CHAPTER I

BACKGROUND

The history of the maritime trade of India is not only about the transactions in high value calicoes and muslin's to Europe. In fact the most important dimension of her trade was the trade in articles of mass consumption within Asian waters like textiles and foodstuffs. This inter-Asian trade was quite developed since time immemorial. People involved in this inter-Asian trading activities ranged from pedlars to substantial merchants from India. But the character and nature of the trade and commerce of India underwent change of far reaching consequences with the advent of the European powers. Their stay in India became an important factor in the economic as well as political life of the country.

Of the two active coastal regions in India in the medieval period, it was the eastern sea board which started acquiring crucial importance in the later half of the seventeenth century. Both the Coromandel and Bengal on the eastern coast of India emerged as significant areas for the European mercantilist activities. Forming a distinct sub-region within the Bengal region and lying in the northern proximity to the Coromandel, the Orissa coastal belt also emerged as an important centre of European commerce and indigenous merchant’s activity.

1. COASTAL ORISSA: A BACKGROUND TO THE HISTORICAL GEOGRAPHY

The term Orissa here refers to a wider tract of territory than the one, which is referred to under the same name in modern times. The boundaries of Orissa, in Ancient period, underwent many changes at different times. Orissa was a prominent region in the Indian subcontinent with a distinct political and cultural heritage. The modern term ‘Orissa’ derived from Odra or Odradesa, which was the name of a very
small part of the present day Orissa.\textsuperscript{1} But during the early medieval period the country of Orissa which was called \textit{Kalinga}\textsuperscript{2} was practically co-extensive with the present Oriya speaking tracts of Bengal, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Hyderabad and Madras\textsuperscript{3}. It has been contended that the idea of \textit{Trikalinga}\textsuperscript{4} found expression in the charters and epigraphs of the Ganga kings who ruled in the Telingana Country. But Pliny presents three divisions of \textit{Kalinga},\textsuperscript{5} which was also corroborated by Ptolemy. The boundary of this united Orissa stretched from the Ganges in the north to the Godavari in the south and from Amarakantaka\textsuperscript{6} in the west to the Bay of Bengal in the East. In the Pre-Ganga Period Orissa extended in the north as far as the Tamluk and Midnapur comprising a portion of Rahra-desha in Bengal and the Rusikulya river in Ganjam in the South. In the East it was surrounded by the Ocean and the river Hugli and in the West it was bounded by Sonepur, Banai, Sambalpur and Gondwana.

According to Abul Fazl and Sujan Ray the climate of medieval Orissa was good, but as Orissa was situated in the tropical zone is subject to high temperature. There were three seasons in a year. The rainy season prevailed for eight months, winter for three months and summer for one month. But this however does not similar to modern conditions.\textsuperscript{7}

Fruits and flowers were available in Orissa, in large quantity. During medieval Orissa, there were different type of crops grew. There grew food grains like rice, wheat, barley, different kinds of pulses like gram, doll callavances and kalai, kalai.
vegetables of different varieties, fruits like mango, tamarind, coconut, palm, spices like raisces, cumin, coriander, caraway, and turmeric, cash crop like sugarcane, betel leaves and cotton, soil seeds like gingelly seed and mustard seed.

Orissa was the homeland of numerous beasts. Among the domestic animals were cattle, cow, oxen, sheep, goat and camel. In 1633, oxen and dogs were found by William Bruton at Puri and at the Gingelly coast goats and sheeps were found by Bowrey. Again at Puri cattle were found by Alexander Hamilton and also on his way from Puri to Cuttack he mentioned about some other beasts.  

In the forest and jungles of Orissa lived many destructive animals. According to Amin Ahmad Razi (1594) and Abul Fazl (1595) elephants were found in plenty in Orissa. People from other provinces came to purchase Orissa elephants. Bowrey observed Orissa to be the homeland of wild beasts like tigers, bears and rhinoceroses. William Bruton referred that lions were seen in deep forests near Puri. Birds of various kinds were found in Orissa. Manrique found birds like peacock, parrot, dove and wood loving pigeon or wood pigeon at Arcepur (Harishpurgarh). Game binds like waterfowl, patridge and pheasant came into the sight of Alexander Hamilton at Jagannath (Puri).

The factors of the English East India Company and Foreign travelers testified to the fertility of the soil of medieval Orissa. According to Manrique, Bengal was composed of twelve kingdoms of which one was Orissa and all of them were very fertile and fecund. Thevenot (1666-67) mentioned Orissa to be a "fruitful

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9 Bowrey, pp. 56, 199.
12 Harishpurgarh, a village situated at the mouth of the river Patua at the extreme south-east of Cuttack district.
province". Bowrey in the seventies of the seventeenth century gives some description about the fertility of land of the Gingelly coast. In his opinion, the land of the Gingelly coast was one of the most fertile lands in the universe. The land of Orissa was therefore, fertile and productive.

During the time of Ganga ruler, Anantavarma Chodagangaddev (1077-1147 A.D.), the northern limit of Orissa limit was the mouth of the river Ganges and the southern limit was the Godavari. But the later Ganga kings were unable to maintain this vast territory and during the reign of Bhanudeva IV (1414-1435) the Reddis of Rajahmundry were in possession of the Ganga territory upto Simhachalam. Under Kapilendra Deva (1434-1470) the territorial limits of Orissa were expanded upto the Kaveri in the south and lower Ganges in the north, owing to his successful campaigns against the kingdom of Rajahmundry and the Sultans of Bengal. Though Purushottama Deva (1470-1479) at first lost his territory lying to the south of the Godavari, again recovered the territory as far as Guntur district towards the end of his reign. But Pratapudra Deva (1497-1540) was defeated by Krishnadeva Raya and had to conclude a treaty in 1519, ceding the territory of Orissa lying to the South of Godavari, to Vijayanagar empire. Pratapudra Deva was again defeated by Qutb-Ul-Mulk, the governor of Bahamani Sultan, who wrested Teligana in 1525 A.D. Later on Qutb-Ul-Mulk also conquered the whole Krishna-Godavari Doab. In the north also the empire was perpetually threatened by the Afghan ruler of Bengal. However, Orissa again rose into prominence in the time of Mukunda Deva, who was a Telugu by birth. His forces penetrated as far as Satagaon near the river Saraswati, then held by Sulaiman Karrani, Sultan of Bengal. But this glory did not last long after the death of Raja Mukunda Deva, the last independent King of Orissa in 1568 A.D.

