

**Situating the Social and Economic History of Odisha (7th c. CE-
14th c. CE) - A study based on the Epigraphs of Bhaumakaras and
their feudatories**

*A Dissertation Submitted to the University of Hyderabad
in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the award of the degree of*

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in
History
by

Debankita Das

Registration No. 20SHHL02

Supervisor

Prof. Suchandra Ghosh



DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCE
UNIVERSITY OF HYDERABAD
HYDERABAD- 500046 (INDIA)
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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the dissertation entitled “*Situating the Social and Economic History of Odisha (7th c. CE- 10th c. CE) - A study based on the Epigraphs of Bhaumakaras and their feudatories*” submitted by **Debankita Das** bearing Registration No. 20SHHL02 in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of Master of Philosophy in HISTORY is a bonafide work carried out by her under my supervision and guidance.

The thesis has not been submitted previously in part or in full to this or any other University or Institution for the award of any degree or diploma.

Signature of the Supervisor

//Countersigned//

Head of the Department/Centre

Dean of the School

DECLARATION

I, Debankita Das hereby declare that this Dissertation entitled “***Situating the Social and Economic History of Odisha (7th c. CE- 10th c. CE) - A study based on the Epigraphs of Bhaumakaras and their feudatories***”, submitted by me under the guidance and supervision of **Prof. Suchandra Ghosh** is a bonafide research work. I also declare that it has not been submitted previously in part or in full to this University or any other University or Institution for the award of any degree or diploma.

Date: 31/12/2022

Name: Debankita Das

Signature of the Student:

Debankita Das

Reg. No.: 20SHHL02

Contents

Acknowledgements

Chapter 1	1
<i>Introduction</i>	<i>1</i>
Chapter 2	23
<i>Records of the Bhaumakaras: Socio-Economic and Cultural Representation</i>	<i>23</i>
Chapter 3	38
<i>The Feudatories of Bhaumakaras: Tuṅgas and Śvetaka Gaṅgas</i>	<i>38</i>
Chapter 4	76
<i>Bhaumakara Epigraphic Records: Representation of Royal Women</i>	<i>76</i>
Chapter 5	95
<i>Conclusion</i>	<i>95</i>
<u>Bibliography</u>	99

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Foregrounding the Conceptual Context

The studies of the histories of early Indian historical region and on the state formations across the subcontinent have seen many shifts in the scholarship since 1970s. The historiographies brought out many evidences of the interplay of multiple historical forces temporally and spatially. The dissertation began with the understanding that region coming into being does not need to primarily entail intrinsic meaning, rather meaning is given or constructed through material, discursive and cultural practices of representation.¹ B.D. Chattopadhyaya had opined that historically, one should look at the aspects of the region in conjunction with their constant interaction. Those aspects include i) space ii) historical/ cultural processes iii) formation of culture zones/networks.² Taking cue from Chattopadhyaya, B.P. Sahu in his seminal work on early Odisha had situated the region since early historical period on wider contextual interactions between the localities, subregions and the trans-regional as evident from multiple sources and interpretations.³ The fundamental concept of ‘areas of attraction, relative isolation and isolation’ as, Bendapudi Subbarao, contextualised, it was described in the manner of the development of the material culture in Indian subcontinent as one of the horizontal expansions of the higher cultures at different historical junctures.⁴ From this concept, the idea of centre and periphery developed which was questioned by historians like Hermann Kulke in his works.

¹ Shonaleeka Kaul, *The Making of Early Kashmir: Landscape and Identity in the Rajatarangini*. Oxford University Press, 2018, p.5.

² B.D. Chattopadhyaya had discussed these in his book, *The Concept of Bharatavarsha and Other Essays*, Permanent Black, New Delhi, 2017, p.34.

³ Bhairabi Prasad Sahu, *The Making of Regions in Indian History: Society, State and Identity in Premodern Odisha*, Primus Books, 2020, p. xii.

⁴ Bendapudi Subbarao, *The Personality of India: Pre and Proto-Historic Foundation of India and Pakistan*, M.S. University Archaeology Series No. 3, Faculty of Arts, Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda, Baroda, 1958, pp. 85-141.

Moving from the epicentric approach of ‘centre-periphery’ and looking into the diversities at multiple levels of regional formation, Chattopadhyaya and Sahu’s works on delineating cultural transactions and looking into varied patterns of networks through time, space and a form of space-time, which further refers to the trans-regional and trans-local linkages, movements and connections studied over a longer period of time, seeking continuities and changes set an imperative ground for the current study.

Consequently, this dissertation seeks to query on the inscriptional source that could provide lens on the specific regional constituents of early medieval Odisha and to examine whether historically subregional developments could emerge over the current period of the study (7th c. CE-10th c. CE). While seeking multivariate questions of regional history on the contextual setting, the use of inscriptions, specifically the land grant charters, clearly points out that the undertaken study has its own biases. There is of course a pattern of reiterating the wider narrative of the historiography as an established idea or the fact but the analysis is an important deviating marker of conducting the research.

Like the other regions, Odisha has a rich historiography of being studied as historic-cultural region. In terms of chronology and trajectory, the scholarship has shown the unique specificities in the shared cultural space of early Odisha. One might argue that the forging of the unique linguistic identity and use of terms *Odiśhā*, *Odiā*, *Odarāṣṭra*, *Oḍradeśa* and *Odiśhārājya* emerged only during the 9th-12th centuries CE and kept on blossoming till 15th-16th centuries CE.⁵ In this context, it is important to point out that the present-day Odisha does not necessarily coincide with the historical terms and boundaries. Geographically, Odisha is located on the eastern coast of India. It is demarcated by the states of West Bengal on its northeast, Jharkhand on the north and Chhattisgarh on the west, Andhra Pradesh on the south and Bay of Bengal on the east. Odisha can be morphologically divided into five parts: the coastal plains, the middle mountainous country, the rolling upland, the river valleys, and the

⁵ Dilip Kumar Ganguly, *Historical Geography and Dynastic History of Orissa up to the Rise of the Imperial Gangas*, Punthi Pustak Calcutta, 1975, pp. 4-6.

subdued plateaus.⁶ However, the earliest manifestation of the identity of Odisha can be traced to early Kalinga.⁷ Although Kalinga by no stretch coincided with the administrative space of today's Odisha, it was related to the coastal strip extending from the Puri-Cuttack area to the Ganjam-Srikakulam region.⁸ Further, the historical names Trikalīṅga, Tosala, Utkala and Dakṣiṇa Kośala during the early medieval period emerged from change coming from within local societies that correspond with the idea of formation of region in Odisha and the entire east coast.⁹ Thus, it can be discerned that the varied historical experiences and broad networks with other contemporary regional societies and state societies, such as those in present day Andhra, Chhattisgarh, Bengal and beyond, went into the forging of the region.

However, as this study would show, patterns of forging cultural terms and features could be found in the earliest of inscriptional evidence of early medieval period and scattered evidences from the early historical period in the form of literary texts, material cultures and visual representations. To reconstruct the history of early cultural patterns or specifically transition to agriculture, the emergence of a stratified society and institutionalised state authority, historians have investigated several archaeological and epigraphic materials.

Historiographical Issues

It can be discerned by now that the theme of regional state formation needs to be explored, particularly since the dominant historiography on early medieval India has highlighted decentralisation and fragmentation in the post-Gupta period. The idea of fragmentation-decentralisation and segmentation began to be countered from the 1980s onwards by historians with several dissimilar approaches. B.D. Chattopadhyaya and Hermann Kulke disagreed with

⁶ Ibid, p. 10.

⁷ Ibid., pp. 11-12.

⁸ Bhairabi Prasad Sahu, *The Making of Regions in Indian History: Society, State and Identity in Premodern Odisha*, Primus Books, 2020, p. 30.

⁹ Dilip Kumar Ganguly, *Historical Geography and Dynastic History of Orissa up to the Rise of the Imperial Gangas*, Punthi Pustak Calcutta, 1975, p.15.

the Marxist formulation and saw the ‘early medieval’ period as an era of local level of state formation, to explain the multiple centres of powers. According to Chattopadhyaya and Kulke the acceleration in the process of local level state formation was not a result of the breakup of large states but due to certain changes that came from the locality level itself which resulted in the proliferation of agriculture, segregation of the local society, and the rise of the local society.¹⁰ Chattopadhyaya suggested that the multiplicity of political centres (foci) in early medieval India reflected the gradual expansion of state society and agrarian settlement into both uncultivable areas and inhabited lands. However, it is also vital to consider the forceful expansion in the inhabited lands by monopolising through taxation. It is deducible that neither of the two models, feudal and the segmentary explained how local subordinate political powers were integrated into the state system, as Chattopadhyaya stated. The spread of the state society and incorporation of autochthonous people were two of the major patterns that led to the formation of regional societies which Chattopadhyaya identified as the distinctive nature of the early medieval period. And this distinctive pattern entails the horizontal spread of rural agrarian settlement, spread of the dominant ideology of social order based on *varṇa* division, appropriation of local cults, rituals, and sacred centres. Thus, changes came from within the local level society. As the changes came from the local level of the society it resulted in the proliferation of agriculture, segregation in the local society, and the rise of the local state.¹¹

Ranabir Chakravarti has added that the ongoing state formation replaced simpler societies as it gradually expanded. The process of the horizontal spread of the state society was manifested in the construction of numerous structural and royal or administrative legal orders of the transfer of revenue-free landed property to the spiritual forces of the society. The unprecedented agrarian expansion, largely as a result of land grants to *brāhmaṇas* in unsettled and non-arable tracts, considerable peasantisation of society, and the penetration of the *varṇa-jāti* system and immense popularity of *bhakti* devotional cults especially Vaiṣṇavism and

¹⁰ Brajadulal Chattopadhyaya, *The Making of Early Medieval India*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 2012, pp. 1-37.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 71.

Śaivism with the agrarian development acted as a catalyst of a resource base for the newly emergent powers.¹²

On the political integration of regional kingdoms, Kulke states that it was a process of inclusion of tribal and local agricultural societies through the incorporation of subordinate rulers (*sāmantas*). He categorically states that the local nuclear area saw developments under the tribal chief; its surrounding peripheral zones were further controlled by subordinates, and beyond these peripheral zones and the nuclear areas there were independent neighbours (*sāmanta*). The term *sāmanta* during the period of early medieval times meant a subordinate position in relation to their overlord who in turn the imperial titles of *mahārājadhirāja* and *paramabhaṭṭaraka*. To be precise, the evolution from ‘king’ (*rāja*) to ‘great king’ (*mahārāja*) and ‘supreme king of great kings’ (*mahārājadhirāja*) is impeccably noticeable.¹³ However, the pattern was complex and it was not every local ruler got evolved into bearing full imperial titles. Kulke labels the entities of growing regional centres as ‘regional imperial kingdoms’ at the time of political unification.¹⁴ He states that the entities hold the manifestations of ‘ritual sovereignty’ as the crucial component of the political process. One can infer the interplay of politico-cultural aspirations in such process.

Burkhard Schnepel and Georg Berkemer presented a new model of ‘little kings’ and ‘little kingdoms’ which have been further studied by applying to the early medieval and medieval kingdoms.¹⁵ Bernard Cohn coined the term ‘little kingdom’ in the context of the 18th century polity in Varanasi/Benares region.¹⁶ The study involves the local ruler of Benares as a “little

¹² Ranabir Chakravarti, *The Pull Towards the Coast: Politics and Polity in India (c. 600-1300 C.E.,)* Presidential Address, Section I: Ancient India, Indian History Congress, 72nd Session, Punjab University, Patiala, 2011, p.4.

¹³ Hermann Kulke, ‘The Integrative Model of State Formation in Early Medieval India: Some Historiographic Remarks’ in B.P. Sahu and Hermann Kulke (eds.), *Interrogating Political Systems: Integrative Process and States in Pre-Modern India*, Manohar Publishers, New Delhi, 2015, pp. 55-80.

¹⁴ Ibid., pp. 81-83.

¹⁵ Ibid., pp.123-187.

¹⁶ Bernard S. Cohn, ‘Political Systems in Eighteenth-Century India: The Benares Region’, *An Anthropologist Among Historians and Other Essays*, 1986, pp. 483-499.

king" who had power but needed legitimacy and honour which he garnered by his association from the imperial level of the Mughal rulers, the 'great king'. The expression 'little' or 'great king' as seen by scholars, did not conform to the geographical extent of territory they possessed respectively. This further got developed as a relational concept where great king and little king are interdependent on each other for exercising their authority. In this two-dimensional administrative process, the great king tried to integrate the little kings within his domain for acquiring support from them which led to the enhancement of the prestige of the king; on the other hand, the little king consolidated his degree of authority and legitimacy in association to the great king. In the present study, I would focus on the interrelationship between the kings and their feudatories and how this contributed to the making of a cultural constituent of a region.

