the 10th Century A.D. scion of the Nala family were ruling over Khindirasrnga Mandala. S.N. Rajguru locates this Mandala between Kalinga Mandala of the Gangas and Khijnali Mandala of the Bhanjas and according to him its headquarters Bhimapara is the same as the present Bhimanagar surrounded by hills and forest on all sides and found in the sheet No. 74A/11 of the survey of India map. Prof. Sahu refers to Madras Museum Plates and Dandia Pathara Plates which describe another mandal named Somundamandal which was under the jurisdiction of Khindirasrnga Mandal in 9\textsuperscript{th} Century A.D. The Zamindaris of dharakota, Badagada, Seragada and Sorada in Ganjam district were collectively known as Khidisingi and it may be said that these estate comprised the heart of Khindirasrnga Mandala in the 10th Century A.D.\textsuperscript{85}

**Chakrakora Mandala**

This Mandala was located in between Vengi and South Kosala and was ruled by the Chalukyas and Somavamsis during 11th and 12th Century A.D. Opinions differ as to its name as it
was known as Chakrakotta, Chakrakuta, Chakrakotya, Sakkara Kottain, Chairagotta and Kukkuda, etc. The Chakrakotta Mandala comprised of a part of the Bastar district of Chhatisgarh and Koraput district of Odisha. As per the Rajim Stone Inscription of Jagapaladeva, Chakrakotta Mandala may be identified with the modern town of Amarkot in the district of Koraput. The capital of Chakrakotta Mandala was Barasura or Barsur in Bastar district situated on the bank of river Indravati. The modern Chitrakuta very likely represents the name Chakrakula or Chakrakotta Mandala.

Later Mandalas

The above discussed Mandalas belonged to the period of Bhauma-Karas and Somavamsi rulers of Odisha. Some of those Mandalas became extinct after Bhauma-Kara period while the rest lost their importance with the downfall of Somasvamsis. A few semi-independent territories continued during the age of Gangas representing the tradition of Mandala States, i.e. Vaddadi Mandala and Kamala Mandala. These two Mandalas flourished in the mountainous regions of south-west Odisha, in Koraput and Kalahandi districts. Prof. Sahu also discusses about Vaddadi Mandala and Kamala Mandala but humbly mentions that these two Mandalas have not successfully been identified.

Prof. Sahu was a pioneer researcher to reconstruct the historical geography of ancient Odisha was a herculean task. With due consultation of Puranic, Buddhist and Jaina sources and
also critical analysis of different inscriptions and views of scholars, he was able to reconstruct the historical geography of Utkala, Kalinga, Kosala, Odra, Tosali and Trikalinga by these different names ancient Odisha was known. He also threw light on different Mandala states of Odisha which had emerged during ancient and early medieval period. He very well referred to mount Mahendra which had played a vital role in the politico-religious life of the people of Odisha, in general and rulers of different dynasties, in particular. He has also described about different Margas (roads) which also formed part of the historical geography of Odisha. His absorbing interest in this subjects later on inspired scholars like D.K. Ganguly and J.K. Sahu who produced two monumental works on the historical geography of Odisha reflecting its various physical features like Kingdoms, provinces, visayas, gramas, rivers, mountains, routes etc. and projected the historical geography of Odisha in the most matured phase which was in its infancy during Prof. N.K. Sahu. In fact, N.K. Sahu was the first historian to throw light on the historical geography of Odisha.
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