15 Now situated in Andhra Pradesh.
16 A temple in Vizagapatnam district in Andhra Pradesh.
17 Satagaon — a ruined town Hooghly district in West Bengal.
following period Orissa entered into a period of disasters and defeat and subsequently it passed from yoke to yoke into the hands of the Afghans of Bengal in 1568 and was annexed to the Mughal empire in 1592, then subsequently by the Marathas and finally by the British.

The foundation of the Muslim rule in Orissa was laid in 1568 by Sulaiman Karrani of Bengal and the territory extending from Midnapore to the Chilika Lake passed into the hands of the Afghans. The Afghan rule in Orissa continued only for a short period and after that, began the Mughal-Afghan hostility for supremacy in Orissa. In the short reign of the Afghans, no change was made in the old administrative and revenue system of Orissa. In 1576 A.D. with the defeat and death of Daud Karrani, Orissa was nominally annexed to Akbar’s empire and was kept as a Mughal Province, along with Bengal.

Even before the commencement of the Ganga Period, we have also seen that terms like Odra, Utkala and Kalinga were sometimes used synonymously. This gives the impression of a common identity of this region in our period. In the Ain-i-Akbari of Abul Fazl, we get in detail the territorial boundaries of Orissa. Abul Fazl mentions five revenue sarkars of Orissa. They were Jaleswar, Bhadrak, Cuttack, KalingaDandapat and Rajahmundry. Again each sarkar was divided into several mahals. There were in total ninety-nine mahals, the details of which have been mentioned in the Ain-i-Akbari. The total revenue collected from the five sarkars was Rs.4268,330.

Orissa during the Maratha rule, divided into two distinct political divisions, Mughal bandis and Garajats. The former comprised of the plain and fertile lands in the coastal region and was thickly populated. The later was a wild tract of land, covered by hills and forests with population sparsely distributed. The Mughal bandis

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21 Ibid., pp. 142-44.
22 Ibid., p. 155.
was under the direct administration of the Marathas but the Garajats were held by several feudatory chieftains. They paid annual tributes to the Maratha government and the latter generally did not interfere in their internal administration.

The British conquest took place when Orissa's past glory had vanished for long. A large part of Orissa remained under several small princely dynasties. Situated in inaccessible regions, these feudatory states remained more or less beyond the pale of historical knowledge. Several districts of Orissa were kept under the administrative jurisdictions of Bengal, Bihar, Madras and Madhya Pradesh. For more than a century of the British rule, Orissa proper meant as if only three districts, namely Balasore, Cuttack and Puri. That narrow coastal belt for the British appeared as a land of no consequence except presidencies.

Thus it is difficult to establish the correct political locations of Orissa during our period. Instead, we will have to take into account the historical and cultural background for fixing up the boundaries of Orissa. However, the study will make a special reference of the eastern coast of present Orissa from Ganjam to Balasore including Midnapore, now in West Bengal.

The Southern sarkar of Orissa was Rajahmundry on the bank of river Godavari. Hence, there is no doubt that the river Godavari was the demarcating line to the southern part of Orissa. The northern sarkar was Jaleswar, which included mahals such as Tamluk, Kasijurah and Midnapore of the present Midnapore district. Hence in the north river Rupnarayan on whose bank Tamluk was situated, formed the northern boundary of Orissa. The five revenue divisions during the period of Hindu administration, were under direct control of the crown. The hilly tracts of the province in the North-West, West and South-West which comprised of jungle mahal, eastern Gondwana and Koraput etc. consisted of numerous small states, each governed by a military general who used to pay annual tribute to the crown.

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23 Ibid., p. 142.
As has been said, after the annexation of the region to the Mughal empire only status quo was maintained. When the Mughal imperial territories were divided into twelve subahs in 1595 and later on expanded into fifteen provinces with the addition of Khandesh, Berar and Ahmadnagar, then Orissa was not constituted into a subah. It was treated as a sub-province and was tagged to the Bengal subah. Under the new revenue arrangement the collection was under two heads: one from areas which were previously subject to the direct control of the crown, now renamed as Mughal bandi and secondly, the small hilly tracts known as Garajats or princely states.

But it is to be noted here that the Ain does not give any detail information about the two southern most sarkars KalingaDandapat and Rajahmundry. Obviously these two sarkars were not under the control of the Mughal empire. Their predecessors the Afghan rulers had lost them to the Sultan of Golconda, I’brahim Qutb Shah in 1571.

The province of Golconda was not a part of the Mughal empire till its conquest by Aurangzeb in 1687. During the reigns of Akbar and Jahangir, the Mughal subehdars or governors of Orissa tried to recover these southern part of Orissa. In the reign of Jahangir a part of Golconda territory Chhaterpur, in the district of Ganjam was recovered from the Qutubshahis of Golconda. During the reign of Shahjahan, Baqirkhan, the Nawab of Orissa had marched up to Manaurgarh, an important fortress which he stormed. But then he was called back by Shahjahan following the conclusion of an amicable settlement with Abdullah, the Sultan of Golconda. Though the southern sarkars were recognized as a part of Orissa, yet the Mughals did not receive any revenue from them, because they were under the control of the Qutubshahis. It was only after the submission of Golconda in 1636 that the Mughals started receiving any revenue from the sarkar of Rajahmundry. We do not

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24 Ibid., p. 9.
25 M.A. Haque, op. cit., p. 133.
26 Ibid., p. 141.
know exactly the location of the revenue headquarters of Kalinga Dandapat, but in 1641, Chicacole became headquarters of a faujdar whose jurisdiction extended from Ganjam to Vizagapatanam.\textsuperscript{27} Now the Golconda tribute appertained to the province of Orissa was paid from the district of Chicacole\textsuperscript{28}. This money seems to have been paid through the Nawab of Orissa until the fall of Golconda in 1687, when it was finally annexed to the Mughal empire.