B.P. Sahu in his influential work on looking into regions from a different perspective discussed the emergence of the state using integrative model. The three periodic themes included criticism of the dominant historiography, like the works of R.S. Sharma and his followers, the attempt to understand the early historical and the early medieval period as continuous historical processes emanating from state formation and social changes at the local level and the reconstruction of the early history of Odisha based on the model. He further worked on this model by considering a sub-region as not only a part of a region but also as an entity formed by the influence of neighbouring regions. He opined the ways to improve the theory by shifting the gaze to sub-regions and their interactions with higher levels in the hierarchy of power relations.¹⁷

Sudarshan Seneviratne's conceptual analysis of the process of secondary state formation in the Kalinga-Āndhra of the post-third century BCE shows the political formation as consequent on the autochthonous forces combined with the consequences of political subordination under the Mauryas and the Satavāhanas. Seneviratne essentially replays the influential materialist

¹⁷ Bhairabi Prasad Sahu, *The Changing Gaze: Regions and Constructions of Early India*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 2013, pp.3-40.

scholarship on the *Purāṇas*, according to the most cogent theoretical statement of understanding cultural processes, an acculturative instrument for the imposition of ‘mainstream civilization’ and *brāhmaṇisation* of indigenous societies to facilitate the spread of agriculture.¹⁸

The above-mentioned studies with their focus on regional histories clearly show how those regions witnessed the process of continuous transformation and finally achieved the status of a regional state during the early medieval to medieval phase. In this whole process of transformation from pre state to state level, religion played a crucial role. The king used this tool to acquire legitimisation, which was offered by the ritual specialist, *brāhmaṇas*. This is evident primarily in the form of land grant charters from post-Gupta period with granting of land or gifting way to the *brāhmaṇas* and temples by the royal powers. The process got further momentum by incorporating the local cults into the main pantheon of *brāhmaṇical* religion. This merger of local cults into the main shrines, as some scholars argued, brought the local chiefs into the core area from the periphery and created a new political set up in the final stage of state formation. However, taking a cue from Shonaleeka Kaul’s perspective it is imperative to ask whether the Sanskrit symbols got used in manipulation and assimilative capacity. Kaul’s perspective was based on the terrain of early Kashmir and thereby she investigated the process of state formation there through the lens of ‘consent-to-rule’¹⁹. Mahesh Sharma also worked on the same theoretical perspective for Chamba valley.²⁰ Such idea is not applicable to regional history of Odisha but, one can think about the universal monopolising aspiration of appropriation. However, revisionist historians as much as have cautioned to apply the top-down approach of centre-periphery notion to any region, the mention of hegemonising tendencies in the scholarship we study on acculturative traditions cannot be overlooked. As Arjun Appadurai puts it, they have become gate-keeping concepts and one keeps on applying to every regional

¹⁸ Sudarshan Seneviratne, ‘Kaliṅga and Āndhra: The Process of Secondary State Formation in Early India’, in B.P. Sahu and Hermann Kulke (eds.), *Interrogating Political Systems: Integrative Process and States in Pre-Modern India*, Manohar Publishers, New Delhi, 2015, pp. 173-190.

¹⁹ Shonaleeka Kaul, *The Making of Early Kashmir: Landscape and Identity in the Rajatarangini*, Oxford University Press, 2018, p. 100.

²⁰ My supervisor Prof. Suchandra Ghosh introduced me to the work of Mahesh Sharma for using as a reference in the dissertation.

process, thereby limiting the full potential for considering a complicated compound of local realities.²¹

On the other, in terms of B.D. Chattopadhyaya's argument in his *Studying Early India* that 'changes occur slowly in the historian's craft,'²² I would like to argue that evaluating the source material in new ways is important and there are range of approaches to it. This context in turn raises a subtle critique of the integrative model of state formation which will be discussed subsequently. Prior to that, it is important to mention that B.P. Sahu and Hermann Kulke opined about the integrative model that unmistakably shifted the historian's gaze from the centre to the peripheries, within which the regions, sub-regions and the locality received greater attention.²³ Though it is said that the explanatory model of 'Indian Feudalism' disavowed the inquiry of the subcontinent from a centralized pan-Indian history to the study of regions, it is actually the integrative formulation that explains the relationship between the socio-political, religious and cultural domains most successfully.²⁴ It however has some limitations and problems. Sahu and Kulke's analysis on the state are limited in terms of socio-economic content. It is also difficult to draw out a structure because it seems to be continuously in the making, providing there are tendencies of promoting regionalism while bending towards regions and regional narratives.²⁵ While polity and economy cannot be studied in isolation, I would like to argue that too much cultural reading from the sources limits the possibility of looking into the sources of multiple traditions that produced the former.

²¹ Arjun Appadurai, 'Theory in Anthropology: Centre and Periphery', *Comparative Studies in Society and History* Volume no. 2, 1986, pp. 356-360.

²² B.D. Chattopadhyaya, *Studying Early India*, Permanent Black, Delhi, 2003, p.13.

²³ B.P. Sahu and Hermann Kulke (eds.), *Interrogating Political Systems: Integrative Process and States in Pre-Modern India*, Manohar Publishers, New Delhi, 2015, pp. 31-55.

²⁴ Upinder Singh, (ed.), *Rethinking Early Medieval India*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 2011, p. 11.

²⁵ B.P. Sahu and Hermann Kulke (eds.), *Interrogating Political Systems: Integrative Process and States in Pre-Modern India*, Manohar Publishers, New Delhi, 2015, p.40.

Daud Ali talks about one major drawback of the ‘integrative’ approach to state formation in early South Asian history is its strong dependency on the narrative of ‘regionalism’ as an explanatory framework for polity and state society. He argues that model has established the post-Gupta history not being merely to be approached as fragmentary or disarticulation of political structures, instead, it set the tone to investigate various developments of new historical processes at multiple levels. However, the focus on ‘regionalism’ in the form of looking into identities may not be a sufficient analytical tool to contour the changes at the level of polity.²⁶

Recently, a convincing critique has come from Ranabir Chakravarti in his examination on the inscriptions looking for societal, ideological, and material cultural representations where he has expressed his disagreement with the integrative model of state formation. He firmly opined that the spread of the *varṇa-jāti* ideology, the very core of the *brāhmaṇical* social norm in conjunction with bhakti ideology, has little to offer in terms of integration. *Varṇa-jāti* operates on institutionalization of inequality, the *varṇa* being just an explanatory tool while the real exclusion was exercised in various *jāti* divisions.²⁷ The integrative model which emanates from the *brāhmaṇical* perception of the state and social order helps in learning the history of rulers and the *brāhmaṇas*, but how much it accommodated the lower orders which are mostly from tribal background remains unexamined and hence invites limitations. It is critical to argue what B.D. Chattopadhyaya termed as the ‘state society,’ the societies that started emerging and consolidating as a result of land grant expansion and agrarian settlements directly maintained by the state and administrative structures, Chakravarti’s comments were oriented towards such society. The *brāhmaṇical* model entered the indigenous societies dominated by *varṇa-jāti* system that largely marginalized, thwarted and exploited legally, the problem which is silent in the inscriptional sources. The question of how and in what ways these groups were integrated

²⁶ Daud Ali, ‘Review of Nandini Sinha Kapur’s State Formation in Rajasthan: Mewar during the Seventh-Fifteenth Centuries,’ *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, 48, 2, 2005, p. 343.

²⁷ I am grateful for the opportunity to listen to Prof. Ranabir Chakravarti’s critical views on ‘Integrative Model’ in person during the sessions of 81st Indian History Congress, 2022 held in Chennai from 27th-29th December.

to the expanding state society²⁸ remains to be examined. Chakravarti opines that there were contestations backed by legal motives when the state society tried to appropriate. Nevertheless, the political integration in space in history was a continuous process and that prompted the possibility of using it as a temporally specific concept. It is always important to ask whether the perspective signifies integration as a phenomenon that requires us not to look for who or what integrates. No political dominance could have remained uncontested though.²⁹

On the other hand, a different historiographical perspective of the integration perspective draws closer to the processes at the local and explains the state formation by highlighting the changes from within the regional societies as well as from a network of trans-local linkages. Connected history is the perspective that regions do not come into being or exist in isolation but are entangled in a network of shaping interactions with other regions.³⁰

Sanjay Subrahmanyam's influential concept of 'connected histories' highlights the permeability of networks among regions and local communities above and beyond the well-defined state systems. Though primarily an economic historian, Subrahmanyam questions the excessive thrust on political economy to understand the Indian Ocean.³¹ He sees religion as an important component that stimulates connected histories when a historian's study crosses national and linguistic boundaries, to study the early narratives that were diverse thus implying

²⁸ Ranabir Chakravarti, 'Eloquent Inscriptions on Indic Experiences of State Society, Material Milieu and Religious Complexes: Integration vis-à-vis Appropriation (c. 700-1600 CE)', *The Medieval History Journal*, 21, 1, 2018, pp. 141-160.

²⁹ The thoughts also emerged in discussion with a scholar, Ms. Devdutta Kakati during her M.Phil. The unpublished dissertation is titled "The Emergence of Vanga and Samatāṭa-Harikela: Two Ancient sub-regions in the Bengal Delta (c.400-800 CE), Centre for Historical Studies, School of Social Sciences, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, 2018.

³⁰ Shonaleeka Kaul, *The Making of Early Kashmir: Landscape and Identity in the Rajtarangini*. Oxford University Press, 2018, p.115.

³¹ Sanjay Subrahmanyam, 'Connected Histories: Notes towards a Reconfiguration of Early Modern Eurasia', *Modern Asian Studies*, XXXI.3, 2004, pp. 735-762.

a de-centring of the pre-eminence of trade and political expansion as explanatory tools in the making of the Indian Ocean world.

Following Subrahmanyam's study, Edward Alpers stresses on making connections among cultural, economic, political, religious, and social ideals and practices among disparate peoples in the Indian Ocean zone. His world history approach illuminates local histories in the Indian Ocean arena without deviating from their global contexts.³² Therefore, he offers a greater visibility of the ordinary, non-elite groups in the making of the Indian Ocean world which did not belong in the sources talking acquainted to the elites, the rich and powerful.

In the context of accepting the model of 'integrative polity' as providing an excellent framework for understanding the spread of state society, Ranabir Chakravarti pointed out the enquiry on coasts of the Indian subcontinent as distinct cultural configuration. Since the historians' gaze has been relatively less on the emergence of coastal polity as a vibrant zone of interactions between diverse ethnic, religious and linguistic communities both within and beyond the subcontinent, he attempted to recover the coast to historiographical visibility. Chakravarti is of the view that the political pull towards the coast needs to be seen not in the events of maritime conquests or turning a maritime space into a story of power, but in the control or attempts at control over deltaic and port areas. The question whether and to what extent the coastal areas came within the orbit of this "integrative polity" brought out an in-depth study of the institution of land grants in his work. Interestingly, it impacted coastal areas as it did in the case of inland areas. He is of the view that it is the institution of land grants that helped the emergence of state societies in coastal tracts, whether in the Ganga delta, the Konkan coast and Malabar. The agrarian expansion set the base for the coast as it did for the interior polities. The coastal areas, vital to maritime and riverine communications, responded favourably to these new trends in material and political life. This is particularly evident in the trade, including maritime trade of agricultural and non-agricultural based products. The coastal areas thus, saw an emerging situation that facilitated the rise of local powers in the coasts. The emerging agrarian settlements and the vibrant Indian Ocean trade from the mid-ninth century

³² Edward Alpers, *The Indian Ocean in World History*, Oxford University Publishers, USA, 2014, pp. 29-55.

onwards provided ample scope for the integration of the coast to the mainland. Thus, the coasts were not merely the tracts of trading purposes but emerged as an important relational location.³³

Perspectives on Source and Methodology

The above discussion was necessary in the context of viewing inscriptions as an important source category for this dissertation. This is because in the context of coast, I would like to focus on a dynasty which ruled in the central coast and gradually expanded towards the interior whose major source includes the inscriptions, about which I will discuss in the due course of the chapter.

At the outset, Snigdha Tripathy's studies on Odisha covering immense epigraphic records across dynasties, periods and localities as well as from the territories which once were a part of early Odisha domain and now forms part of modern period's Andhra, Bengal and Chattisgarh administrative divisions, could be discussed.³⁴ Tripathy opines about the importance of epigraphic records in absence of proper textual literary collections required to reconstruct the history of early historical and early medieval Odisha. There is however, also a rich collection of archaeological reports on Odishan early historical and early medieval sites which she did not mention. The collection of the study brings out the epigraphic records and copper plate charters in the form of catalogue. She provides a comprehensive picture of the development of the nature of the records as well as the scripts that were in continuous development till about 18th c. CE. With her seminal works on bringing out the volumes of *Inscriptions of Orissa* (vols. I and II, 1997 and 1999) after following Pt. S.N. Rajguru's *Inscriptions of Orissa* in 1960, Tripathy has opined that the reconstruction of history and

³³ Ranavir Chakravarti, *The Pull Towards the Coast: Politics and Polity in India (c. 600-1300 C.E.,)* Presidential Address, Section I: Ancient India, Indian History Congress, 72nd Session, Punjab University, Patiala, 2011, pp. 40-47.

³⁴ Snigdha Tripathy, 'Introduction' in *Descriptive Topographical Catalogue of Orissan Inscriptions*, Manohar Publishers, New Delhi, 2010, pp. 1-22.

culture of the region has become much accessible considering the overwhelming number of epigraphs. The former volume is the main sourcebook for the study of the current dissertation.

Following this, Subrata Kumar Acharya brought out volume on the same published and newly discovered grants where multiple scholars contributed the analysis from land grant records. From undertaking the study of aspects of provenance of the epigraph found to connecting it to the larger regional identity, the micro-studies on territorial units, the socio-economic resources from the archaeological and numismatic findings, S.K. Acharya could build a coherent narrative around using land grant as a category of study for understanding regional developments.³⁵ At this point, it can be opined that there is an absolute necessity to appreciate the full range and the diversity of the inscriptional materials.

