The present Orissa state is mainly a part of ancient Kalinga Empire which was situated on the eastern zone of India is surrounded by West-Bengal and Bihar on the north, Andhra Pradesh on the south, Madhya Pradesh on the west and Bay of Bengal on the east. Orissa has been carved out as an autonomous political unit and placed in the geographical map of India on 1st April, 1936. It came into its present shape after the reorganization of states in 1948. Before 1912 it was a part of West Bengal after that till 1936, it became a part of Bihar. The state of Orissa has at present 13 districts covering an area of 155,825 sq kilometres and the land area is about 5.11 percent of the total area of the country.

Morphologically the state is divided into 4 natural divisions. 1. The hilly region of the north and north-west. 2. The eastern ghats. 3. The central and western plateau and the coastal plains. The territories comprising Orissa mostly come under the two main divisions; the coastal and hilly region. The coastal plains of Orissa covers the district of Cuttack, Puri, Balasore and Ganjam.
The rest of the state comes under the hilly and the plateau regions. The coastal regions of Orissa has an area of 14075 sq.miles, comprising 25 percent of the total area of the state. It stretches from Subarnarekha in the north to the Rushikulya in the south. The coastal plains are the gifts of 6 rivers namely the Subarnarekha, the Budhabalanga, the Baitaran, the Brahmani, the Mahanadi and the Rushikulya. These rivers are the life line of the state. The coastal plains can be termed as a land of 6 deltas. These plains are the creation of the beds of the rivers flowing through different districts. Deltas are formed by the silt deposits of the rivers flowing into the Bay of Bengal. This area is very fertile due to the rivers but many of the rivers are in high flood during the rainy season bringing ruin and devastation to the coastal and eastern districts.

The inland or the hilly areas of Orissa has an area of 46,052 sq.miles and it occupies 75 percent or 3/4 of the total area of the state. This hilly region covers the districts of Mayurbhanj, Keonjhar, Sundargarh, Sambalpur, Kalahandi and Bolangir. The eastern ghats pass into the districts of Koraput and Dhenkanal through the coastal districts. Both the Vindhya ranges and eastern ghat mountain ranges meet at Phulbani. Thus the physical and ecological features of the hilly regions are different from those of the coastal regions.

Orissa is a maritime state with a coast line of 482 Kms
along the Bay of Bengal on the east coast of India. Chilika is the largest and famous lake of Orissa, near the Bay of Bengal, on the boundary of the districts of Puri and Ganjam. This lake of 64 Kms long and 16.32 Kms wide, is a natural sanctuary for birds coming from Saibaria in winter in search of warmth and sunshine. There are two beautiful islands inside the lake; they are Parikud and Malud. There are also some hills like the Solari, the Bhaleri and Jatiya. It is also an important research centre for pisciculture and marine-biology. Ansoopa lake near Banki in Cuttack district which is 5 Kms. long and 1.6 Kms. wide at the foot of the Saranda hill, is another worth-seen lake of Orissa.

Hirakud Dam has been constructed across the river Mahanadi near Hirakud, about 15 Kms. upstream from Sambalpur. It is the longest dam (4,800 meters long) in world. The stored water forms a lake measuring 650 sq. Kms. This will ultimately irrigate about 4 lakh hectares of land. This reservoir not only helps in controlling the water flow in the Mahanadi but provides facilities for irrigation and pisciculture. The power-house at Hirakud Dam has an installed capacity of 123,000 kilowatts. This power has attracted new industries near Hirakud and elsewhere in Orissa. Aluminium plant at Hirakud, Rourkela Steel Plant, the Cement factory at Rajgangpur receive power from this river valley project. Another power house has been constructed at Chiplima, 22.5 Kms. down stream from the Hirakud Dam.
The population of Orissa, as per 1981 Census, records is $2,63,70,271$ consisting of $132,53,523$ males and $130,18,531$ females and the density of population is $169$ per sq. Km. $47.34$ percent of the State's population live in the coastal regions which constitute $25$ percent of the total area of the state, whereas $52.66$ percent of its population live in the hilly regions which cover about $75$ percent of the total area of the state. The inhabitants of Orissa are oriyas and most of them speak oriya, their mother tongue. The state has the highest percentage of Hindus which constitutes about $96.25$ percent of the total population.