As we have already seen, the northern portion of Orissa in the time of Akbar was ruled as a part of Bengal subah. But during the time of Jahangir, for the first time in 1607, Orissa became a separate province and its subahdar was directly responsible to the emperor. The process was continued until the time of Shah Shuja in 1624, when he was entrusted with the subedari of Orissa and Bihar, in addition to his subedari of Bengal. In the time of viceroyalty of Khan-i-Dauran, Pipli and Balasore were transferred to the subah of Bengal in 1667, under the jurisdiction of Shaista Khan. In 1688 the three sarkars of Orissa were reorganised into twelve sarkars. In 1704 during the Dewani of Murshid Quli Khan, the territorial boundary of Orissa was rearranged again and Orissa was divided into thirteen sarkars of which the northern most six sarkars were dismembered and annexed to Bengal. The main reason advanced for this change was to protect the port of Balasore and its sea-coast against the ravages of the Arracanese.

Thus, it is almost difficult to determine correctly the political boundary of Orissa during our period. After losing independence to the Afghan in 1568, Orissa was for all practical purposes a sub-province. In fact, until 1905, this problem continued since Orissa’s districts continued to be controlled from different neighbouring provinces such as Bengal, Madras and central provinces. In our period also the political boundaries were subject to many changes. It is to be noted that under the Mughals only the northern portion of Orissa was assigned the status of a

\textsuperscript{27} W. Francis, \textit{Madras District Gazetteers}, Vizagapatnam, Madras, 1907, p. 305.

\textsuperscript{28} Jadunath Sarkar, \textit{Studies in Mughal India}, Calcutta, 1919.
distinct province. The southern portion from Ganjam to Godavari seems to have been regarded as a part of the kingdom of Golconda. According to Tapan Ray Chaudhuri, the region from north of Godavari was known as the Gingelly coast, a name it derived from the oil seed Gingelly, found in plenty in that area.²⁹ According to Thomas Bowrey, this coast extended from the Bay of Coringa at the point Godavari to Jagannath (Puri) in north.³⁰

From the English factory records of the eighteenth century it is also evident that the region at least up to the beginning of that century was known as Kalinga, which as we have seen, was synonymous with Orissa. The Europeans, when they started trading in Orissa during the period under review, had their factories in Balasore, Pipli and Hariharpur under the chief of the Bengal Council. The region beyond Ganjam was under the Coromandel establishment. Hence, taking all these into consideration, the scholars of Indian Ocean Studies, treat northern Orissa, i.e. from Puri upto Hijli coast as part of Bengal, while the coastal belt Ganjam and further south up to river Godavari, as a part of the Coromandel region in their studies.³¹


³¹ See the map of Bengal in Sushil Chaudhuri’s Trade & Commercial Organisation in Bengal, 1650-1720, Calcutta, 1975, p. xiv.
II. SOCIAL CONDITIONS

In this section an attempt has been made to throw some light on some aspects of the general social conditions of Orissa during the period under study.

In medieval Orissa, the kings, chieftains and the Nawabs or governors occupied the highest rung in the society. But they were very friendly to the strangers and were quite reputed for their hospitality to them. They lived lavishly and enjoyed all comforts and luxuries. Ramachandra Deva, the Gajapati ruler of Orissa in the second half of the sixteenth century "was very powerful and a great land holder in this country. Ferishta mentions him as" a prince of great fame and power.\(^\text{32}\)

The vassal chieftains were equally powerful in their respective estates.\(^\text{33}\) They rendered military service to the Gajapati at times of war. They maintained huge retinue of servants and the aristocratic officials assisted them in administration.

The population of Orissa during medieval period was homogeneous. Till the middle of the sixteenth century, Orissa had been purely a Hindu country. During Sri Chaitanya’s journey from Puri to Bengal in 1514, the last outpost of Muslim rule was Pichhalda\(^\text{34}\) and to the south of it lay Hindu Orissa where there was not a single permanent Muslim settler\(^\text{35}\) Neamatullah also mentions that Puri was not visited by any Muhammedan before Sulaiman Karrani’s invasions in 1568.\(^\text{36}\)

The Hindu society was divided in the line of Aryan polity into four major classes, Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaisyas and Sudras.


\(^{33}\) Ibid., p. 464-65; Thomas Bowrey, p. 108.

\(^{34}\) Pichhalda: situated on the southern bank of the river Rupnarayan; Mukherjee, *op. cit.*, p. 76.


\(^{36}\) *Makhzan-i Afghana*, Ed. by Dorn, p. 181.
Among them, the *Brahmins* enjoyed a very high position in the society and they performed both religious and secular duties. The main functions performed by the *Brahmins* were the study and teaching of the Vedas and performance of religious rites. During the medieval period, the territorial subdivision has been divided into two groups called *srotiya* or *vedik*, and *asrotriya* or *non-vedik*. The former included the *sasani Brahmins*, who depended for their living chiefly on royal grants and rent free lands.

The later categories mainly depended on professional temple worshipping and their services as cooks.

The *Marhia* priests were low castes, who received alms from the humble clients whom they served and enjoyed the privilege of being fed first in all feasts, connected with pray as *chitta* or purification ceremonies. During medieval period, *sasani Brahmins* were chiefly engaged with the intellectual and spiritual work under the patronisation of the various Rajas and chiefs of Orissa. The *Kshatriyas*, were next to the *Brahmins*, in importance and status in the social structure. The *Khandait* and *Karanas* were two other important social groups who also enjoyed many privileges, entered into the sphere of administration and held position really equal to *Kshatriyas*.