Keeping in mind the dimensions of the inscriptions discovered a range of statistical data in tabular form or making comparative studies is being followed in the emerging research studies. It is important to mention that the records are not examined in isolation but have also been viewed as texts in its contextual settings, thus making the whole process of reading inscriptions belonging to the category of both literary and archaeological sources. For this dissertation, my attempt is to conduct an empirical study of the land grant charters belonging to the period of 7th c. CE- 10th c. CE in its entirety and to find the new readings of regional and subregional dimensions of early medieval Odisha comprehensively.

Historians are of the view that the dominant discourse of Odishan studies revealed vital elements of Oriya identity and culture through its extensive research on the coastal region focusing only in the cult of Jagannāth and the temple city of Puri, as well as the historical Kalinga. Hermann Kulke, H. Von Steitencron and A. Eschmann in the early 80's marked the engagement of Odishan studies almost simultaneously with B.D. Chattopadhyaya's conceptual framework of integrative model. Kulke and Georg Berkemer in a seminal project shows that there has been a clear shift of emphasis to the hinterland and periphery of coastal Orissa with

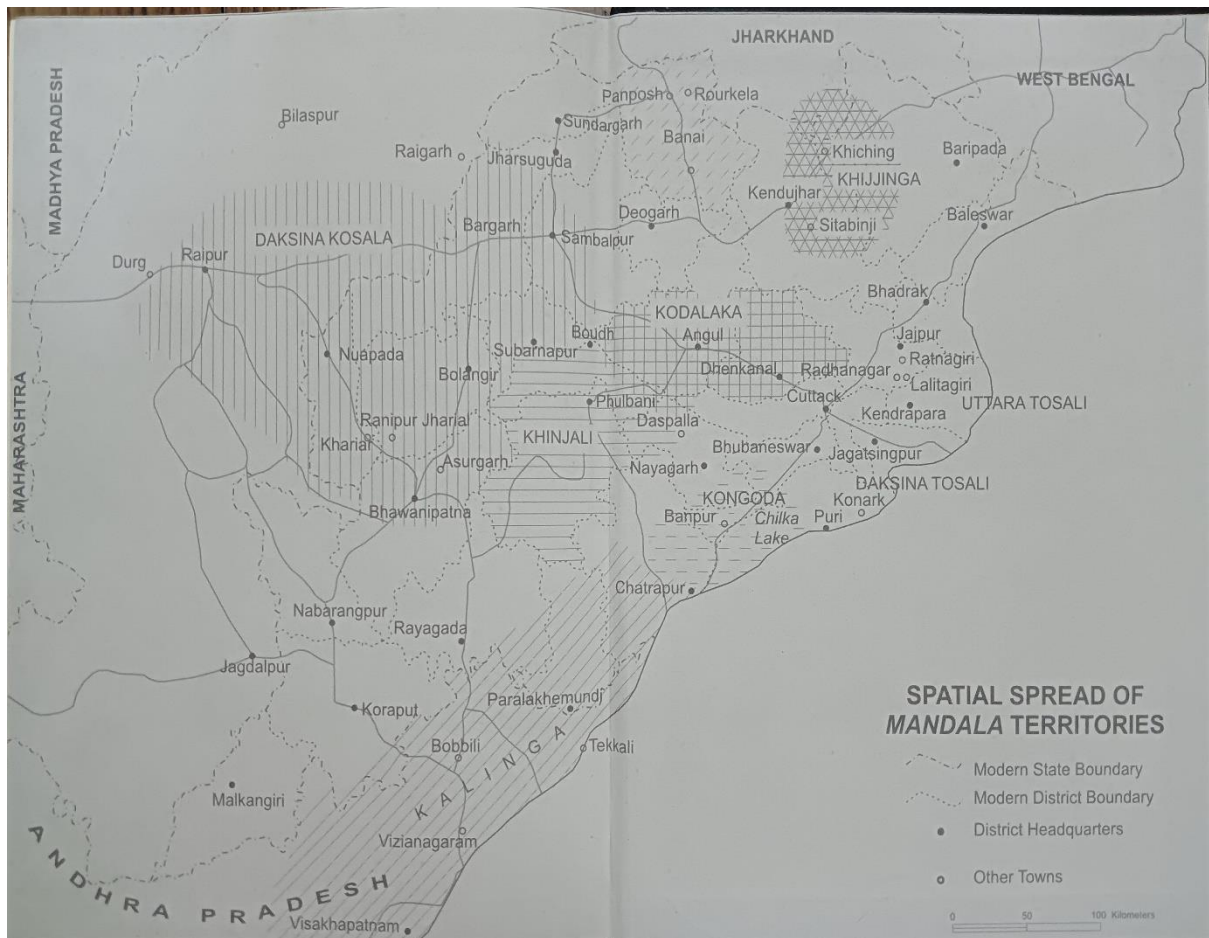
³⁵ Subrata Kumar Acharya (ed.), *Studies on Odishan Epigraphy*, Pratibha Prakashan, Delhi, 2014, pp. 1-217.

tribal and folk traditions of its various local and subregional identities. To understand the multicentric pattern of the great regional tradition of Odisha, Kulke argues that the emergence of local and subregional identities had its roots in early medieval processes of state formation when tribal polities emerged in the periphery of the coastal kingdoms as autonomous *maṇḍala* states. They were not just disruptive factors in the politics of these kingdoms but through processes of adaptation and inclusion became integral part of them, strengthening their coherence and helping to extend their realm.³⁶

Again, the gazing of a specific spatio-temporal activity as central node or peripheral remains arguable. B.P. Sahu talked about the early medieval polities in varied subregions of Odisha such as Kaliṅga, Koṅgoda-*maṇḍala*, Dakṣiṇa and Uttara Tosali, Khiṇjali-*maṇḍala*, Kodālaka-*maṇḍala*, Khijjiṅga-*maṇḍala* among others under the Early Eastern Gaṅgas, Śailodbhavas, Bhaumakaras, Bhañjas of Khiṇjali and Khijjiṅgakota, Somavaṁsis, Later Eastern Gaṅgas and Gajapatis witnessed the changes from within and the making of the region of Odisha today. The reference of rural settlements, the trade routes, developments of markets, towns, temples and port sites, mercantile associations, the connection between the hinterland, interiors and the coastal areas, the congealing of peasant societies, several occupational groups and their shifting terminologies, castes, indigenous belief practices, gods, goddesses; the *brāhmaṇisation* of these cults, the development of important cultural and pilgrimage centres, the constant trans-local and trans regional exchanges are available in the epigraphical, textual, visual and archaeological form attached to the temples, land grants and artefacts in these regions throughout from the early medieval period to late medieval period.³⁷ The varied subregional principalities known as *maṇḍala* could be encountered in epigraphic records of Odisha.

³⁶ Hermann Kulke and Georg Berkemer (eds), *Centres out There? Facets of Subregional Identities in Orissa*, Manohar Publishers, 2011, p. 9.

³⁷ Bhairabi Prasad Sahu, *The Making of Regions in Indian History: Society, State and Identity in Premodern Odisha*, Primus Books, 2020, pp. 12-15.



Map.1.1. The map is showing the early medieval *maṇḍala* territories in Odisha mentioned in the chapter. These are- Kalinga, Kōṅgoda-*maṇḍala*, Dakṣiṇa and Uttara Tosali, Kṣiṇjāli-*maṇḍala*, Kodāḷaka-*maṇḍala*, Khijjiṅga-*maṇḍala*.

Source: From the book of B.P. Sahu, *The Making of Regions in Indian History: Society, State and Identity in Premodern Odisha*, Primus Books, New Delhi, 2020.

Thus, it can be discerned that the study of the region as a historical category comprises several distinct subregions visible in the different historical records at different points in time. The distinction between ‘locality’ and ‘subregions’ as B.D. Chattopadhyaya argued, is hard to define in historical times but the interaction between and the coming together of some localities can be hold as a prerequisite for the formation of the distinctive identity markers of

subregions.³⁸ Moreover, it cannot be ignored that regions form only one stage in the hierarchical continuum of territorial spaces like local, subregional and regional. Thus, any study on region is likely to be linked with subregion and local. But whether the subregions would retain their identity or be subsumed within a region is another question. In case of Odisha, the continued presence of sub-region specific ingredients and their identities did not allow their complete integration with the regions, denoting that, while contributing to the shaping of the region and getting impacted by it, the sub-regions were somewhat also out of it. This can be corroborated with the studies conducted by B.P. Sahu on the subregional differences between Kaliṅga, Utkala and Dakṣiṇa Kośala.³⁹ Even, as he argued, one could visibly see the differences in spoken language, cooking styles, weaving traditions and the preference for marriage networks. This is true considering the multi-layered landscape of Odisha and the pluralities connected with the regional identities is prominent in today's times also.

It is now an established fact in Odishan history's scholarship that the gradual coming together of localities (*janapadas*)⁴⁰ and subregions (*maṇḍalas*) at different historical junctures, leading to interactions, overlaps and intersections and the wider network of cultural transactions with other regional societies in the subcontinent went into shaping Odisha's cultural identity. The entangled identities, mutual adaptations and creation of shared spaces saw multiple evolutions of institutions and state-societies. The movement from the early historical period to early medieval stage across spatial segments away from the littoral happened during the 7th to 10th century CE as Sahu opined. Most of the ruling families such as the Eastern Gaṅgas, Śailodbhavas, Bhaumakaras and the Bhaṇjas of Khiṇjali and Khijjiṅgakota, as he pointed out, had humble local origins.⁴¹ It is interesting to note that despite of having local origins they

³⁸ Brajadulal Chattopadhyaya, 'Space, History and Cultural Process: Some Ideas on the Ingredients of Subregional Identity,' in, *The Concept of Bharatavarsha and other Essays*, Permanent Black, New Delhi, 2017, p.48.

³⁹ Bhairabi Prasad Sahu, *The Making of Regions in Indian History: Society, State and Identity in Premodern Odisha*, Primus Books, 2020, p. 19.

⁴⁰ It is to be noted that, the term *janapadas* acquired different meaning in several historical contexts.

⁴¹ Bhairabi Prasad Sahu, *The Making of Regions in Indian History: Society, State and Identity in Premodern Odisha*, Primus Books, 2020, p. 6.

gradually acquired the status of sub-regional powers having a set of feudatories wielding power under them. These feudatories, though, have not been given much attention in the historiography of Odisha.⁴²

Until now, as discussed there remain certain gaps in the study of sub-regions of Odisha which are not looked at in the context of their feudatories. Thus, for this dissertation, the rationale behind the choice of Bhaumakara dynasty was that they acquired the status of an important sub-regional power in coastal Odisha and ruled at a time when the imperial powers have not taken a firm ground, so there will also be an attempt to see whether the genesis of the rise of imperial power like the Gaṅgas could be traced to the Bhaumakaras. It is a curious question to ask whether the subregional power formulated by the Bhaumakaras and their inscriptions give any clue of imperial ambitions of the rulers to be a regional power? In this dissertation, I have chosen the Bhaumakara dynasty and their two feudatories namely Tuṅgas and Śvetaka Gaṅgas as a case study to comprehend the relationship and the negotiation between a subregional power like the Bhaumakaras and their two feudatories who were located contiguous to the territory. Apart from this, the study of Bhaumakara inscriptions would also help us foreground the subregional historic-cultural specificities with respect to economy and society. A close reading of the inscription of the feudatories on the other hand would help us to raise certain questions relating to the emulation of the local level polities by these subordinate rulers or whether they charted their own way of expressing power through the medium of inscriptions, considering epigraphs were the agencies of patronage and projection of power control and relations.

⁴² An exception to the discussion and the reconstruction of the history of feudatories of early Odishan historiography is the study of B.P. Sahu's research on "Kalinga and Dakṣiṇa Kośala: Understanding Transitions in Early India".

Also, at the outset, I would like to mention that the current study uses the word 'feudatory' in relation to state formation and state society. The term 'feudatory' here, does not refer to the feudal system as R.S. Sharma and D.D. Kosambi described. While I acknowledge the theoretical formulations of 'Indian Feudalism' and 'Segmentary State', my study is based on the conceptual framework of Integrative Polity and its critiques. Here, the feudatories denote different meanings in their own context at various points in early medieval period. It is a broad analytical term and hence approached in their own context in this dissertation.



Map 1.2. The curve on the map is indicating the early medieval territorial sites under the control of the Bhaumakaras from 7th c. CE-10th c. CE based on the provenance of their discovered copper plate charters.

Source: [Odisha District Map, List of Districts in Orissa \(mapsofindia.com\)](http://www.mapsofindia.com)

The Bhaumakaras (736-930 CE) ruled from Jajpur in central coastal Odisha and after combining Koṅgoda and both Uttara and Dakṣiṇa Tosali gradually expanded towards the lower valleys of the river R̥ṣikulyā and Mahānadī, and then moved into the hinterlands. The Bhaumakaras emerged as a larger political institution during this period that set the foundation for the successors to become a regional polity bringing together several subregions. Several *maṇḍala* rulers along with those named above in the river valleys and hilly hinterland of coastal Odisha became a part of the Bhaumakara's *sāmantas*. These lineages included the Śulkis of Kodālaka-*maṇḍala* in the Brāhmaṇi valley (Talcher-Dhenkanal area), the Bhañjas of Khiñjali-

maṇḍala in the Boud valley (Boud-Khondmals), the Śvetaka Gaṅgas of Śvetaka-*maṇḍala*, the Tuṅgas of Yamagartta-*maṇḍala* and the Nandas of Airāvaṭṭa-*maṇḍala* both of whom succeeded the Śulkis.⁴³ It can be sufficed from the epigraphs that most of these local level kingdoms used the Bhauma Era in their land grant charters along with the epithets such as *raṇaka*, *mahāsāmantādhipati* along with the proclamation of their having obtained the privilege of independence. The use of these titles visibly indicates the social and political status of the Bhaumkaras as the powerful overlord.⁴⁴ Hence, these states while acknowledging the lord's political existence and power, also exercised independent power in their domains, largely owing to their local origins.