CLIMATE

Orissa enjoys a tropical climate. The south-western monsoons and the retreating north-eastern monsoons effectively control its climate. As the state is located on the eastern coast of India, it does not come under the direct path of the south-western monsoons with the result that monsoon rain is much lower here than in West-Bengal. As a coastal state the climate of Orissa is equable; it is neither very hot in summer nor very cold in winter. But in hilly regions and plateau, we have the extreme of climate. In the western districts of Bolangir, Sambalpur and Sundargarh, it is very hot in summer and very cold in winter. Although the rainfall is widespread during monsoons but it varies from place to place.
The average rainfall in the state is over 150 cm. In some places like Jeypur the rainfall is heavier and there is scanty rainfall in Sambalpur, Gopalpur, Puri, Bhubaneswar, Chandipur on account of their pleasant weather, they are good summer holiday resorts which attract tourists and visitors from far and near and thereby Orissa earns a large amount of money from this tourist traffic.

AGRICULTURE

Orissa is mostly a state of villages. Nearly 80 percent of its population live in 50,854 villages and only 20 percent of the population live in 108 towns and 4 cities of Cuttack, Sambalpur, Rourkela and Bhubaneswar. Orissa is not sufficiently urbanized and the reason for its low speed of urbanization is most probably the lack of adequate industrialization and employment facilities in town. It is predominantly an agricultural state. Nearly 77.4 percent of the state population is engaged in agriculture and farming is the mainstay of the people, while the rest of it are employed in other works such as mining, trade, manufacturing, labour and governmental services etc. The state economy is agriculture dominated and the entire agricultural economy depends on rice production. The principal crops grown in Orissa are cereals, pulses, oilseeds, fruits, vegetables, jute and cash-crops like sugarcane and tobacco. Of these, rice is by far the most important crop and is grown all
over the state. Orissa contributes about one-tenth of the rice produced in India. It is regarded as a rice-surplus state, not because of high-yield per hectare but on account of low population. Agriculturally, Orissa is backward as one-third of the state is under the plough. But now the state government is giving attention by providing fertilisers, improved varieties of seeds, modern agricultural equipment to raise agricultural productivity and now Orissa's progress in agriculture has been encouraging in many respects. The state produces pulses or Rabi crops like moong, gram, birl and arhar. The state is not self-sufficient in the production of pulses; it depends on Madhya Pradesh and Andhra Pradesh to meet its own requirements. The oilseeds grown in Orissa are groundnut, castor seeds, mustard etc. The most common oilseed is mustard which is grown as a second crop after the cereals are harvested. Groundnut cultivation has become very popular in recent times, though at first instance it was popular only in the hilly areas and uplands. Now people all over the state have taken to it as a profitable cultivation. The popular fibres grown in Orissa are jute and cotton. Orissa is fourth largest producer of jute in the country. The cash-crop like sugarcane is another important cultivation of the people of Orissa. The western part of the state is hilly and two-fifth of the land is covered with dense forest. The state is endowed with vast forest resources and the total extent of forest is about 67,461 sq.kms. and it is about 43.75 percent of the total land areas of the state. The important forest products are sal, teak, rose-wood, gambhari, haldi and kendu-leaves. Of all these kendu-leaves constitute the most important
and profitable forest product in Orissa. These leaves are used for the preparation of bidis and are mostly grown in the forests of Western Orissa. The government receives a large amount of revenue from Kendu-leaves trade. The Kendu-leaves of Orissa are imported by Bangladesh and Sri Lanka because of their special qualities for the preparation of bidis. The Kendu-leaves of Orissa brings a good amount of foreign exchange for India. The Kendu-leaves play an important role in the Orissa politics as it was monopolised by the Gujarati families who acted as a powerful pressure group in the state politics and they have had a hand in the untimely and premature fall of all governments, Congress and non-congress till it was finally nationalised.