During the medieval period. Orissa was left under the *Garajat* Rajas and Chiefs under the Muslim administration. These Rajas, and Chiefs had their own armies. It is probably that the *Khandait* must have been performing military service during the time of war and cultivating land during the time of peace. The *Khandait* must have been performing the military job for the Muslim administrators. The *paika* of our period, seems to have belonged to *Khandait* caste. The *Khandait*, of medieval period, depended on occupied lands, provided by the government. They claimed next to the status of *Kshatriyas* in the society. Besides *Khandait*, a new

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39 Ibid., p. 75.
community called, Karanas or the writers caste of Orissa, emerged as a new and influential social group in the medieval period. The Karanas seem to be most favoured class, for recruitment into the services of Muslim government or of Zamindars, as clerks, accountants and petty officers. The sources entrusts vaisyas with the agriculture and commercial functions and the sudras with servile and menial works of life.\textsuperscript{40} Within the social structure, a large number of occupational groups existed. They were agriculturists, producers of different commodities, as well as traders. The status of such groups, depended on the nature and dignity of their professions and material condition. At the lowest were the untouchables, who performed duties which were unclean or for-bidden according to the Aryan standards. The aboriginal tribes of Orissa existed during the medieval period remained out of Hindu social system.

The social structure during the medieval period, would be incomplete, without reference to the Muslim population of Orissa, which emerged during this period. Although, Orissa’s first contact with the Muslim began or started in 13\textsuperscript{th} century and Orissa witnessed Muslim invasions both from the north and south. In 1568, the Afghans of Bengal under Sulaiman Karani, had invaded Orissa and in dethroned the Hindu ruler of Orissa and laid the foundation of Muslim administration. Before the middle of the 16\textsuperscript{th} century the Muslim contact with Orissa was political. Sri Jadunath Sarkar rightly pointed out that, “upto the middle of the 18\textsuperscript{th} century, Orissa had been a purely Hindu country, both in its royal house and in its population”, All this situation was changed by Sulaiman Karrani’s invasion in 1568 and the south ward rush of Islam into Orissa was intensified after Akbar’s victory over Daud in 1575.\textsuperscript{41} Muslim migration to Orissa was continuous after its conquest and Muslims settled in the new province with a new religion and culture.

The Muslims who settled down in Orissa constituted a small group. The Muslim society was also divided into two fold divisions. \textit{viz.} (i) those of the foreign

\textsuperscript{40} Ibid., p. 75.

\textsuperscript{41} J. Sarkar, \textit{History of Bengal} (Muslim period), Vol. I, p. 188.
extraction and (ii) Those of the India origin. The Muslims extractions known as Ashrafs claimed superior status over the Muslims of Indian origin because of their link with the foreign lands such as Arabia, Persia, Turkistan etc.. They seemed to be the most privileged class in the society. The Muslim social structure also gradually began to split up, on the lines of established Hindu caste system.

The European communities also made their importance to some extend in the social structure of medieval Orissa. The Portuguese first settled in the coast of Orissa, as traders, in the early part of 16\textsuperscript{th} century.\textsuperscript{42} They were followed by the Dutch, Danes, English and French in the 17\textsuperscript{th} century. The rise of European settlements at Pipli, Hariharpur and Balasore and Ganjam brought drastic change in the society. Although the Europeans were settled down in Orissa. For commercial purposes, but they also carried out missionary activities and for their religious needs churches were erected by them. The inclusion of Muslims into the social structure of Orissa was a result of political and administrative changes. The growth of European settlements could be possible due to a flourishing maritime activities. The Hindus gradually accommodated the new comers viz. the Muslims and Europeans, and they became parts of Orissan society.

The people of medieval Orissa, earned their livelihood by engaging themselves in various kinds of occupations e.g. agriculture, industry, trade, etc., many were employed in various public offices also. In medieval Orissa, the scope of employment was limited, the majority of the people depended on agriculture for their livelihood. Alexander Hamilton found in 1708, many people of Bhadrak\textsuperscript{43} engaged in husbandry.\textsuperscript{44} Industries come next to agriculture as the means or subsistence of the people

A large number of people were engaged in textile industry. In the twenties of


\textsuperscript{43} Bhadrak, it is situated on the bank of the river Salandi, \textit{Balasore Dist. Gazt.}, p. 194-195.

the seventeenth century, Pelsaert observed that, from Chabaspur⁴⁵, Sonargaon⁴⁶ and the surrounding villages as far as Puri “all lived by the weaving industry⁴⁷. William Bruton in 1633 found many weavers of the town of Balk Kada (Balikuda). During his time, there was at Hariharpur at least three thousand weavers who were engaged on contract or hired labourers.⁴⁸ Many people also engaged in the diary industry. Alexander Hamilton (1708) found many people engaged in churning at Bhadrak.⁴⁹ According to Bowrey, the Oriyas mostly lived in cottages near the sea or river and earned their livelihood by making salt or by fishing. Some people were also engaged in woodcutters.⁵⁰ Many people were also engaged in ship and boat building industry, handicrafts, and mines as well as in trade.

