CHAPTER - I

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INTRODUCTION

The history of Orissa gives an excellent account of navigation on Inland Waterways. Location of a large number of ancient towns and commercial centres by the side of waterways indicates the importance of IWT as a mode of transport at that time. The glorious maritime past of Orissa has been acknowledged by ancient Greeks, Romans, Arabs and Chinese. In the beginning of the Christian Era in the book "Periplus of Erythrean Sea", there was mention of ships regularly sailing from the Orissa Coast towards the Far East. In the second Century A.D., Ptolemy, the famous Geographer, mentioned about the existence of a number of sea ports in Kalinga. Fa-hien, the Chinese pilgrim of the 4th Century A.D., has also mentioned about the sea ports of Kalinga. From literary and archaeological sources, one can observe the overseas role of Kalinga in a large part of South East Asia and Indonesia. To commemorate these glorious days of sea voyage in Orissa, a festival is celebrated known as "Bali Yatra". This is held in Cuttack on Kartika Purnima every year. The sailors from Orissa used to start on their voyage on this particular day because of favourable wind direction towards Java, Sumatra and Bali. To commemorate the occasion, the State Government also celebrates this day by a symbolic function at Paradip Port.
IWT activities continued in a limited way in Orissa during Mughal, Maratha and to a large extent in the British period. The first mechanised propulsion in India started in 1823 when the first propelled craft "Diana" weighing 89 Metric Tonnes sailed with passengers from Kamrup to Calcutta, a distance of 80 Kms. from Hooghly. The regular steamer service was established in 1934 between Calcutta and stations upstream on the Ganges for carrying East India Company's officials and stores. In 1942 a service was established between Calcutta and Agra on the river Yamuna and in 1963 steamer service connected with Assam.

In the 19th Century, navigation by power crafts and country boats played a very important role in the development of trade and commerce along the river banks and in catchment areas of navigable rivers and canal systems. This was the feature in Orissa also. All the commercial centres and settlements were on the banks of important navigable rivers and canals. These inland waterways were lifelines from the hinterland to feed the ports and harbours for coastal shipping and for high seas navigation. Orissa was quite prosperous and the prosperity was mainly on account of overseas trading with distant countries like Java, Sumatra and Bali. "Bali Yatra" in Cuttack reminds us of those days of maritime glory of Orissa.
Construction of main rail lines initially gave a boost to river transport as the two modes supplemented each other with waterways providing feeder service to railways. But the complementary service between IWT and the railways was very short-lived. The decline of navigation started about 1960. By that time the railway system had begun to make its presence felt. With increased rail network, new centres of economic activity developed away from waterways and gradually the IWT lost its significance.

The phenomenal growth of road transport after the second World War gave a decisive setback to IWT. New industries began to be established in the vicinity of rail and road transport network. Freight transportation, in view of its advantage of speed, reliability, flexibility and door-to-door service had great advantage over IWT and accordingly the survival of IWT as a commercial mode of transport became increasingly doubtful with the fast and powerful competition of rail and road transport services. Besides the competition from rail and road transport, the decline of IWT was due to diversion of waters from rivers for irrigation, deforestation of hill ranges leading to erosion, accumulation of silt over rivers and neglect of maintenance in waterway channels.
However, IWT continues to be functionally important in certain places; it enjoyed natural advantages such as the perennial rivers Brahmaputra and the Ganga in Eastern India. Also in Kerala and Goa in South West India and in the deltas of the Krishna and Godavari rivers; IWT continued to play an important role. In Orissa, IWT remained as the main mode of transport in delta areas and in Chilika lake area.

Presently Orissa is economically backward and poor inspite of its abundant natural resources. Orissa had a glorious past as a prosperous and rich State. Oriyas were seafaring navigators and because of oversea trading, the State was prosperous and rich. The main internal transport system of the State was Inland Water Transport through rivers and canals; and ships used to sail out from the Ports on the East Coast. But in subsequent years during Moghul, Maratha and British rule in Orissa, the State suffered in many ways including decline of Inland Water Transport. The State was divided - Northern part was merged with Bengal and the southern part was merged with Madras. During the Britishraj, there was substantial development of roads and rails as a mode of transport in this country. Particularly with the advent of the Railways, the Inland Water Transport system was neglected and was pushed to a very negligible transport system. With the decay of Inland Water Transport system which existed over navigable rivers and canals, the internal transport system suffered a severe set back as adequate roads were not developed to
replace the existing inland waterways system and the railways were developed for connecting the other growth centres - for example - Orissa had rail lines merely for connecting Calcutta with Bombay and Calcutta with Madras. The rail lines certainly contributed in a big way for development of growth centres like Calcutta and Madras. Because of breakdown of internal system in Orissa, no economic development could accrue to the State on account of rail transport. This resulted in decline of economy in Orissa due to which able-bodied Oriyas migrated to Calcutta and Jamshedpur for making a living. The rail system helped this migration from Orissa in a big way.