NATURAL RESOURCES

The mineral resources of Orissa are vast and diverse. The hill regions in the north and north-west constitute the mineral-belt of the state. Orissa has an abundance of minerals wealth such as high grade iron and manganese ores, chromite, coal, graphite, copper and lead ore, lime stones, etc. The total production of minerals in the state is 5 percent of the country. 60 percent of the iron ore is found in the districts of Keonjhar, Sundargarh, Mayurbhanj and Cuttack which is about one-third of the total reserves of the country. Both the Rourkela Steel Plant and the Tata Iron
and Steel Plant depend mainly upon Orissa's iron ores. Manganese ore is found in the districts of Keonjhar, Sundargarh, Kalahandi and Koraput. It is the leading producer of manganese ore in the country accounting for about 40% of all India production. In case of chromite, Orissa occupies an enviable position in the country by having 90% of the reserves, estimated to be 19 million tonnes. The deposits are distributed in Cuttack, Dhenkanal and Keonjhar districts. A sizeable quantity of chromite is exported from Orissa. The state ranks first in the country so far as bauxite reserves is concerned. The bauxite deposits are distributed in the plateau of Koraput, Kalahandi, Phulbani and Bolangir districts. In the production of dolomite Orissa's position is second in the country. A large number of industries have been set up mostly based on minerals such as ferro-chrome plant at Jajpur Road, two Ferro-manganese plant at Joda and Jeypur, one Ferro-silicone plant at Theruvelly, two cement factories at Barghar and Rajgangpur. There are three large paper mills at Rayagada, Chaudwar and Brajrajnagar. A Mig-Engine factory at Sunabeda near Koraput is a landmark in the industrial development of Orissa.

TRANSPORT AND COMMUNICATION

Inspite of rapid development and expansion of agricultural and industrial production, Orissa remains far behind in respect of communications. One of the reasons is the existence of a number
of rivers which have to be bridged. The limited, inadequate railway facilities hamper the faster industrialisation and economy of the state. Though Orissa has made considerable progress during the last few years in the matter of providing all-weather road communications to different parts of the state still unfortunately Orissa lags behind all other states in this vital sector of the economy.

National highways connecting Calcutta-Madras and Calcutta-Bombay pass through Orissa. The former passes through the districts of Mayurbhanj, Balasore, Cuttack, Puri and Ganjam and the latter passes through the districts of Sambalpur and Sundargarh. After the construction of bridges on the Kathajuri, Kuakhat, Birupa, Brahmani and Baitarani, one can travel all over the state in all weather. There are 1,641 Kms. of national highways in Orissa of which 1,480 Kms. are surfaced. National Highways number 5 and 6, which pass through Orissa are now being linked to many places. There are 2,210 Kms. of state highways of which 2,179 Kms. are surfaced. Orissa has only 14,775 Kms. of surfaced roads out of total 1,15,611 Kms. roads in the state. Road facilities to some extent is satisfactory so far as the eastern districts are concerned whereas the districts which are lying in the eastern ghats, hilly areas and northern plateau suffered a great deal due to inadequate road facilities. The inter-state road links of all-weather traffic is affected by river and narrow bridges over them and this affects the transport facilities and economy of the state to a great extent. Railway facilities is...
severely limited in Orissa. The railway line of the South-eastern railway which links Howrah with Madras and Bombay pass through the boundaries of Orissa\(^1\)\(^8\)\(^\)\(^9\). There are three main routes in Orissa one along the eastern coast, another along the northern districts of Sambalpur and Sundargarh, and the third across the western districts of Koraput, Kalahandi and Bolangir. Most of the railways are found on the periphery of the state. While the interior areas still continue to be inaccessible. All district headquarters are not yet connected by railways. The absence of adequate road and railway facilities keep the state to intense backwardness in matters of economic development.

EDUCATION

The literacy rate in Orissa is only 34.22\(^1\)^{19} percent while the national rate of literacy is 37.38 percent. This low rate literacy in Orissa is due to the schedule caste and schedule tribe which constitute nearly 38.20 percent of the state's population\(^2\)^{20}. Nearly a quarter of Orissa's population belong to the tribal group, each with a distinctive custom and dialect. There is a remarkable difference between the average literacy of coastal areas and that of the hilly areas. The four coastal districts have an average literacy rate of 40.91 percent whereas the rest of Orissa has only 27.25 percent. Puri has the highest literacy rate having 45.90 percent
and the lowest rate of literacy is observed in Koraput having 15.83 percent. The difference in the literacy rate between the coastal division and the inland division is primarily due to their respective background of modernization. In case of coastal districts modernization process was initiated by the British rulers but the same started in the districts of inland division mostly after independence.

At present there are 5 Universities in Orissa including one on agriculture and technology which is a residential university situated at Bhubaneswar. The other universities are, Utkal University founded in 1943 Sambalpur and Berhampur Universities founded in Jan, 1967, and a Sanskrit University at Puri. There are 89 affiliated general colleges in Orissa, 19 are under the Berhampur University, 25 under the Sambalpur University and the remaining are under the Utkal University. Besides there are 3 Engineering Colleges, 3 Medical Colleges, 5 Teachers' Training Colleges, 1 College of Agricultural Engineering, 4 Law Colleges and 1 College of Accountancy and Management. There is a Board of Secondary Education in Orissa which conducts the High School Certificate and the Middle School Certificate Examination. Women's education was neglected before independence. Now the state government is giving utmost emphasis on women's education.