The diet of the medieval people of Orissa, as known from the contemporary accounts, that rice always was the staple food of the people. Rice was cooked, stepped in cold water and kept aside, to be taken in the next day.⁵¹ Besides rice people use pulses like mung, biri and harad for their daily life. The use of wheat was not popular. Rice and dal were supplemented by fry, curry and sour dishes prepared out of green vegetables. Milk, ghee, butter, cheese and curd were also popular articles of food. A popular dish of the people on special occasions was khichiri which is prepared out of rice cooked with peas or pulses vegetables and ghee. Meat preparations of different animals like goat, sheep, cocks, hen, peacocks etc. (except that forbidden by their religion) was generally taken by the people in the society. Thomas Bowrey refers to some people, who maintained their livelihood by adopting

⁴⁵ Chabaspur: According to the editors of Pelsaert’s book, it may represent Shahbajpor in Backergunj District; Pelsaert “Remonstratie” (ed.), M & G, p. 8n.
⁴⁶ Sonargaon: 15 miles east of Dacca city, L.G., pp. xxiii, 812.
⁴⁸ Bruton, pp. 270, 276.
⁵⁰ Bowrey, p. 199, 219-220.
the profession of fishing. Orissa was famous for the production of many varieties of fruits in the medieval period. Ripe fruits like banana, mango, jack-fruit, orange, etc. were very commonly eaten. Due to Orissa's contact with the Muslims and Europeans, there occurred certain changes in the food habit of the people. Food items viz. halua, jalet, chapati, palau, biriani, etc. which became popular in medieval period were introduced by the Muslims in Orissa. The green vegetables potato and papaya so commonly used in Orissa were brought by the Portuguese.

Potato, cashewnut, pineapple, papaya and karmanga also, became favoured articles of food among the people of medieval Orissa. Pickle was also introduced by the Portuguese and was prepared out of vegetables, spices, and oil since the medieval period it has been a common and favoured food item.

Drinking of wine was not absent in Orissa. Although there was social disapproval, yet some people were in the habit of drinking wine. Besides wine, opium and leaves of hemp (bhang) were used as intoxicants by some people of medieval Orissa. So the medieval period witnessed many changes in the food and drinks of the people in Orissa. The people manifested varied tastes in the use of dresses. The common men’s clothing consisted of dhoti and chadar. Woman generally wore sari and Jacket (Kanchala). The rich and aristocrats peoples wore costly garments. The impact of Muslim costumes on Rajas and zamindar’s of medieval Orissa seems to be significant. The materials used in the preparation of various costumes reflected the peoples economic status. People from different walks of life wore different stuffs. Cotton was the most common materials for clothes, known to Indians, so also to the people of Orissa. Generally, it was of coarse medium and fine varieties. Wool, silk and tassar were fairly prevalent and used by the

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52 Bowrey, p. 199; Dairy of Streynsham Master, 8th Sept. 1676, p. 57.
Marriage is one of the social institutions, which has continued to this day also. During the medieval period, several forms of marriage existed in Orissa. The Hindu marriage was conducted as per the vedic injunction. The local customs or Lokachars played a vital role in the performance of marriage. The Muslim marriages were not as elaborate as the marriage of Hindus. The Muslim followed their own social customs. The institution of marriage was accompanied with dowry or Jautaka. The Jautaka, consisted of golden ornaments, slaves, jewels, cows, clothes and other articles of daily use. It is difficult to say that it was a social evil during the medieval period. Offering the amount of dowry by the brides parents depended largely on the socio-economic status of person.

The sati or self-immolation existed in medieval Orissa. Sati or self-immolation on the funeral pyre of the dead husband was one of cruelest institutions that entered into the Indian society during the stage of her history. But from the available sources it can be said that the institution of sati did not affect Orissa very much as in north India.

The institution of slavery had an ancient history in India. Extensive references existed of the gift, sale and purchase of slaves during the medieval period and it played a vital role in the socio-economic life. The European traders, particularly the Portuguese were encouraged trade in slaves for their commercial benefit and people in poor economic condition, were found to have been victims of this system. In the 17th century Pipili and Balasore, the port towns of Orissa, remained as the main centers of slave trade. The Portuguese and Arakanese (Pirates) were the active slave traders. William Hedges and C.R. Wilson inform us that, the Portuguese ships picked up the people from the coast of the Bay of Bengal and carried them off captive to sell them into slavery at Pipili.56

The educational system in Orissa was primitive. The *chatasalis* (village schools), *math's* (monasteries), *rajasabhas* (Royal courts) for the Hindu pupils, and *Maktabs* and *Madrashas* for Muslim students, were the centers of imparting education. The rich and aristocrat people had granted land and money for the maintenance of educational institutions to teachers as well as scholars. The government patronized the institutions, teachers and pupils by way of granting stipend and madad-i-mash land for their maintenance. During the medieval period, palm, leaf and iron pen were used as instrument of writing. The Persian chronicle, Abul Fazl, opines that, the people of Orissa, did not have paper, pen and ink (Ain-i-Akbari – II, P.198). Elementary education was imported in primary schools (*chatasalis*) and private houses. But the Muslim student received the elementary education in Maktabs. The medium of instruction for the Hindus students in Orissa, during the medieval period was Sanskrit and Oriya. According to the literature, the Oriya language and script, developed and became popular during the medieval period.\(^5^7\) During the medieval period, for the Muslim students, the medium of instruction was Persian\(^5^8\) and the study of Arabic, the language of the holy Quran was compulsory.

The females of the upper strata of the society also received education. So far the elementary knowledge was concerned girls received education with boys in village schools. But higher education was imparted by tutors at home.

Festivals and religions observances formed an important aspect of socio-religious life of the people. The Hindus of Orissa performed a good number of national and purely regional festivals with devotion and austerity. The car festival of Lord Jagannath was the most celebrated one and drew pilgrims from various parts of India. The festival was performed with great pomp and show. The Muslim occupation of Orissa resulted in the establishment of Muslim settlements and

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\(^5^7\) The details account are written in *Oriya Sahityara Itihasa* by Pandit Surya Narayan Das, and Dr. Mayadhar Mansingh.