For the dissertation, the study of land grant records as the subject helped me to situate the social, economic, and political attributes in developing the network of localities and the subregion. Methodologically, after a critical reading of the copper plate charters, I have undertaken the task of organising data through tables which helps in comparative analysis clearly. For a more expansive understanding, there has been a conscious attempting of choosing the two feudatories Tuṅgas and Śvetaka Gaṅgas of the Bhaumakaras out of the latter's other prominent three subordinate ruling houses which have been already studied by the historians in detail.

The land-grant records, as we are aware, participate in the larger vocabulary, delineating a sub-region's history seems much 'actual.' However, the records are only indicative in nature so a comprehensive picture could be possible only in relational study of other sources. This methodology of approaching the sources draws the idea that the inscriptional records with its well-defined contextual settings would map the patterns of connections and differences in examining the formation of the region. Hence, it is important to point out that the present study would read the whole range of records in relation to the sites mentioned and its provenance. This also brings the small and scattered number of records that are otherwise not yet taken in

⁴³ Bhairabi Prasad Sahu, *The Making of Regions in Indian History: Society, State and Identity in Premodern Odisha*, Primus Books, 2020, p. 7.

⁴⁴ Ibid., pp.7-8.

the historiography. At this point, I would like to state that the study would be seen in terms of integrated approach to understand the broader historical phenomena considering material and discursive representations.

In this context, it can be argued that besides the usual cultural transactions in the growing complexities, multiple structures of legitimation and power, as well as hierarchy, implying the accommodation of divergent beliefs, and a dominant pattern of social structures across subregions and regions.⁴⁵ The early medieval *maṇḍala* states also had sub-region-specific social, cultural and economic situation in the region. This provides an important outlook towards the contradictory aspects of centrality and remoteness and thwarts such concept at this juncture. The study of the Bhaumakaras and their feudatories through the lens of inscriptions would reveal the multiple centres of power at play thus strengthening the emerging subregional identities and the diverse state societies which can locate both cultural dynamics of integration and take note of diversities of separate communities.

According to the nature of the period and the source category chosen for the dissertation, the study is based on an interweaving approach of early medieval Odisha's multi-layered, complex and multivariate process. My purpose is to probe on such representational processes across the following three chapters which are outlined below.

- *Chapter 2* titled 'Records of the Bhaumakara: Socio- Economic and Cultural Representations' is concerned with issues of the subregional markers of representations. This would entail focusing on contextual social groups and communities, economic activities as a part of the political formation. The linkage between the expressions of the land grants and temple inscriptions issued by the Bhaumakara rulers and the regional specificities would also be considered. At the same time, there is a need to consider how the formation of inter-regional level spatial formations could be attributed to the local polities who exercised considerably immense power and patronage over a longer period. The widespread nature and pattern of the grants issued by the concerned rulers is also to be examined for delving into the

⁴⁵ Ibid, pp. 11-13.

historical socio-economic cultural nexus along with the society and economy where the Bhaumakaras were based. I argue that a close examination of these materials is necessary to understand the material and cultural practices of representation practised by social forces. To this end, the delineation of local and migrated communities across the eastern coastal territory gives us a glimpse of their specificities and local concerns. And finally, the probing into the nature of the Bhaumakaras and their rule for about three centuries could consider them as a subregional kingdom or not would be examined.

- *Chapter 3* entitled as ‘Feudatories of Bhaumakaras: Tuṅgas and Śvetaka Gaṅgas’ deals with the land grants issued by them under the dated era of the Bhaumas and acknowledging their suzerainty. I link this discussion to the understanding of the evolving concept of *sāmantas* and how the record posits the difference between the expressions of Bhauma inscriptions and the both feudatories’ inscriptions. By looking into the records, the hierarchies between the feudatories in relation to the supra power they were entitled to, is also to be examined. While patronage and power politics are a political activity, they cannot be examined without traces of economic and cultural dimensions. The question of looking into how the local powers could sometimes move back and forth from acknowledging the lord’s pre-eminence power could corroborate the dynamism between the interdependency of the feudatories and the ruler of the region. Such interrogation would also reveal the interrelationship of the power culture that goes into the making of a locality or sub-region.
- The title of the 4th chapter is “Bhaumakara Epigraphic Records: Representations of Royal Women”. As the title indicates, an attempt to raise a concern about historiography where women rulers and their identities were studied as regent or in relation to the presence of any collateral branch in absence of male heir. But as early medieval Odishan land grant records would show, the royal women were independent in terms of adapting and mobilising resources as well as exercising power. The expressions of powerful titles they held were acknowledged as could be seen in the chapter. At the same time, rather than focusing on one identifiable aspect from an individual record, it is important to investigate the social identities in relation with the

other land grants issued by the women rulers of the Bhaumakara dynasty. In the larger scheme of record, this chapter also entails looking into aspects and ways of women rulers wielding power and politics based into the region. Such evidence as would be discussed could also be found in contemporary early medieval Kashmir; deducing that the eastern coast's gendered history remains outside the foray of early medieval historiography.

- *Chapter 5* deals with the 'Conclusion' or concluding remarks of the study undertaken in the dissertation. At this point, I wish to hopefully seek answer of the concerns raised in the previous three chapters and arrive at an understanding of shaping of the sub-region by looking into the socio-economic and cultural aspects emanated from and demanded contextually situated in the sub-region.

Finally, it also needs to be mentioned that every source comes with its own limitations and biases. Hence, the dissertation acknowledges its own limitations in terms of looking into the social and economic processes of the emerging sub-regions, using inscription as a source.

Chapter 2

Records of the Bhaumakaras: Socio-Economic and Cultural Representation

This chapter offers a detailed glimpse on the representational markers and activities of society, economy and culture under the Bhaumakara dynasty in Odisha during 7th c. CE-10th c. CE. The chapter is based on the study of twenty-four copper plate charters issued by the reigning rulers including a temple inscription. Recent researches by Hermann Kulke, B.P. Sahu⁴⁶, Snigdha Tripathy⁴⁷, Umakanta Mishra⁴⁸ among others have attained the sources critically. The present chapter is an aspiration of the ongoing study on societal patterns emerged with the state formation in Uttara and Dakṣiṇa Tosali under the Bhaunakaras. Since the state society under consideration was backed by economic developments and multi-cultural prospects, the landscape of central coastal Odisha is a vital point for study along with its trans-regional networks.

To begin with the transformation in socio-political processes, it is important to note that the territoriality of Jajpur situated in the modern Cuttack district was a pivotal point for the Bhaumakara rulers, since they issued all of their known charters from this region. The unit of Guhadeva-*pāṭaka* or Guheśvara- *pāṭaka* located in the sacred Viraja-*kṣetra* was the strategic place for them to issue the land grants. Viraja-*kṣetra*, the famous pilgrimage centre appears to be appropriated by the Bhaumakaras for political purposes since the origin of the rulers are still a matter of interrogation among the scholars. If one substantiates the pilgrimage centre with the temple remains and other material cultures, historians have stated that, the Bhaumakaras were the proponents of poly-religious ideologies in their subregions along with their adjoining regions. That the rulers were also the followers of Buddhism, Saivism and Vaishnavism is attested from their inscriptions.

⁴⁶ B.P. Sahu and Hermann Kulke (eds.), *Interrogating Political Systems: Integrative Process and States in Pre-Modern India*, Manohar Publishers, New Delhi, 2015, pp. 55-80.

⁴⁷ Snigdha Tripathy, 'Introduction' in *Inscriptions of Orissa, Volume II (Inscriptions of the Bhauma-Karas)*, Indian Council of Historical Research New Delhi and Pratibha Prakashan, Delhi, 2000, pp. 11-13.

⁴⁸ Umakanta Mishra and S.K. Acharya, 'Buddhist and Saiva Acaryas (Preceptors) in Newly Discovered Inscriptions of Early Medieval Odisha', *Pratna-Samiksha, A Journal of Archaeology*, New Series, Volume 7, 2016, pp. 23-35.

Jajpur, known as Virajā-Kṣetra, was imperative in the context of the Bhaumakaras as Kailash Chandra Dash opines that although Virajā was the name of a famous female deity in early period, the real nature of this deity was not known but was known to people since early times as a glorious centre of pilgrimage. According to Dash, that in the early phase before 8th-9th century CE, the Buddhist nature of the deity was well known. She was changed into a full Sakta deity in the later phase of the Bhaumakaras probably after the Brmigration to Jajpur in the reign of Śubhākara.⁴⁹ The records of the early Bhauma Kara rulers reveal that they were followers of Buddhist faith and had assumed Buddhist religious epithets. The Avalokiteshwara image inscription of the time of Subhakara I show that the early Bhauma kings extended royal patronage to the spread of Mahayana Buddhism.⁵⁰ The Neulpur grant ⁵¹ was issued by Subhakara II of Bhaumakara family during the year 30, evidently dated according to the era introduced by the dynasty and which is now generally believed to have started during the year 736-37 CE. The grant is stated to have been issued from Guhadeva pāṭaka and the issuer of the grant, has been endowed with the Buddhist title of *paramasaugata* and *parama tathāgata*. It credits the issuer and his predecessors to have brought into order and established the castes in their proper duties (*sva-dharma-aropita-varṇāśramah*). The main objective of Śubhākara II to issue the grant was for the establishment of a large Brahmanic settlement. It records the grant of a village named Solanapura to a group of 204 *brāhmaṇas* in the division of Uttara Toṣalī.⁵²

An interesting account to mention according to Kailash Chandra Dash who believes that the popular memory forgot the Brahmanical activities of the Bhauma Karas and attributed all their Brahmanical deeds to Somavamshis and kept them alive as the patrons of Tantricism. That was why the Bhauma kings were branded as Bhojas in the Bhakti Bhagavata Mahakavya of Kavidindima Jivadevacharya which means kings of occult arts and magic.⁵³ As Kailash Chandra Dash opines that although Virajā was the name of a famous female deity in early period, the real nature of this deity was not known but was known to people since early times as a glorious centre of pilgrimage. According to Dash, that in the early phase before 8th-9th century CE, the Buddhist nature of the deity was well known. She was changed into a full Sakta

⁴⁹ Kailash Chandra Dash, 'A Traditional Account on Yayati Keshari: Its Formation and Historical Authenticity', IHC Proceedings, 71st Session 2010-11, pp. 164-166.

⁵⁰ *Epigraphia Indica*, Vol 13, p.40 .

⁵¹ Ibid, Vol. 15, pp. 1-8.

⁵² *Epigraphia Indica*, Vol 15.1, p. 1.

⁵³ Kailash Chandra Dash, 'A Traditional Account on Yayati Keshari: Its Formation and Historical Authenticity', IHC Proceedings, 71st Session 2010-11, p.169.

deity in the later phase of the Bhaumakaras probably after the *brahmana* migration to Jajpur in the reign of Śubhākara. The records of the early BhaumaKara rulers reveal that they were followers of Buddhist faith and had assumed Buddhist religious epithets. The Avalokiteshwara image inscription of the time of Śubhākara I show that the early Bhauma kings extended royal patronage to the spread of Mahayana Buddhism.

The Neulpur Grant of Śubhākaradeva issued in the Bhauma Year 30, entitled as *Paramatathagata*, a devout follower of Buddha, issued two villages in favour of two hundred *brahmanas* to settle in the land. The grant also states about several social groups such as *Mahaksapataladhirta*, *Mahaksapatalika* and *Bhogikas*, *Petapalas*. The nature of the grant points towards the settlement under the state society with several communities attached to the administrative positions and execution of the charter as well as the undifferentiated space-making with the presence of learned Brahmins. This denotes that the rural societies granted under this charter were getting consolidated in terms of sharp social inequalities and castes.

The Terundia Plate of Subhakaradeva⁵⁴ on 100th year of the Bhauma rule talks about donating Taramandapa-grama to the brahmana donees with *tantuvaya* (weavers), *gokuta* (herdsmen), *saundika* (distillers) along with *kheta* (hamlet), *ghatta* (harbour), *naditara-sthana* (ferries). The village seems to be associated with the cult of Buddhism further attested by the reigning ruler's usage of *Paramasaugata* title. Further, the association and granting of the social communities who were the part of generating economic resources formed part of the village settlements. Such type of grant was emulated in all the later inscriptions of the Bhaumakara dynasty by the rulers.

The Hindol Plate of the same ruler in year 103⁵⁵, is important to understand the socio-political transformations accentuating power hierarchy in the sense that it reveals a crucial information about the indigenous tribe of Pulindas. The grant of village was given on the request of Pulindaraja who constructed the temple of Pulindeśvara to lord Vaidyanātha along with ritualistic materials. The temple land in turn provided rent of four *panas* of metallic money and

⁵⁴ *EI* 28, 1949-50, pp. 211-16.

⁵⁵ Snigdha Tripathy, *op.cit.* pp. 125-30.

adhakas of husked rice on everyday basis. The evidence of Pulindarāja could be found in the Śailodbhava records who traced the lineage to a local influential chief in the Koṅgoda-*mandala* in Dakṣiṇa Tosali region of Odisha. The tribal chief and the temple at this point seems to be appropriated within the sub-regional power of the Bhaumakaras suggesting the indigenous ruler lost his consolidated power and to seek honour and legitimation, the request was made. The description of the taxed land also further denotes that the reigning ruler imposed a considerable charge for the maintenance of the temple.