In the later part of British rule and after Independence, there were constant efforts from the State through Government and through public to have more roads and more rail lines as they were considered to be the most effective and efficient modern modes of transport. There was practically no attempt for revival of the old system of Inland Water Transport. After Independence, there were attempts to build a Port in Orissa which finally culminated in the Government being successful in setting up of a large port at Paradip. But the hinterland of the port was primarily connected with the railways and roads. There was no plan to utilise inland waterways for feeding this port with traffic.
With the passage of time and growth of environment consciousness among the population, railways and roads have been considered not eco-friendly. There was consensus to limit the growth to avoid suffocation and pollution. At this stage, the role of Inland Water Transport has become more essential because of its eco-friendliness, less energy consumption and more employment potential. Also IWT is a relatively cheaper mode of transport compared to the railways and roadways.

With this background, there is a marked enthusiasm among the Historians and Economists in the State for revival of the old system of Inland Waterways in Orissa. Citing the glorious past of the State, it is advocated that the highest priority should be given to the revival of all the Inland Water systems available in the past together with the revival of ancient ports. They are of the opinion that by reviving IWT, Orissa will be back once again on the path of prosperity. The State Government has set up a Directorate in the Transport Department for revival of the Inland Water system in Orissa.
Presently, the Railways and roadways as systems of transport have come to stay in Orissa. Considering the impending needs, there are plans for the growth and development of the State. Taking into consideration the utility in this sector, it will not be wise to abandon these two systems of transport and revive the old Inland Water Transport system in Orissa. The then Inland Water Transport in Orissa was catering to the needs of transport where the existing transport infrastructure of rail/road was not available. Therefore, reviving the old system of Inland Water Transport and ignoring the role of railways and roadways will not be prudent. Therefore, it is essential to consider revival of Inland Water Transport to supplement and/or complement the existing mode of transport.

Government of Orissa recently has taken a decision to set up new ports at Gopalpur and Dharmra besides the existing port of Paradip. There are a number of heavy industries in the State to cater to the needs of the ports to further economic activities. It will be necessary to take help of roadways and railways and to revive the Inland Waterways to the extent it is necessary to supplement the requirement. Though the Inland Waterway is cost-effective to the other modes of transport, it does not remain so when transhipment is involved.
II. OBJECTIVES

The purpose of this study is -

(i) to assess the utility of IWT as a mode of transport considering the need and requirement of the State.

(ii) to assess whether IWT should be developed reviving all the ancient navigable routes or to develop it selectively to supplement the other existing modes of transport; and

(iii) to examine the merits and demerits of IWT and its limitations as an infrastructure;

III. HYPOTHESIS

The following hypotheses are intended to be tested:

(i) IWT, as a mode of transport, can play a major role in the development of the economy of the State;

(ii) IWT can become effective as an instrument of development only when all the ancient navigable routes are revived;

(iii) as an infrastructure, the demerits of IWT far outweigh the merits of IWT.
IV. DATA SOURCE:

Help was taken from a number of books and Gazetteers of India, like History of Orissa under the Muhammedan, Maratha and English rule by J. Beams, Shipping and Maritime Activities of Orissa during the Muslim Rule by B.C. Roy, Trade and Commerce in Medieval Orissa by A.P. Sah, History of Orissa by R.D. Bannerjee, Bihar and Orissa District Gazetteers, Ranchi, 1917, National Transport Policy Commission Report, RITES Report on Modes of Transport and secondary data and observations in the files of Irrigation Department and Transport and Commerce Department of Government of Orissa.

V. PRESENTATION

This study is presented in eight chapters. The first chapter deals with the Introduction, Objectives, Hypotheses, Data Source, Presentation, Importance of the study and limitations of the study. The second chapter is devoted to the role of transport in economic development while the third outlines the geographical and economic profile of Orissa. The fourth chapter discusses the present status of the various transport systems in Orissa and the fifth relates the maritime history of Orissa and the causes of its decline. The sixth chapter gives an evaluation of IWT as a mode of
transport while the seventh presents the scope of IWT in Orissa as a transport system. The eighth chapter gives the conclusions drawn from the study.