\(^5^8\) In Orissa during the Muslim rule, the official language was Persian. It contained up to the British conquest in the early part of 19\(^{th}\) century. G. Toynbee, *"A Sketch of the History of Orissa form 1803 to 1828"*, p. 70.
promoted to the religious needs of the Muslim population. Cuttack, Jaipur, Pipili and Balasore were the important places where mosques and tombs were erected. The Hindu-Muslim co-existence resulted in the origin and growth of a very popular festival called, Satyapir. Dussehra, Dipavali, Rakhi, Muharram, and Id were some of the festive occasions where both the Hindus and Muslims participated freely. There was good harmony and understanding between the two communities during the medieval Orissa. When the Muslim started ruling over Orissa, Jainism, Buddhism, Sakti worship, Sun worship, Saivism and Vaishnavism all mingled together to influence the religious life of the people. The rise of the European settlements on the coastal Orissa had its due impact on the socio-religious life of the people. The European traders were allow to erect churches, for religious worship. In medieval period, we find references of missionary activities of Christians in Orissa. Thus the people of Orissa were not ineffable to other creeds. Finally an overview could be made on the people of medieval Orissa with various occupational enjoyment. The urban people maintained more sophisticated life while rural sector depended more on their labour and exertions rather than on the bounties of the state.

III. POLITICAL CONSCIOUSNESS

As a result of Orissa’s annexation to the Mughal empire, her contact with the rest of India increased which ensured a better climate for trade. Some historians are of the view that, Bengal in the second half of the seventeenth century enjoyed unusual peace because of three long vice-royalties in the province by Shah Shuja, Sha‘ishta Khan and Muhammad Azim\(^59\). But this was not true of Orissa because during these long vice-royalties many changes occurred in Orissa. From 1628 to 1642 as many as five subahdars were changed. Hence Orissa was again placed under the jurisdiction of the subahadad of Bengal in 1642, and the deputy subahdar became the top post of the province. During this time, Shah Shuja became the subahdar of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa. Generally the assignment of Jagirdari at any place in the provinces of Bengal was considered lucrative. By and large, the Mughal officials tried to

maximise their income by all means possible during their temporary assignment in Bengal. Hence, in the phase prior to the *subahdarship* of Shah Shuja, a general disorder characterized the entire province of Bengal. Shah Shuja of course, tried to improve the situation. But though, he himself enjoyed a long vice-royalty, the condition in Orissa did not change much and between 1642 and 1658 governors replaced one another in quick succession in the province.\(^{60}\) The frequent changes in the governorship created many problems. First, the frequent recall presumably affected the efficiency in administration, secondly it also affected directly the trade as after each change of governorship.

However, it is true that Bengal, during the second half of the seventeenth century was free from many major rebellion like the Sikh, Jat and Satnami rebellions in the north or Martha rebellion in the Deccan and western India. The exception was the rebellion of Sobha Singh at the close of the seventeenth century.

In many cases, when the Europeans felt that the tenure of office of a particular Mughal officer would injure their interest, they tried to interfere in the court politics and remove the man from office. For example, after their relations with Muhammad Yusuf, the *faujdar* of Balasore and Pipli became strained the Dutch Company persuaded the *Nawab* of Orissa to dismiss him from both these posts. In fact, the order was also practically carried out as he was dismissed from the *faujdari* of Pipli.\(^{61}\) In 1673, similarly, the English pressed *Nawab* Shaista Khan not to send Malik Kasim to Balasore as governor in view of his previous record at Hugli. They did their best to secure the post for Muhammad Raza or Boremul.\(^{62}\)

During the later part of the seventeenth century, we have on record several

\(^{60}\) Ibid., p. 149.


internal rebellions like the rebellion of Bahadur Khan of Hijli.\(^6^3\) Continuous tussle between the local Rajas and *Nawabs* of Orissa or governors of Balasore, and the rebellions of Subha Singh. The condition of eighteenth century, except the forties was comparatively better largely because of the two peaceful administrations by Murshid Quli Khan and his son-in-law Suja-ud-din Muhammad Khan. They had suppressed all lawless elements and provided a peaceful administration in the entire *Subah*. Though the Mughal empire by this time was weakened, the province was becoming more prosperous under two *Nawabs*.

With the death of Aurangzeb in 1707, the dissolution of Mughal empire started and internal intrigues, dissension and party factions in the court of Delhi became the order of the day. Consequently the provincial Governors assumed, enormous power and became practically independent. Murshid Quli Khan – I who was appointed on January 21, 1703 to 1708 and again from 1714 to 1727, by the Mughal ruler as the *subahdar* for Orissa, was foremost in this regard.\(^6^4\) He made his son-in-law Shuja-ud-din Muhammad Khan as his deputy governor of Orissa, and it was separated by him.\(^6^5\) It was after the death of Murshid Quli Khan – II that Shuja-ud-din proclaimed himself the subahdar of Bengal and Orissa in July 1727 and remained in power till 1739. He then appointed his son Taqi Khan as Deputy Governor, the Naib Nizam of Orissa. On his death, Shuja-ud-din appointed his son-in-law Murshid Quli Khan – I, compared to that of his predecessor, his reign was one of peace and tranquillity.

During his tenure as Naib Nazim of Orissa, Alivardi Khan became the Nazim of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa in 1740. But in the pride of his power, Murshid Quli Khan – II refused to recognize his authority. Hence Alivardi with a strong army advanced towards Orissa. Having defeated Murshid Quli Khan – II, he held sway


\(^{65}\) J.N. Pattanaik, *op. cit.*, p. 3.
over Orissa from 1742. But he had return to Bengal soon because of the appearance of the Marathas on the Bengal Orissa border. In the meantime, Raghuji Bhonsla – I of Nagpur, invited by Mir Habib, a friend of Murshid Quli – II sent a large army under Bhaskar Pandit, who made a surprise attack upon Alivardi and ravaged West Bengal. Alivardi Khan managed to drive the Marathas away from Bengal, but the latter retreated across the jungles and fell back upon the province of Orissa and by 1747 it (Orissa) practically came under Maratha’s occupation.

Finally, Orissa slipped off the hands of the rulers at a time when the English power was rapidly growing in Bengal in the north and northern circars in the south. After the battle of Plassey (1757), Wandiwash (1760) and Buxar (1764) the English supremacy in eastern India was firmly established and a sort of cold war for the possession of Orissa soon started between the English and the Marathas which continued till the end of the eighteenth century.