The Talcher Plate of Subhakara ⁵⁶in the year 145, states about the reigning ruler's succession as one of the highest attainments because it seems during his reign there was turmoil in the Tosali region. The ritual royalty of the reigning ruler is an indication of the allegiance and foremost support from the *samanta* rulers and the subjects. The charters also provide a glimpse of the description of the boundaries of the gift village indicating the development of settlement as an inland or hinterland because the charter granted the land along with ferries and harbours.

Some another Talcher Plates of Sivakaradeva in the year 149 talks about granting lands and villages to the Jayasrama- *vihāra* and Buddha Bhattaraka on the request of his subordinate Tunga ruler Vinītatunga. The vihara was also endowed with ritual offerings. The presence of monks in the viharas attests to the institutionalised structure of acquiring legitimation and prestige for the feudatory ruler and the reigning ruler respectively. The charters are also the site of locating non-royal personas that were associated with the administrative purposes of recording the inscriptions. Further, the extensive description of the gift villages throws light on the emerging proto-Odia influence in the written word for the inscriptions. The local jota or water reservoirs were mentioned as a part of the temple land points towards the easy availability of water resources in the region and easy access for the *vihāra* daily quotidian purposes. There are also descriptions of artificial reservoirs denoting several irrigational activities sponsored by the state in conjunction with agrarian settlements.

Similarly, the Hamsesvara temple inscriptions built by the queen Madhavadevi of one of the earliest Bhauma rulers Subharakaradeva I in the Jajpur district talks of construction of vapi or well in the temple vicinity. The temple was dedicated to Siva and named Madhavesvara after

⁵⁶ Snigdha Tripathy, *op.cit.* pp. 135-39.

the queen's name. The grant also acknowledged the presence of *vanik* or trader which is imperative in the context of the temple. In this context, it is to be stated that the trader was associated with the temple market or *hatta* in the emerging town that developed in the area as a result of the socio-cultural activities. The temple garnered many affluent resources and the trader must have participated in the transactional process of agro based and agro based crafts. Moreover, considering the strategic pilgrimage centre the temple was situated in, it could be provided many traders a base for their markets and trading activities about which the inscription is conspicuously silent.

The market and towns were also a space emerging under the state society providing impetus for the artisans and peasants apart from the merchants and traders. Even though the epigraphs are silent about the inter-regional trading activities and trans-regional ones during the time of Bhaumakaras, the important presence of a socio-economic group gleaned from the charters could be taken into consideration. The presence of *saundikas* or distillers ubiquitously mentioned in all the donated charters granted along with the land is an important feature because they could not be found in other areas of Odishan inscriptions apart from the central coastal and southern coastal region. Such mobility of groups is absent even in the coastal regions of Bengal. Hence, it can be articulated that the coastal areas under the Bhaumakaras is replete with palm trees and state seemed to have participated in the liquor production by generating them into revenue. This could be in the form distribution of local wine, an important characteristic of the coastal region. Scholars have stated that drinking wine was an elite activity associated with the court but the nature of the topography and the settlements that emerged through agrarian expansion also points towards the local consumption of palm toddy or wine. Some of the literary texts also point out about the process of distillation in the coastal areas.⁵⁷ It is also imperative to consider that the traders would have involved themselves in exchange of the local production of wine in the region since the trans-regional evidence in this context is absent. Interestingly, a charter of Ranaka Vinitatunga belonging to the Tunga family of rulers emulated his Talcher Plates by mentioning the presence of *saundikas* in the Daksina Tosali region of the Bhaumakaras.

⁵⁷ D.N. Jha, (ed.,) *Drink of Immortality: Essays on Distillation and Alcohol Use in Ancient India*, Manohar Publishers, New Delhi, 2020, p. 171.

This brings me to another discussion of the various professional groups and peasant societies dotting the early medieval *mandalas* of Odisha. The changing societal patterns with inequalities accentuated by the settlement of the *brahmanas* and the appropriation of the local cults gradually transformed the distribution of economic resources too. Land grants show that the situation somewhat became quite tenuous since the non-royal social communities were allowed to pay additional taxes and there was continuous shifting of their bases. However, the commercialisation of the coastal areas provided impetus for the rural agrarian settlements to participate in the larger vocabulary of economic transactions where transformation of ideas also happened. This is clearly pointing towards the porous nature of the littoral society that is otherwise different in terms of inland and hinterland areas. This is one of the significant reasons why the studies of sub regions are important in order to understand the making of regions. B.P. Sahu opined that the varied levels of socio-economic organisations created differentiation in the peasantisation of society and these differences were felt differently in the coastal and inland areas.⁵⁸ The Dhenkenal Grant of Tribhuvanamahadevi I in the year 160 talks about the presence of lower order of a person who heated the charter and affixed the seal named Virasena belonging to the *jati* of the communities bearing uncleaned water or malina-amba-vahu.⁵⁹ The community could be associated with the local settlement who would have involved in the cleaning of the uncleaned water. It is important to consider because this shows the varied occupational status of the lower orders of the society for the state structure. The presence of the identity of the heater of the charter in this context is vital considering his aspiration towards mobility in the stratified society.

The other professional groups sometimes also included the administrative officers of the court and even learned in script in order to write the records. The land grants that were donated were usually addressed to *kutumbins*, *bhojaka*, *bhogins*, *samantas*, *lekhaka*, *mahamattara*, *kutakolasa*, *visayapati*, *kumaramatyas*, *uparikas* among others. The possibility of them being integrated to the administrative machinery both locally and trans-locally cannot be ignored. From the records, the migration of these professional groups could also be noted. Comparable

⁵⁸ B.P. Sahu, *The Making of Regions in Indian History: State, Society and Identity in Premodern Odisha*, Primus Books, New Delhi, 2020, p. 34.

⁵⁹ Snigdha Tripathy, *op.cit.*, pp. 167-172.

evidences from the other inscriptions would reveal interesting anecdotes of the power relations of these groups and access to resources. There was of course noticeable social disparity in among them which is a matter of consideration in the study of state society and regional formation.

On the other, the inscriptions issued by the female rulers in succession to the male rulers of the Bhaumakara dynasty in both the Tosalis provide with gleanings on many important facets of socio-economic and administrative structures. That the women rulers also maintained their subregional position with imposition of heavy taxes, stratifying society as a result of *brāhmaṇa* settlements and inclusion of different local level rulers. The attributes concerned with the female rulers would be discussed in the fourth chapter of this dissertation in detail.

Thus, it is probable that the sovereign status of the Bhauma Karas is proved by the assumption of full imperial titles borne by them and the introduction of the era of their own. From the earliest known copper plate charter, i.e., of Śivakara II till the last ruler of the dynasty i.e., of Dharmamahadevi, all the ruling members had borne the sovereign titles of *paramabhattachāraka*, (*paramabhattachārīka*, in the case of a female ruler), *mahārājadhiraja* and *parameśvara* (*parameśvari* in the case of female ruler).

To further get a clearer picture of socio-economic and cultural representations, an overview look at the tabular data of the Bhaumakara land grant records would be fruitful.

S. No.	1	2	3	4	5	6
Details of the Plates	Haṁseśvara Temple Inscription of the Time of the Bhaumakara Dynasty	Chaurasi Grant of Śivakara	Neulpur Plate of Śubhākaradeva	Dhauli Cave Inscription of Śāntikara	Gaṇeśagumpha Inscription of the Time of Śāntikara	Terundia Plate of Śubhākara
Provenance of the Inscription	Jajpur, Cuttack District	Chaurasi, Puri District	Darpan, Cuttack District	Dhauli hill near Bhubaneswar, Puri District	Gaṇeśagumpha (cave) in the Khandagiri hill at Bhubaneswar	Terundia, Puri District

					ar, Puri District	
Date of the Issuance	Not Dated but roughly may be assigned to the third or fourth quarter of the 7 th century	Year 12, the 12 th day of the bright fortnight of the month of Kārtikka	Year 30, the 13 th day of the dark fortnight of the month of Mārgaśira	Year 93	Not Dated (latter half of the eighth and the first half of the ninth century CE)	Year 100, the 5 th (?) day of the bright fortnight of the month of Vaiśakha.
Nature of the script	Eastern variety of North Indian alphabet of about 8 th c. CE	Eastern variety of North Indian alphabet of about 9 th -10 th c. CE	Eastern variety of North Indian alphabet of about 8 th -9 th c. CE	Eastern variety of North Indian alphabet of about 9 th c. CE	Eastern variety of North Indian alphabet of about 9 th c. CE	Eastern variety of North Indian alphabet of about 9 th c. CE
Donor	Śubhākara I's queen Mādhavad evī	Śri-Śivakaradeva (multiple royal titles)	Śri-Śubhākaraśraddhadeva (Paramasaugata, the devout worshipper of the Sugata or Buddha and Mahārāja)	Under the reign of Śri-Śāntikaradeva	Under the reign of Śri-Śāntikaradeva	Paramasaugata Śubhākara II (multiple royal titles) at the request of the queen (rājñī) Nṛṇṇā. The king's mother belonged to the family of Bhavāna-vamśa
Donee		Jāllubhaṭṭa of Kātyāyana gotra and three pravara and Rigveda carāṇa	Names of two hundred Brāhmaṇas belonging to differed gotras and carāṇas and well versed in the four Vedas			6 BhaṭṭaBrāhmaṇas of Taramaṇḍapa grāma belonging to Bhāradvāja gotra, Kāṇva śākhā, Vājasaneyya carāṇa of the Yajurveda
Topography and the place of issuance	temple made at the top of Udaygiri hill for god Bhava (Śiva) and named as Madhaveśvara	Guhadevapāṭīkā (the victorious camp)	Guhadevapāṭakā (the victorious camp)	Caves of the hill	Cave on the Khandagiri hill	Guhadevapāṭakā (the victorious camp)
Names and identities of officials and others	Acārya (pontiff), Śrīman-mahābhāgi-vaṇik	Writer-Harivardhana, the brazier (taṭṭhakāra) who is a resident of Śri-Virajā (kṣetra)	The dūtaka of this charter was Samudradatta, a Mahākṣapaṭaladhikṛta. Written by the Mahākṣapaṭalika and the Bhogika named	Made by Bhaṭṭa Loyomaka (a Brāhmaṇa) and Bhīmaṭa, the son of Ijyā and	The physician Bhīmaṭa, the son of Ijyā and the physician (bhiṣak) Nannaṭa	Dutaka-Taradatta, the Mahākṣapaṭaladhikṛta, Writer-Ānandanāga, the bhogin and Mahākṣapaṭalika,

			Brahmadatta, heated by the Peṭṭāpāla Nārāyaṇa and Eḍadatta as the brazier (taṭṭhakāra)	the physician (vaidya) Nannaṭa (inhabitants of Virajā)	(inhabitants of Virajā)	Heater of the plate-Nārāyaṇakara, the Peḍāpāla Engraver-Aghāka, the Taṭṭhakāra and son of Mallu
Names of the village/land		Village Vuvraḍā situated in the district (viṣaya) of Antardra	Village Parvatadroni-Komparāka and Daṇḍāniyoka situated in the district (viṣaya) Pāncāla and Vubhyudaya. The granted village was renamed as Saloṇapur-ādhivāsa	Resident of Virajā	Residents of Virajā	Village Lavāgaṇḍā in Sulāntarakurbhavisaya
Boundary Markers						
Administrative terms		Mahāsāmantaś, Mahārājas, Rājaputras, Antaraṅgas, Kumārāmātyas, Uparikas, Viṣayapatis, Tadāyuktakas, Dāṇḍapāśikas, Sthānāntarikas, cāṭa, bhāṭa, vallabha of Dakṣiṇa Tosali	Mahāsāmantaś, Mahārājas, Rājaputras, Antaraṅgas, Kumārāmātyas, Uparikas, Viṣayapatis, Tadāyuktakas, Dāṇḍapāśikas, Sthānāntarikas, cāṭa, bhāṭa, vallabha of Uttara Tosali			Mahāsāmantaś, Mahārājas, Rājaputras, Antaraṅgas, Kumārāmātyas, Uparikas, Viṣayapatis, Tadāyuktakas, Dāṇḍapāśikas, Sthānāntarikas, cāṭa, bhāṭa, vallabha of Dakṣiṇa Tosali
Fiscal Terms		Uparikara (additional or unfixed taxes)	Uparikara (additional or unfixed taxes)		Made a vow (yācate) to donate Dhānyaprasṭha (one prasṭha measure of paddy) every year (samvatsarāt-punah)	Uparikara (additional or unfixed taxes)
Other terms/categories	Vāpi (stepped well which	Mahāmahattara, Bṛhadbhogin,	Mahāmahattara, Bṛhadbhogin, Pustapāla			Mahāmahattara, Bṛhadbhogin, Pustapāla

	has pure water), haṭṭa (market place)	Pustakapāla, Kuṭakola in Antarudra visaya	adhikaraṇas of Pāncāla and Vubhyudaya viṣayaor districts			,Kuṭakola and their adhikaranas of Sulāntarakurbha visaya
Nature of the land	The temple has been compared with Śiva's residence on Mount Kailāśa	Bhmi-chidra-pidhana-nyaya which is made free from all obstructions (sarvvapīḍa-varjitā), with uddesa (space above the ground) along with śauṇḍika(vinter), gokuṭa (milkman) and gulmakas(out posts)		Evidence of the activities-Record of the cobstruction of a monastery (matha) called Arghyaka-Varati		Bhmi-chidra-pidhana-nyaya which is made free from all obstructions (sarvvapīḍa-varjitā), with uddesa (space above the ground) along with tantuvāya (weaver) śauṇḍika(vinter), gokuṭa (milkman) as prakṛitikāḥ (artisans) or subjects of the king along with outposts (gulmakas), kheta (hamlet), ghaṭṭa (harbour) and nadītara-sthāna (ferries).
Evidence of activities	Appointment of a person connected with the activities in the temple after the death of the queen	Custom of akṣayanivi			Prayer to the lord Gajāśya (Gaṇeśa) and the assembly of sages (puṇge) called vedi or (that the prosperous reign of Śrī-Śāntikara	The reigning king established the order of varṇāśrama dharma. Custom of akṣayanivī.