VI. IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY

IWT is a very economical and eco-friendly mode of transport. It also provides the maximum employment potential. But now IWT routes are no longer navigable because of prolonged disuse and various irrigation projects. Attempts have been made to assess the scope of IWT in Orissa taking into consideration the existence of the other modes of transport like railways and roadways. The importance of the study is that it has determined the scope of development of IWT in Orissa. The phase-wise development will supplement the main transport infrastructure and help the economic development of Orissa.

VII. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The full scope of IWT as the only mode of transport has not been considered. The limitations of this study is that the scope of IWT has only studied as a supplement and/or complement to the existing modes of transport and within the existing infrastructure, for which the secondary data have been used.
This study has been divided into eight chapters including the introductory chapter. In Chapter II, the role of transportation in economic development is discussed. Authors like Benson Don and Whitehead Geoffrey, Bhandari R.R., Foster C.D., Hirshman, A.D., Kraft Geneld and Meyer John R and Valettee Jean-Paul, Lewis Arthur, Owen Wilfred and Rostow W.W., are of the view that transportation plays a vital role in the economic development. This has happened in all developed countries in the world. Negligence on development of transport always scuttles the growth of economy. Therefore, the recommendation is to develop transport as an infrastructure which will facilitate economic growth.

In Chapter III, Geographical and Economic Profile of Orissa has been discussed. In this, help of Banerji (RD), Hunter (WW), Jena (KC), Das (Manmatha Nath), Mahtab (HK), Mahapatra (Pinaki Ranjan), Majumdar (RC), Mukherjee (P), Mookerji (RK), Patra (KM), Ray (Bhabani Chandra), Ray (BC), Sahu (Nabin Kumar), Utkal University, Samal (JK) and Sinha (BN) has been taken.
In Chapter IV, the present systems of various transport systems in Orissa have been discussed. In this, three modes of transport have been considered viz., Railways, Roadways and Inland Waterways. The study has been based on Techno-Economic Survey of Orissa by National Council of Applied Economic Research, Report of National Transport Policy Committee on Transport Policy and Coordination, Government of India, January, 1996, Statistical Abstract of Orissa by Bureau of Statistics & Economics, Government of Orissa.

Literature on Road and IWT in Orissa is not available in documented form. The help of offices of the Chief Engineer (Roads) and Chief Engineer (National Highway) has been taken to assess the studies of road system in Orissa.

For assessing the present status of Inland Water Transport in Orissa, help of Commerce Department, Government of Orissa and the Office of the Director, Inland Waterways has been taken. The study is based on documents and reports available in these offices.

In Chapter V, Maritime History of Orissa and causes of decline has been discussed. In this, the works of Foster (W), ED., Lookyer (C), Temple (RC), Banerji (RD),
In Chapter VI, the evaluation of IWT as a mode of transport has been taken. For this, help of Journals and Reports published on the subject, the work of Ross, Richard A., and Hirst, Eric has been taken. Besides this, the study has been based on the RITES Report of Inter Modal Transport MX 1976/ Report of National Institute of Training in Industrial Engineering on Energy Intensity for different modes of transport - 1979 / Report of Transport Policy Committee on Transport Policy and Coordination, Government of India - January 1996.

In Chapter VII, the scope of IWT in Orissa as a transport system has been assessed. As mentioned earlier, there are hardly any documented books and reports on the subject. The studies have been based mostly on the official records of various Departments of Government. In this study, the needs of industries, transport of agricultural and forest products and location of the ports to be constructed in future has been taken into consideration. In this, potential of mineral development in Orissa issued by Mining & Geology Department, Government of Orissa has been taken into consideration. For this, we have taken the help of -

(2) RITES Report on Inter-modal Transport MX - 1979

(3) Census of India, 1991;

(4) Orissa Paper I;

(5) Statistical Abstract of Orissa by Bureau of Statistics & Economics;

(6) Industrial Scene of Orissa published by IPICOL and IDCO;

(7) Position of Industries published by IPICOL 1987 / 1986;

Besides these, the study has been based on the reports and documents available in various Departments of Government like Commerce, Industries, Mining and Chief Engineer (Roads) and Chief Engineer (National Highway).

In the last Chapter i.e. VIII, Summary and Conclusions have been given.