In the reign of Akbar, Orissa was a sub-province; but in the time of Jahangir she was assigned the status of a province. Jahangir perhaps realized the vastness of her resources for which he made her a separate province. Orissa since then was a separate province though her governors or Nazims were the deputy of the Nawab of Bengal. We have also observed that in coastal Orissa, the area extending from Rajahmundry to Ganjam was under the Sultan of Golconda which was governed by the faujdar of Chicacola. This was the most fertile area in the Coromandel.

IV. STATE OF ECONOMY

Unfortunately, we have no quantitative data for a detailed discussion of the economy of Orissa. Bernier, who visited India, in the reign of Aurangzeb, wrote that Bengal was superior to Egypt in resources and the productivity of her soil. Bengal produced rice in such abundance that it supplies not only to the neighbouring subahs

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but other neighbouring kingdoms also, and even to Europe. Bengali is also the principal emporium for saltpetre. The rich exuberance of the country has given rise to a proverb in common use among the Portuguese, English and Dutch, that the kingdom of Bengal had a hundred gates for entrance, but not one for departure. From the days of the great Akbar, European settlements had been given facilities to carry on trade between India and the countries overseas. Since the reign of Shahjahan, the English East India Company was permitted to trade freely in Bengal in return for a fixed Peshkash of Rs. 3,000/-.71

The largest volume of Bengal’s trade was directed towards south-east Asia to the Indonesian Archipelago, Malay peninsula and Burmese and Thai coasts. Muslin and cotton goods of Bengal were in great demand in Acheh and famous throughout Central Asia. Bengal also supplied rice, butter, vegetable oils and saltpetre. On their return merchants took back pepper, spices, tin, elephants and gold. The export commodities were also textiles, silk, opium and foodstuff. The rice is far superior to that of Europe. Foodstuff is very low price. Again Manrique found all the twelve provinces of Bengal “most fertile and fecund” and among these twelve provinces were Hijli, Midnapore and Orissa.

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69 Ibid., pp. 437-440.

70 Peshkash: Tax, Tribute, A Fine or Present to the Ruling Power on Receiving an appointment or assignment of Revenue.

71 EFl, 1655-60, p. 111.


76 Ibid., p. 288.

About the Gingelly coast, Bowrey writes that it was the most delicate country for the use of man . . . . and the land abounding with all necessaries for the sustenance of mankind. 78

He further says this was one of the most fertile lands in the universe. 79

Where they have annually three crops, each yielding a great quantity. 80 And their butter and rice and oyle is for the most part made of mustard seeds and is edible all over India and south-sea over. 81 Hamilton found, Ganjam fruitful in rice and sugar-cane, and they made pretty good sugars both white and brown. 82 The other notable manufactures were bees-wax and iron. 83 The inland areas also manufactured several sorts of cotton clothes of both fine and coarse varieties which were fit for exportation. 84

Apart from different varieties of food stuffs, crops and craftsmanship, special mention should be made about the forest resources of the province. However, Orissa in our period emerged as an important centre in the vast trade network of the Indian Ocean and her economy could not have been unimpressive according to medieval standards.

During medieval period under the Hindus kings, Orissa covered a large region extending from the Triveni Ghat near Hugli to Rajamahendri on the Godavari. During Sailodbhavas, Bhaumakaras and Somavamsis dynasties, the whole kingdom was divided into certain divisions called, Mandalas. Each Mandala was subdivided

78 Bowrey, *op. cit.*, p. 128.
79 Ibid., p. 120.
80 Ibid., p. 128.
82 Ibid.
83 Ibid., p. 209.
84 Ibid., p. 208.
into *visayas*. The lowest administrative unit was *grama* or village.\(^8^5\) During the rule of the Ganga, Gajapati and Bhoi rulers, the names or designation of the territorial units under went changes. During the Hindu rule, the duties of the *Khandadhipati* the Chief of Khanda, enjoyed the power of superintendent and gave directions in the affairs of administration. He was assisted by an officer called *Khandait*. There was another, officer *Bohimul* or the accountant-cum-record keeper who look to the collection of revenue, to keep the account of the produce of the cultivation and to maintain all the particulars of the lands. Besides certain officer, there were common revenue and police officer, great military *jagirdars\(^8^6\)* as hereditary chief servants of the Rajas, Senapati and Rajguru and others were granted extensive unassessed lands as their emoluments.\(^8^7\) The military force of the state depended on the feudal nobility. These feudal nobility, were allowed to enjoy large grants of land from the king in exchange of their service. The priestly class or *purohits* were also enjoying privileges of free lands.

Therefore, during Hindu rule, the land of Orissa was divided into two categories e.g. 'crown lands' and 'military fiefs'. A portion of crown lands was assigned to the officers, servants of the king and the priest of the state, while remaining portion of land was kept under king's direct control. The military chiefs, who paid a certain amount of tribute to the king, in return they enjoyed military fiefs.

In 1568, the Afghans under Sulaiman Karrani of Bengal took over the possession of Orissa. During this period the Afghans were much worried about this security due to the Mughal campaigns. They collect revenue from Orissa for recruiting more soldiers or to make war preparation against the Mughals. Therefore, Afghan brought practically no change in the traditional revenue system, so far prevalent in Orissa. Therefore, during the rule of Afghans, no change was made in


\(^{8^6}\) The jagirdars were styled as Mahanayaks, Khandaits, Bhupatis.

\(^{8^7}\) A. Sterling, *An Account (Geographical, Statistical and Historical) or Orissa*, Cuttack proper, APP, p. 53.
the old administrative and revenue system of Orissa.