S. No.	7	8	9	10	11	12
Details of the Plates	Hindol Plate of Śubhākaradeva	Dharakote Plate of Śubhākaradeva	Talcher Plate of Śubhākara	Talcher Plate of Śivakaradeva: Plate A	Talcher Plate of Śivakaradeva: Plate B	Baud Grant of Tribhuvanamahādevī: Plate A
Provenance of the Inscription	Chitalpur, in the ex-state of Hindol, Dhenkenal District	Balichhai, near Dharakot, Ganjam District	Jagati near Talcher, Dhenkenal District	Jagati near Talcher, Dhenkenal District	Jagati near Talcher, Dhenkenal District	Baud, Baud-Khandamal District
Date of the Issuance	Year 103, the 7th day of the bright fortnight	Year 141, the second day of the dark fortnight of	Year 141, the second day of the dark fortnight of the	Year 149, the second day of the dark fortnight of the	Year 149, the second day of the dark fortnight of the	Year 158, the 7th day of the bright fortnight

	of the month of Śrāvaṇa	the month of Bhadra	month of Bhadra	month of Puṣya or Pauṣa	month of Puṣya or Pauṣa	of the month of Kārttika
Nature of the script	Eastern variety of North Indian alphabet of about 9th c. CE	Eastern variety of North Indian alphabet of about 9th c. CE	Eastern variety of North Indian alphabet of about 9th c. CE	Eastern variety of North Indian alphabet of about 9th c. CE	Eastern variety of North Indian alphabet of about 9th c. CE	Eastern variety of North Indian alphabet of about 9th c. CE
Donor	Śrī-Śubhākaradeva (multiple royal titles), born to the queen Tribhuvanama hādevī (Nāga clan) at the request of Pulindarāja at Yavāgulopātikā. The reigning king was also known as king Śimhadhvaja.	Śrī-Śubhākaradeva (multiple royal titles), born to the queen Tribhuvanama hādevī of Nāgodbhava family.	Śrī (prefixed thrice)-Śubhākaradeva (Multiple royal titles), son of Hirāmahādevī (having multiple royal titles)	Śrī-Śivakaradeva (multiple royal titles), son of Hirāmahādevī daughter of Śrī-Simhamāna, granted the charter at the request of RāṇakaVinītat uṅga	Śrī-Śivakaradeva (multiple royal titles), son of Hirāmahādevī daughter of Śrī-Simhamāna, granted the charter at the request of RāṇakaVinītat uṅga.	The reigning queen Prthvīmahādevī or Tribhuvanamahādevī (holding multiple royal titles), daughter of Kośala, wife of Kusumahāra granted the land at the request of Śaśilekhā of Virāta lineage, Vrāgadi family and queen of Mahāmaṇḍalādhipati Maṅgalakalaśa, in favour of the temple constructed by her named Nānneśvara after her father Śrī-Nānna. The reigning queen in the grant has been named as Sindagaurī.
Donee	One half of the gift village granted in favour of lord Vaidyanātha (Śiva) enshrines in the temple Pulindeśvara made by Pulindarāja. The other half of the village granted for making provisions for the Śaivite ācāryas (teachers).	Names of two Bhaṭṭa Brāhmaṇas, each belonging to their gotra, pravara and 2 anupravaras.	Kulaputraka Sūryapāla, the son of Dāmodarapāla and the grandson of Bāmanapāla	Out of three shares, one share provided to Lord Buddha enshrined in the temple of Bhagavata Buddhabhaṭṭār aka built by Ambubhaṭṭaka.	Out of three shares, one share provided to Lord Buddha enshrined in the temple of Bhagavata Buddhabhaṭṭār aka built by Ambubhaṭṭaka.	To the temple constructed by Śaśilekhā named Nānneśvara.
Topography and the	Guhadevapātikā (the	Guhadevapātikā (the	Guheśvara-pātikā (the	Guheśvara-pātikā (the	Guheśvara-pātikā (the	Guheśvara-pātikā (the

place of issuance	victorious camp)	victorious camp)	victorious camp)	victorious camp).	victorious camp).	victorious camp)
				The grant has been executed by Śivakara at the monastery called Jayaśrama-vihāra.	The grant has been executed by Śivakara at the monastery called Jayaśrama-vihāra.	
Names and identities of officials and others	Dutaka- (name omitted) the Mahākṣapaṭala dhikṛta and Brhadbhogin. Writer- Haravara, the Bhogin and Mahākṣapaṭalika. Heater and keeper of the record- Rāmadeva, the Peḍāpāla. Incisor/Brazier - Vijayaḥva, the Taṭṭhakāra and son of Ānandaḥva.			Dūtaka- Śri-Vicitrādhyā, Mahākṣapaṭala dhikṛta and the Rāṇaka Writer- Devapāka, he Bhogin and Mahākṣapaṭalika. Heater- Devadeva, the Peḍāpālaka or the record keeper Engraver or Brazier- Rabhasavardhana, the Taṭṭhakara, son of Rāmavardhana	Dūtaka- Śri-Vicitrādhyā, Mahākṣapaṭala dhikṛta and the Rāṇaka Writer- Devapāka, he Bhogin and Mahākṣapaṭalika. Heater- Devadeva, the Peḍāpālaka or the record keeper Engraver or Brazier- Rabhasavardhana, the Taṭṭhakara, son of Rāmavardhana	Dūtaka- Rāṇaka Śrīmālloka, the Mahākṣapaṭala dhikṛta. Writer- Śakrasena, Mahākṣapaṭalika and the bhogin. Heater- Devadeva, Peṭakapala Engraver- Harivardhana, son of Rahasavardhana, the Taṭṭhakāra or the brazier.
Names of the village/ land	Village Noḍḍilo in Koṇkavirā viṣaya or district.	Village Gujjaṭā of Jayakāṭaka viṣaya or district.	Village Addhenaḍakona situated in Maḍera viṣaya or district.	Village Kallāṇigrama situated in Pūrvārāstra district or viṣaya	Village Surabhipura situated in the division called Koratti-khaṇḍa of Madhyamakhaṇḍa viṣaya or district.	Village Koṭṭapurā together with another locality called Nāneśvara-tala-pāṭaka situated in the district or viṣaya of Tamālakhāṇḍa
Boundary Markers	Boundary line starts from the east. The full description has been given in line 33-41.		Granted with four boundaries- description not given	Boundary line starts from north-east corner of Trikaṭā- the full description has been given in lines 39-47.	Boundary line starts from north-eastern corner of Tamalā-khaṇḍa- the full description is given in lines 39-48.	Boundary line starts from the east- the description have been given in lines 44-51.
Administrative terms	Mahāsāmantas, Mahārājas, Rājaputras, Antaraṅgas, Kumārāmātyas, Uparikas, Viṣayapatis, Tadāyuktakas,	Mahāsāmantas, Mahārājas, Rājaputras, Antaraṅgas, Kumārāmātyas, Uparikas, Viṣayapatis, Tadāyuktakas,	Mahāsāmantas, Rājaputras, Antaraṅgas, Kumārāmātyas, Uparikas, Viṣayapatis, Tadāyuktakas, Dāṇḍapāśikas,	Mahāsāmantas, Mahārājas, Rājaputras, Antaraṅgas, Kumārāmātyas, Uparikas, Viṣayapatis, Tadāyuktakas,	Mahāsāmantas, Mahārājas, Rājaputras, Antaraṅgas, Kumārāmātyas, Uparikas, Viṣayapatis, Tadāyuktakas,	Mahāsāmantas, Mahārājas, Rājaputras, Antaraṅgas, Kumārāmātyas, Uparikas, Viṣayapatis, Tadāyuktakas,

	Dāṇḍapāśikas, Sthānāntarikas, cāṭa, bhāṭa, vallabha of Uttara Tosali	Dāṇḍapāśikas, Sthānāntarikas , cāṭa, bhāṭa, vallabha categories of Koṇḍoda-maṇḍala situated in Dakṣiṇa Tosali	cāṭa, bhāṭa, vallabha of in Dakṣiṇa Tosālā/ Tosali	Dāṇḍapāśikas, Sthānāntarikas, cāṭa, bhāṭa, vallabha categories situated in Uttara Tosālā/ Tosali	Dāṇḍapāśikas, Sthānāntarikas, cāṭa, bhāṭa, vallabha categories situated in Uttara Tosālā/ Tosali	Dāṇḍapāśikas, Sthānāntarikas, cāṭa, bhāṭa, vallabha categories situated in Uttara Tosālā/ Tosali
Fiscal Terms	Uparikara (additional or unfixed taxes). Six ādhakas of husked rice every day and four paṇas of hiranya to be given to the Dānapati for his service as his salary.	Uparikara (additional or unfixed taxes).	Uparikara (additional or unfixed taxes).	Uparikara (additional or unfixed taxes).	Uparikara (additional or unfixed taxes).	Uparikara (additional or unfixed taxes).
Other terms/ categories	Mahāmahattara , Bṛhadbhogin, Pustakapāla, Kuṭakola and adhikaraṇas in Koṇkavirā viṣaya or district.	Mahāmahattara , Bṛhadbhogin, Pustakapāla, Kuṭakola and their adhikaraṇas in Jayakāṭaka viṣaya or district.	Mahāmahattara , Bṛhadbhogin, their adhikaraṇas in Maḍera viṣaya or district.	Mahāmahattara , Bṛhadbhogin, Pustakapāla, Kuṭakola and their adhikaraṇas in Pūrvarāstra district or viṣaya viṣaya or district.	Mahāmahattara , Bṛhadbhogin, Pustakapāla, Kuṭakola and their adhikaraṇas of Madhyamakhaṇḍa viṣaya or district.	Mahāmahattara , Bṛhadbhogin, Pustakapāla, Kuṭakola and their adhikaraṇas of of Dakṣiṇa-khaṇḍa viṣaya or district within Daṇḍabhukti-maṇḍala.
Nature of the land	Bhmi-chidra-pidhana-nyaya which is made free from all obstructions (sarvvapīḍa-varjitā), with uddesa (space above the ground) along with tantuvāya (weaver) śauṇḍika(vinter), gokuṭa (milkman) as prakṛitikāḥ) or subjects of the king along with gulmakas (outposts), kheṭa(hamlet), ghaṭṭa (harbour) and nadītara-sthāna (ferries).	Bhmi-chidra-pidhana-nyaya which is made free from all obstructions (sarvvapīḍa-varjitā), with uddesa (space above the ground) along with tantuvāya (weaver) śauṇḍika(vinter), gokuṭa (milkman) as prakṛitikāḥ (artisans) or subjects of the king along with gulmakas (outposts), kheṭa(hamlet), ghaṭṭa (harbour) and nadītara-sthāna (ferries).	Bhmi-chidra-pidhana-nyaya with uddesa (space above the ground) along with śauṇḍika (vinter) and prakṛitikāḥ (artisans) or subjects of the king along with gulmakas (outposts) and nadītara-sthāna (ferries).	Bhmi-chidra-pidhana-nyaya which is made free from all obstructions (sarvvapīḍa-varjitā), with uddesa (space above the ground) along with tantuvāya (weaver) śauṇḍika(vinter), gokuṭa (milkman) as prakṛitikāḥ (artisans) or subjects of the king along with gulmakas (outposts), kheṭa(hamlet), ghaṭṭa (harbour) and nadītara-sthāna (ferries).	Bhmi-chidra-pidhana-nyaya which is made free from all obstructions (sarvvapīḍa-varjitā), with uddesa (space above the ground) along with tantuvāya (weaver) śauṇḍika(vinter), gokuṭa (milkman) as prakṛitikāḥ (artisans) or subjects of the king along with gulmakas (outposts), kheṭa(hamlet), ghaṭṭa (harbour) and nadītara-sthāna (ferries).	Bhmi-chidra-pidhana-nyaya which is made free from all obstructions (sarvvapīḍa-varjitā), with uddesa (space above the ground) along with tantuvāya (weaver) śauṇḍika(vinter), gokuṭa (milkman) as prakṛitikāḥ (artisans) or subjects of the king along with gulmakas (outposts) at the kheṭa(hamlet), ghaṭṭa (harbour) and nadītaṭa-sthāna (ferries) at the request of Śāsilekhā.