The dominant castes of the state are Brahmin, Karana and Khandayat. The Brahmin and Karan dominate the cultural educational, administration and politics of the State. The academic life
of the state is dominated by the Bramhins as most of the high cadre of Government posts are occupied by them. The Karanas despite their numerical minority dominate the political life of the state.

In Orissa the power structure is dominated by an elite class like Bramhin, Karana, Kshatriya and Khandayat. The first three castes dominated the political scene for a long time since the inception of Orissa as a separate state. Of late, the Khandayats have started sharing power at different levels. Out of four Prime Ministers of Orissa between 1937-1946, three were Kshatriya and one was a Bramhin. Of the twelve chief ministers between 1952-80, four were Bramhins, three Karanas, two Kshatriyas and one was a Khandayata. Leadership of the Government is rarely availed by the leaders of the highlands making the region politically less influential in the state. "The coastal districts have consistently enjoyed the office of the Chief Ministership."

The political life of the state is not completely free from casteism. In the pre-Independence and the early period of post-independence there were mainly two hostile groups in the Congress Party - the Bramhin group led by two stalwarts - Nilakantha Das and Godabarish Mishra against the Kshatriya-Karan group led by H. K. Mahtab and Nityananda Kanoongo. It was the origin of Karana-Bramhin factional fight and inter-caste competition over state politics. However, Orissa politics is not exclusively based on casteism.
The politics of the state is shared and controlled by different castes at different times but there is always an inter-caste competition between two numerical superior groups like Bramhin and Karan for capturing the power of the state.

Out of the total population of about 21.90 million, the schedule tribes are 5 million or 23.11 percent and 15.9 percent are schedule castes. The notable schedule tribes are Kandha, Kolha, Sabara, Munda, Juanga, Santhal, Paraja, Bhumia. They live in the hilly area and are found in almost all the districts of Orissa. The adivasis have concentrated especially in the regions of north-western, western and south-western part of the state. The district of Mayurbhanj has got the largest number of schedule tribes constituting about 58.56 percent. On the other hand, the district of Cuttack has the lowest number of schedule tribes constituting only 2.89 percent of its population. The Adivasis of Koraput and Sambalpur have been modernised to some extent. But those who are living in the districts of Mayurbhanj, Keonjhar, Dhenkanal, Sundargarh, Phulbani and Bolangir are less civilised and progressing very slowly. They are politically, economically and socially backward for which the government is giving special attention and adequate facilities to bring them to the level of the developed section of the state population. In order to make them politically conscious and give them equal opportunity to govern the state, there is a constitutional provision for the reservation of 58 seats in Orissa Legislative Assembly.
POLITICAL CULTURE OF ORISSA

Geographically, Orissa is situated in the North-eastern section of the Indian peninsula, but culturally it has got some similarities and homogeneity with the culture of Northern and southern India. Thus, we see the marks of Aryavarta (Northern) and Dakhinatya (Southern) civilization in the language, culture, art and architecture.

Orissa has a very rich and glorious past. The oriyas take pride in the superb artistic skill displayed in the temples, handicrafts, paintings, handlooms, music and dance. The handloom weavers show exquisite craftsmanship in the screen and sarees which are very famous inside and outside too. Orissa's sculpture and temple architecture are world famous. Oriyas have great faith and belief in the cult of Lord Jagannath, the presiding deity of the state and is the symbol of "sunyabada" form of the formless supreme being. Communal and casteist elements are not found by common people's mutual love and fellow feelings. All religious, social customs and cultural activities in Orissa veer round Lord Jaganath. In short Orissa's culture means Jagannath and Jagannath means oriya culture. Orissa has retained her cultural identity all through the ages which is much more prominent than her political identity. It is famous for its traditional odissi dance and music. The tribal dance is prevalent in the inland division of western orissa. Its
political history and socio-economic background have contributed a lot for building up of its cultural edifice.

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2. Census of India, 1981 - Series 16, Orissa Provisional population Total.


5. B.N. Sinha, Op Cit. p 159


8. Ibid.


12. Bidi, Kendu leaf rolled with tobacco inside it is used by common people for smoking purpose.


21. Ibid.


23. S. C. Dash, op. cit, page 41-44.