In 1593, the Mughal occupation of Orissa, brought significant changes, in the administrative and territorial arrangements. The Mughal government brought under their direct control the crown land. For administrative convenience, the territories under their direct possession was divided into five sarkars viz., Jaleswar, Bhadrak, Katak, Kalinga Dandapat and Rajamahendra. This region was under the direct control of the Mughals. The revenue was collected from the inhabitants of the region directly, it was called mughalbandi area. The rest of Orissa under the native rajas and zamindars who agreed to pay a fixed annual peshkash was named Garajat area. After the conquest of Orissa, the Mughals concentrated their attention to the problem of consolidation and control over the revenue officers of the newly conquered territory. Raja Todar Mal, a reputed financier and the celebrated Diwan of the court of Akbar had already visited Orissa in 1580. He introduced a new system in the field of revenue. He introduced a settlement of the crown lands, based on a measurement and valuation called the taksim jama and tankha ramji. This is known as Todar Mal system.

Tankha rangi was known as Todar Mal’s settlement. Maddox opines that the first regular settlement was begun by Todar Mal in 1582. After the complete conquest or Orissa in 1592 by Raja Man Singh, the settlement got a final shape.

Taksim Jama or Jamma Kamal was the second major settlement made in the year 1722 during the governorship of Murshid Quli Khan who was also known as Jafar Khan. It is also stated that it was known as Jamma Kamal according to the name.

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88 W.W. Hunter, Orissa, Vol. II, p. 71. The Garajat area or tributary states to the Mughal government were bounded on the north by the districts of Midnapur, Purulia and Singhbhum, on the west by the states of Banai, Burma, Radhakhol, Sonepur and Patna on the south by Kalahandi and Ghumsar, on the east by districts of Puri, Cuttack and Balasore.

89 The word Tankha in person ordinarily means assignments.


91 In 1722, Murshid Quli made a fresh settlement of Bengal and Orissa; six northern most sarkars put under two chakas viz., Bandan, Balasore and Hijli were dismembered from Orissa and added to Bengal.
of an officer called as Kamal Mohammad.

So far the assessment is concerned the rate was specified in kauri which was the common currency of Orissa. The loyal and trust worthy zamindars were permitted to collect revenue for the state in their respective zamindari.

During the Hindu rule, the settlement of the areas which were assigned to the ministers, and the servants of the King's court and under Todar Mal's settlement, the assignment was given to the royal house hold or great officers. The owners of the fiefs of the Hindu times, and the garajats of the Mughal period being independent chiefs were perhaps free to enforce their own system of revenue administration.

In the pre-Muslim period, the archaeological and inscriptional records refer to various categories of land. They are corn land, wat land, house plot, cattle tracks, pastureland, jungles, palm groves and sadh bhumi. Nisadhs bhumi, referred as forbidden land and there were burial ground also. Such classification of land, seems to have existed during the Muslim period. In the medieval period, land have been properly measured and assessed for a proper and regular realisation of land revenue.

During Mughal rule in Orissa, land revenue was collected in rupee, kauri as well as in the form of rice. Shortage of currency seems to be one of the important factors which led to revenue being collected in the form of rice. The revenue collection of Orissa depended mainly on the autumn harvest. The collection of revenue in kind had both good and bad sides. The collectors faced difficulties in paying the revenues to the government in cash as the conversion of the crops into rupees meant heavy loss to them. It was also sometimes difficult to sell the corn. The demand of the state was fixed at one-third of the production at all India level.

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93 Abdul Hasan, Muraqat-i-Hassan, pp. 163-164, 182; J. Sarkar, Studies in Mughal India, p. 217. The revenue of Orissa was collected in the form of rice.
After Muslim conquest of Orissa, they demanded close and constant supervision in every aspect of administration. They appointed a body of officials, for the efficiency of the administration, for the collection of revenue. There were various types of revenue officers like chaudhuries, qanungos or talukdars, etc., who were in charge of different fiscal divisions.

The Choudhuri and qamungo performed, two indispensable functions. First, the Choudhuri or Talukdar must pay the government revenue and would be accountable to government for the collection from the villages, within their jurisdiction. Secondly, he would render the cultivator happy and satisfied with his conduct. Besides the revenue collections, they had to exercise police functions for the trial of cases and maintaining peace and order in their jurisdiction.

Under the Mughal rule, the villages were divided into two categories. The first categories with resident cultivator and protected by their hereditary villages heads or Muqaddams. The others were non-resident husbandmen. The whole burden of village land tax was fixed on resident cultivators through the representatives of the village head. The collection which the revenue officer gathered from migratory husbandmen was regarded as his own private property.95

Agriculture played a dominant role in medieval Orissa's economy. Fertile soil of Orissa encouraged production. As Thevenot mentioned Orissa to be a fruitful province.96 In medieval period agriculture depended much on rainfall. According to Abul Fazl the rainy season lasted for eight months in Orissa.97 In 1708, Alexander Hamilton observed that, the river of Cuttack, (Mahanadi) flowing through Orissa increased the fertility of its soil.98

96 Thevenot, Indian Travels, Ed. by S.N. Sen, p. 95.
The natural calamities, political confusion at different periods and agrarian exploitation impeded agricultural production in Orissa. But there were two important factors which encourage the production:

1. extension of area, under cultivation.

2. adequate relief provision for the peasants, seems to have not received much attention in Orissa under Muslim administration. There are references to the grant of taqavi (agricultural loan) to the cultivators, exemptions from payment of revenue in some cases for calamities and grants of seeds to the benefit of the cultivators.99

The peasants of medieval Orissa, enjoyed certain privileges i.e., right to cut woods in forest for fuel, right to fish and to bring uncultivated forest lands under cultivation. Such privileges helped the peasants, to improve their material condition. The necessary materials were available at cheap price, so the peasants could manage within themselves without depending much on the states bounties. However, coastal Orissa in our period emerged as an important centre in the vast trade network of the Indian Ocean and her economy could not have been unimpressive according to the medieval standards.

99 Murshid Quli Khan, the governor of Orissa, (1714-1727) gave taqavi to the poor tenants. Salimullah, *Tarikh-i-Bengal*, pp. 26b, 31a-40b; J. Sarkar, *Studies in Mughal India*, p. 219.