Evidence of activities	At the temple, offering of ablution to the deity, and sandal-paste, flowers, lamp, incense, bali, caru for the mendicants and for the repair of the dilapidation of the temple. The other half would be required for garments, meals and medicines of the family of Dānapati or the Brāhmaṇas in charge of worship of the deity and also in charge of all functions associated with the royal grant.	Established principle of akṣaya-nīvī.		The gift village divided into three shares. The share to the temple of lord Buddha have been allotted for providing perpetual offering of ablution (snapana), sandal paste (gandha), flowers (puṣpa), incense (dhūpa), lamp (dipa), bali, caru and oblation to lord Buddha along with the maintenance of the servitor of the monastery and for supplying the ten bhikṣus along with their attendants, with garments (chīvara), bowls for offering oblation (piṇḍapātra), bedsteads (śayanāsana) and medicines. The second share is intended for the repair of dilapidation of the temple. The third share is meant for the maintenance of the family of the Dānapati or the person in charge of receiving the royal grant on behalf of the concerned religious establishment or the monastery.	The gift village divided into three shares. The share to the temple of lord Buddha have been allotted for providing perpetual offering of ablution (snapana), sandal paste (gandha), flowers (puṣpa), incense (dhūpa), lamp (dipa), bali, caru and oblation to lord Buddha along with the maintenance of the servitor of the monastery and for supplying the ten bhikṣus (male or female?) along with their attendants, with garments (chīvara), bowls for offering oblation (piṇḍapātra), bedsteads (śayanāsana) and medicines. The second share is intended for the repair of dilapidation of the temple. The third share is meant for the maintenance of the family of the Dānapati or the person in charge of receiving the royal grant on behalf of the concerned religious establishment or the monastery.	The gift village was divided into four shares. One share of the gift village along with pātaka have been granted for perpetual offering of ablution, sandal paste, bali, caru etc. to the deity Umā-Maheśarabhaṭṭā of the temple and for providing satra, garments and medicines etc. to the monks. The second share of the gift was meant for providing food and clothing to the Brāhmaṇas. The third share was for the food and clothing of the mendicants or the pādamūlas and others. The fourth share of the gift was meant for the maintenance of the family of Dānapati or the Brāhmaṇa in charge of all functions connected with the grant. Custom of akṣaya-nīvī
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Chapter 3

The Feudatories of Bhaumakaras: Tuṅgas and Śvetaka Gaṅgas

The theoretical notion of ‘Integrative model of State Formation’ according to B.D. Chattopadhyaya, implies the existence of ‘centres’⁶⁰ and further justifiably added by Hermann Kulke’s attempt to highlight the aspects of ‘centres out there’⁶¹. The strategies of looking into early medieval sources enviably brought out the socio-cultural and political existence of centres for the historians intended to understand the structural foundations of state formation and region making. This chapter seeks to outline the existence of multiple centres almost simultaneously with each other as political institutions that in turn contributed to the contiguous development of the subregional identity discussed in the previous chapter. Kulke masterly explains how a range of *maṇḍala* or *sāmanta* polities surrounded Odisha’s coastal kingdoms throughout the early medieval centuries as ‘the feudatory states’⁶². They retained their own local polities and identities while being subordinates to the dominant coastal Odishan belt kingdoms. However, it is also imperative to note that these *maṇḍala* principalities were spreaded across the region of Odisha, inland and hinterland apart from the coast. Emerging from different spatial zones, these *maṇḍala* polities were continuously shaped and re-shaped in the form of local and trans-local centres along with the sub-regional power. Such patterns depended on the changing political and complex social developments during the early medieval centuries.

The present chapter deals with two such *maṇḍala* polities, namely Tuṅgas and Śvetaka Gaṅgas from different cultural zones in relation to their status as tributary and subordinate states to the sub-regional Bhaumakara dynasty. Tuṅgas of Yamagartta- *maṇḍala* and Śvetaka Gaṅgas of Śvetaka-*maṇḍala* are known from their issued land grant charters and few Bhaumakara records which stand as testimony to their establishment of kingdoms and existence as semi-independent, subordinate and independent even before the rise of the Bhaumakaras of Tosalis.

⁶⁰ B.D. Chattopadhyaya, *The Concept of Bharatavarsha and Other Essays*, Permanent Black, Ranikhet, 2017, p.36.

⁶¹ Hermann Kulke and Georg Berkemer (eds.), *Centres Out There? Facets of Subregional Identities in Orissa*, Manohar Publishers & Distributors, 2011, p. 62.

⁶² Ibid, p. 62.

However, a close look into the copper plate charters when studied in relation to the other inscriptions reveals that the principality of Yamagartta-*maṇḍala* was in the division of Uttara Tosali under the sovereignty of the Bhaumakaras. Snigdha Tripathy mentions the *maṇḍala* comprised the present region of Angul, Talcher and Dhenkenal in the Dhenkenal district.⁶³ The Tuṅga corpus of inscriptions finds its provenance in this region, mostly undated but could be ascertained to the tenth centuries. Śvetaka- *maṇḍala* on the other, formed part of the Dakṣiṇa Tosali province of Bhaumakaras and located in the coastal district of Ganjam.

Tuṅgas

The expression ‘lord of the whole of *Gondramas*’ or *Samasta-Gonḍramādhinātha* as the Tuṅga rulers identified themselves in their issued charters significantly point towards the consolidation of the local space into a kingdom. The epithet could also be found in few inscriptions of the Śulkis, ruling from Kodālaka-*maṇḍala* as one of the other major feudatories of the Bhaumakaras. It is noted elsewhere that the Kodālaka-*maṇḍala* was divided into two political units namely Yamagartta- *maṇḍala* and Airāvaṭṭa- *maṇḍala*.⁶⁴ The argument that the Bhaumakaras drove away the Śulkis from the region and allowed the Tuṅgas and Nandodbhavas in the respective *maṇḍalas* to rule seems somewhat far-fetched. A closer look into the inscriptional evidence would reveal otherwise and would be discussed in the due course of this chapter. B.P. Sahu mentioned about *Gondrama* being derived from the Gond tribe.⁶⁵ This surely entails, as also historians agreed on communities emerging from their own local space and getting organised into local and subregional polities in the early medieval centuries. The historicity of the Gond tribe is important to consider since they constitute as one of the largest tribal groups in modern India spreaded across Chattisgarh, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh and Odisha. D.C. Sircar had associated the term *Gondrama* in the context of its usage

⁶³ Snigdha Tripathy, *Inscriptions of Orissa, Volume II (Inscriptions of the Bhauma-Karas)*, Indian Council of Historical Research & Pratibha Prakashan, New Delhi, 2000, p. 47.

⁶⁴ Pramila Mishra, ‘Chapter 1- Prolegomenon’ in her *ORISSAN EPIGRAPHS (A.D. 350-1100) A STUDY*, a published PhD thesis submitted to Sambalpur University, Orissa, 2015, p. 42. The thesis can be accessed online- <http://hdl.handle.net/10603/284244>.

⁶⁵ B.P. Sahu, ‘From Kingdoms to Transregional States: Exploring the Dynamics of State Formation in Pre-modern Odisha’ in *Studies in History*, Volume 35 (1), 2019, p. 4.

in Odiya dialect as a hill fort.⁶⁶ In this case, if we view the term in the context of its usage by the rulers, we can surely argue that the Tuṅga asserted the power in the mountainous forest tract of the region and expressed themselves as the rulers of the space. This bears the evidence of the changing structures legitimatisation in the polity.

The five inscriptions issued by one of the earliest rulers among the Tuṅga rulers named Gayāḍatuṅga possessed strong bearings of his position as *Mahārāja*, *Samadhigata-Pañcamahāśavda*, *Mahāsāmantadhipati* in the region of *Gondrama*⁶⁷. The expressions clearly bring out his role as the higher ruling authority in his region along with being a subordinate ally of the sovereign power. That he was also in the highest position in the hierarchy of administering other local chiefs, *rājāṇakas*, *sāmantas* is evident both from his titles as well as addressing of his charters. It is possible to argue that during Gayāḍatuṅga's rule, the consolidation of Tuṅga power in the region was perceived as an organised institutional rule by the subjects and his subordinate officials. However, he also enjoyed the autonomy of being a subordinate ally of a sovereign power, the former's support being deemed as imperative for the higher power's administration. Historians have identified the sovereign power of the Tuṅgas being solely exercised by the Bhaumakaras and if we consider the expansion of power of the latter towards the frontiers from their coastal capital⁶⁸, it is discernible that the local settlement polities were transformed into complex societies.

The facets evident in the Gatarei Plate of Gayāḍatuṅga and charters found from Talcher and Rakasabahala area of Dhenkenal-Angul district point towards societal changes according to the political situations of the region. While the former issue describes Gayāḍatuṅga as *paramasaugata*⁶⁹, all the latter ones proclaim him as *paramamāheśvara*⁷⁰. The importance of

⁶⁶ D.C. Sircar, *Indian Epigraphical Glossary*, Motilal Banarsidass Publication, 1966, p. 118.

⁶⁷ S.K. Acharya, *Copper-Plate Inscriptions of Odisha- A Descriptive Catalogue (Circa Fourth Century to Sixteenth Century CE)*, D.K. Printworld (P) Ltd, 2014, pp. 387-393.

⁶⁸ Here, the coastal capital meant the capital of Bhaumakaras, which was Jajpur in present day Cuttack district. Jajpur is also known as *Viraja-kṣetra*, an important pilgrimage centre since early times.

⁶⁹ S.K. Acharya, *Copper-Plate Inscriptions of Odisha- A Descriptive Catalogue (Circa Fourth Century to Sixteenth Century CE)*, D.K. Printworld (P) Ltd, 2014, pp. 387-388.

⁷⁰ *Ibid*, pp. 387-393.

the changing belief system of the Tuṅga ruler could be ascertained to his association with the Bhaumakara royal court; the latter rulers as described in the previous chapter followed their own preferred religious ideology, i.e., both Buddhism and Śaivism. In this context, I would also like to argue that, as per genealogy described in the Talcher Plate of Gayāḍatuṅga, he reclaimed his family identity belonging to a chief Jagattuṅga, from Rohitāgiri with Śāṇḍilya *gotra* and descendant Saloṇatuṅga who happened to be the father of the concerned Tuṅga king.⁷¹ The evidence bearing the Brāhmaṇical perception in identifying one's social status and their mobility ruling from the forest-scape transformed kingdom seems important. S.K. Acharya identified the charter bearing Buddhist title as earlier to that of the other charters of the same ruler.⁷² This can be held as true since the succeeding rulers and their inscriptions also designated them as *paramamāheśvara*. It is perhaps possible to situate these developments as a part of strategic measures by the sovereign powers in the process of integrating powerful local chieftains into the administrative machinery, thus in turn shaping a socio-political identity contributing to the larger process of region making.

The donation of *brahmādeya* and *agrahāra* lands/villages to the learned *brāhmaṇas* either migrating from different regions such as Madhyadeśa⁷³, Varendra-*maṇḍala*⁷⁴, Antarāvādi⁷⁵, Ahicchatra⁷⁶ and other unidentified places residing in Yamagartta-*maṇḍala* were not devoid from collection of taxes. One of the Talcher issues of the reigning king bears evidence of collection of revenue as 4 *palas*⁷⁷ of silver by the king from the donees which was a nominal

⁷¹ Ibid, p. 390.

⁷² Ibid, p. 388. Acharya noted this claim in his footnotes.

⁷³ The mention of Madhyadeśa is replete in early Indian sources whose meaning changed according to the context and socio-religious groups. The location in inscription is unidentified as of now.

⁷⁴ A geographical unit of early medieval Bengal forming part of Pundravardhana. It has been identified with the present-day Malda-Rajshahi district and adjoining areas.

⁷⁵ Antarāvādi or Antarvedī, a place in South Tosala region.

⁷⁶ Ahichhatra forms part of the ancient north Indian kingdom located in present day Uttar Pradesh and could be found in the early Indian sources as well.

⁷⁷ *Pala* denotes measuring weight. D.C. Sircar, *Indian Epigraphical Glossary*, Motilal Banarsidass Publication, 1966, p. 227.

rent (*tr̥ṇodaka*)⁷⁸ for the multiple *brāhmaṇa* donees altogether. Such instance proclaims the superior ownership rights of the donor king and point out towards the intention of issuing charter from the land that was fertile and already had flourishing peasant settlements. In the concerned charter, the silence of the evidence on issuance of land with artisans and other peasantries further attests so. Further, if we visualise such pattern in relation to the service towards the Bhaumakara polity, it can be described as the supra-local economic affirmation and garnering of resource base for the newly formed localised kingdom in Yamagartta-*maṇḍala*. Gayāḍatuṅga's *mahāsāmantādhipati* title could be both symbolic and economically integral for the expansion of the state of the highest monarchical power in the rank. Symbolically, the reigning king was welcomed in the royal court with the 'loud sound' or *pañcamahā-śavda*⁷⁹ which were, according to historians, done for few privileged officials as the highest ritual marker of subordination, in this context Tuṅgas' allegiance to the Bhaumakara rule. A closer view to the features of Gayāḍatuṅga's land grant charters would give a clearer picture.

5 Grants of Gayāḍatuṅga	Donees	Villages Granted	Nature of the Grant/Economic Terms	Administrative and Social Terms
Gatarei Plate issued from Jayapura-kotṭa	Lakṣmaṇastambha, son of Bhaṭṭa Vāsudeva immigrant from Suraḍā of Madhyadeśa	Ṣaḍaśrṅga-grāma in Talachera- <i>viṣaya</i>	Permanent grant with tax exemption with the right to enjoy treasure	Administrative officers- <i>rāja-pād-opajīvins rājanaka, mahāsāmanta, kumāramātya, daṇḍapāśika,</i> Social groups-

⁷⁸ The word denotes a tax or cess. D.C. Sircar, *Indian Epigraphical Glossary*, Motilal Banarsidass Publication, 1966, p. 344.

⁷⁹ Ibid, where D.C. Sircar describes about these five musical sounds that the nobilities and highest-ranking subordinate chiefs were entitled to were horn, conch shell, tabor, kettle-drum and a gong. To see more about the usages of this term in both North and South Indian context, refer to *op.cit.* pp. 230-231.

				<i>vyavahārins, janapadāns.</i> The donor was known in the form of <i>Mahārāja, Paramasaugata samadhigata-pañcamahāśavda, Mahāsamantādhipati</i> and <i>samastagondramādhinātha.</i>
Talcher Plate (No. 1) issued from Jayapura koṭṭa	Bhaṭṭa Bhainadeva hailed from Traividyā or Trivedin family of Śrichātra	Svalpa-kompai in Khemvāi- <i>viṣaya</i>	Same as above	Administrative officers- Same as above. Professional Social Group- <i>jajamāna.</i> Donor- <i>Paramamāheśvara</i> and <i>samadhigatāeṣa-mahāśavda</i> along with the epithets mentioned above
Talcher Plate (No. 2) issued from	1. 1/2 of the share to Bhaṭṭaputra Devaśarman	Vāmāitālo in Tuṅkera- <i>viṣaya</i>	Three shares were divided among three	Administrative officers-

Mahāparvata, the family hailed from Rohitāgiri	immigrant of Mūthāutha <i>bhaṭṭa-grāma</i> in Varendra- <i>maṇḍala</i> and situated in Sāvira <i>bhaṭṭa-grāma</i> in Oḍra- <i>viṣaya</i> . 2. 1/4 th to Bhaṭṭaputra Vāsudeva, immigrant from Sāvasthi or Śrāvastī and situated in Yamagartta- <i>mandala</i> 3. His son, Bhaṭṭaputra Rāmadeva, received one-fourth of the share.	of Yamagartta- <i>maṇḍala</i>	donees as permanent endowment with 4 <i>palas</i> of silver, an annual rent described as nominal (<i>tr̥ṇodaka</i>)	<i>sāmantas</i> , <i>sāmayājīnis</i> Social groups- <i>jana</i> and <i>janapadāns</i> . The ruler was known as <i>Paramamāheśvara</i> and <i>samadhigata-pañcamahāśavda</i>
Asiatic Society's Plate issued from Mahāparvata	11 <i>Brāhmaṇa</i> donees along with their brothers shared the 36 division of the village. The first donee was an immigrant from Ahicchatra and resided in Kūruvā <i>bhaṭṭa-grāma</i> of Oḍra- <i>viṣaya</i> . Refer to (<i>EI</i> ,34, p.100-04)	Torogrāma in Veṇḍuṅga- <i>viṣaya</i> of Yamagartta- <i>maṇḍala</i>	Permanent holding with 9 <i>palas</i> of silver an annual rent, described as nominal or <i>tr̥ṇodaka</i>	Same as above

Rakasabahala Plate issued from Mahāparvata, the family hailed from Rohitāgiri	<i>Paramavaiṣṇava</i> <i>bhaṭṭāraka</i> Trivikrama, Madhusūdana and Vāsudeva, the sons of Govinda and grandsons of Keśava, immigrant from Antaravādī and resided in Yamagartta- <i>maṇḍala</i>	Svalpa- Daṇḍaratikā or Daṇḍarati in Talācera- <i>viṣaya</i> of Yamagartta- <i>maṇḍala</i>	Permanent endowment along with the description of boundaries on two tanks bordering the village granted. The mention of <i>joda/ jora</i> denoting natural streams is significant.	Same as above
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Gayāḍatuṅga's son and successor Vinītatūṅga I did not issue any inscription although he is known only from *Mahārāja* Khaḍgatuṅga's Gatarei Plate⁸⁰. Khaḍgatuṅga's sole charter from Talcher *viṣaya* mentions him as the follower of Buddhism apart from being the chief of the whole of *Gondramas*. The titular epithet of *Paramabhaṭṭāraka* and the absence of any status of *sāmanta* denote his independence institutionally and ideologically. This could be relevant in terms of seeking support for power within the interplay of temporalities and the sacred domains of social ideologies in the *Gondrama* territory. His son and successor Vinītatūṅga II's inscriptions provide direct evidence of the Tuṅga power being in direct subordinate and feudatory relation to the Bhaumakara dynasty.

⁸⁰ S.K. Acharya, 'Gatarei Plate of Khaḍgatuṅga' in *Copper Plate Inscriptions of Odisha: A Descriptive Catalogue (Circa Fourth Century to Sixteenth Century CE)*, D.K. Printworld (P) Ltd. New Delhi, 2014, p. 167-168.

Grant of Khaḍgatuṅga	Donee	Village Granted	Nature of the Grant/Economic Terms
Gatarei Plate issued from Mahāparvata of Yamagartta- <i>maṇḍala</i>	Bhaṭṭaputra Vājjaṭa, son of Cchattaṭa and grandson of Maṅgulā, immigrant from Vicchaṭa of Antarvedī	Ṣaḍaśrṅga-grāma in Talachera- <i>viṣaya</i>	Unspecified charter with description of boundaries of the granted village.

The Bonai Plate of Vinītatuṅga⁸¹ II issued during the Bhauma Year 149 (885 CE) of Śivakaradeva attests the Tuṅga ruler with the feudatory title *Rāṇaka*. That the two Talcher Plates of Bhauma King Śivakaradeva, Year 149⁸² were donated tax free along with permanent ownership to the donees on the request of *Rāṇaka* Vinītatuṅga is significant to understand the relational aspect of the socio-political and economic nature of kingship. Notably, the villages were granted for the lord Buddhabhaṭṭāraka at Jayāśrama-*vihāra*. The integration of Yamagartta-*maṇḍala* to the state of Bhaumakaras and accordance of the status of the chief nobility whose request was granted for the latter's region points out the relevance of the political ascendancy of the Bhaumas during this period and the acceptance of the sovereignty by the chief. This in turn also reveals the making of structural foundations of the kingdom by acknowledging the allegiance of the overlord. Here, it is relevant to mention that Vinītatuṅga II in his charter clearly ascribed himself as the *aṣṭādaśa-gondramādhipati* meaning the lord or

⁸¹ Ibid, 'Bonai Plate of Vinītatuṅga', in *op.cit.*, p. 393.

⁸² Snigdha Tripathy, *Inscriptions of Orissa Volume II (Inscriptions of the Bhauma-Karas)*, ICHR New Delhi and Pratibha Prakashan Delhi, 2000, pp. 140-153.

chief of 18 territorial units of *Gondrama*.⁸³ B.P. Sahu while discussing about the process of state formation between seventh to tenth centuries in the regions otherwise stated as hinterland opined that the socio-economic transformations prompted the local rulers to confirm to pan-Indic traditions of explaining their origins.⁸⁴ In this context, while expression of *aṭavi*, as Sahu had shown, stood for the tribes, the references of existence of Sabaras and Pulindas⁸⁵ in the region further affirm the term *Gondrama*, as an accommodative habitat of multiple indigenous groups. Vinītatūṅga held power over this forest-central territorial unit in the province of Uttara Tosali. The corpus of inscriptions we are looking at does not mention the term *aṭavi* while depicting about the *samasta-gondrama*. The historical geography of *Gondrama* even so clearly depicts its forested stature; the absence of the term *aṭavi* significantly points out that this region already had its prior existence in the form of an organised state before Tuṅgas emerged as the lord of this territory. The inscriptions of the Śulki kingdom, a near contemporary of Tuṅgas, also declared themselves as the *samasta-goṇḍramādhipati*.⁸⁶ Unlike the epigraphic evidence from present day Baghelkhand/Bundelkhand region in Madhya Pradesh, the Khoh Copper Plate of *Mahārāja* Saṁkshobha of the Parivrajaka family belonging to 6th century who governed the Dabhala/Dahala *rājya* as a part of eighteen forest kingdoms (*aṭavika-rājya*), ‘*sa-aṣṭādaśa-rājya-gondrama*’.⁸⁷ As discussed elsewhere in this chapter, the area called *gondrama* was vast in terms of its spatial spread as it is still today. B.D. Chattopadhyaya explained *aṭavi* as a forest-space⁸⁸, the denoted term which is conspicuously absent in the Tuṅga copper plate charters.

Based on these circumstantial evidences, I would like to argue that the negotiations between the political authority of the concerned historical geography and the sovereign monarchical

⁸³ S.K. Acharya, ‘Bonai Plate of Vinītatūṅga’ in *Copper Plate Inscriptions of Odisha: A Descriptive Catalogue (Circa Fourth Century to Sixteenth Century CE)*, D.K. Printworld (P) Ltd, 2014, New Delhi, 2014, p. 394.

⁸⁴ B.P. Sahu, ‘From Kingdoms to Transregional States: Exploring the Dynamics of State Formation in Pre-modern Odisha’ in *Studies in History*, Volume 35 (1), 2019, p. 3.

⁸⁵ Ibid, p. 4.

⁸⁶ Refer to the copper plate charters of the Śulkis in S.K. Acharya, *Copper-Plate Inscriptions of Odisha- A Descriptive Catalogue (Circa Fourth Century to Sixteenth Century CE)*, D.K. Printworld (P) Ltd, 2014, pp. 371-386.

⁸⁷ The concerned epigraphical evidence was introduced to me by my supervisor Prof. Suchnadra Ghosh during discussion on the connection of forest spaces with the state.

⁸⁸ B.D. Chattopadhyaya, *The Concept of Bharatavarsha and Other Essays*, Permanent Black, Ranikhet, 2017, p.66.

power should not be seen through the lens of centre-periphery but rather take into consideration what Kulke calls as the ‘formation of centres out there’⁸⁹. The changing economic and social dimensions as evident in the inscriptions can be discerned to understand the phenomenon.

The Talcher Plates of Śivakaradeva talks about the granting of the village for the maintenance of the temple of Lord Buddha and resources for daily ritual offerings as requested by his chief subordinate official Vinītatunga. Considering they both were the followers of Śaivism as gleaned from their entitlement of *Paramamāheśvara*, the patronage towards Buddhism brings out the relevance of pluralism and social inclusiveness in the emergent polity as an important feature of integration and as a diffusion of power in varied forms, in this case, ideologically and culturally that were felt at multiple levels. Whether this was a strategic selective appropriation on their part would remain unclear due to limitation of substantial evidence. But the enormous resources offered to the monastery indicates the inclination of cordial communications happening in the religious landscape of Odisha. One can also not ignore the establishments of multiple schools of Buddhism during this time in Odisha, the patronage activities of the Bhaumakara rulers towards multiple religions and also that the early rulers of the dynasty were devout followers of Buddhism. On the other hand, in the Yamagartta-*maṇḍala*, Vinītatunga II issued *agrahāra* with the shifting of various artisans and occupational groups unlike his predecessors. This shows that the low-density settlements were coming into formations along with agrarian developments. It needs to be mentioned that the pattern of addressing the transfer of rights to the donees is akin to that of the Bhauma sovereign. This is clearly a sign of emulation on the part of the feudatory or *Rāṇaka* Vinītatunga who had to showcase moral attributes as a part of legitimising process associated with state formation. Further, this is also an indication of the adaptation of strategies and ideas for political and cultural communication and dissemination. The immense declaration of the grant to future *mahāsāmantas*, *sāmantas* and social groups of *sāmaṇyikas* among others points towards the hierarchical position of the donor and what Chattopadhyaya mentioned about the transformation of forest land into settled villages with the various structures of communities,

⁸⁹ Hermann Kulke and Georg Berkemer (eds.), *Centres Out There? Facets of Subregional Identities in Orissa*, Manohar Publishers & Distributors, 2011, p. 62.

are now themselves emerging in the inscriptions⁹⁰. The Khadgaprasada Plate of Vinītatunga (II) issued in the Bhauma Year 161 under the aegis of Bhauma queen Tribhuvanamahādevī I⁹¹ during the reigning period of 845-850 CE mentions the presence of *vaṇika* Duvadāsa as the engraver of the charter. Apart from being the functionary of the *maṇḍala* polity, the *vaṇika* or the trader might have been associated with the rural society and the chief of the territory being dependent on him for revenue mobilisation and growing economic activities. Duvadāsa could have been a local influential person associated with the court of Tuṅga. The entitlement of *Mahārāja* along with being administratively subordinate to the Bhauma rulers for a longer period of time indicates the possibility of Vinītatunga II being the force of consolidating power in the territory of newly formed (*nava-khaṇḍa*) parts of *aṣṭādaśa-gondrama*⁹². That he was not installed as the administrative holder of the Bhaumakaras but, he himself exercised independent autonomy to some extent in the evolutionary process of agrarian localities and state formation can be gleaned from the information provided in the inscriptions.

At this juncture, I would like to glean the implicit evidences both from the Dhenkenal Grant and Talcher Grant discussed above in the light of delineating the term *nava-khaṇḍa*. At the outset, it is understandable that the Bhauma queen Tribhuvanamahādevī I issued her Dhenkenal Grant during her reigning year of 160 while Vinītatunga II's Talcher Grant got issued in the same district during the Bhauma Year 161. Tribhuvanamahādevī in her praise described about the loyalty of her feudatories and allegiance to the court. Vinītatunga II even though he did not mention the name of his paramount lord, the overarching emulative pattern of executing the grant is visible and since the date also clearly suffices. From the socio-economic perspective, the Talcher grant appeared to be a joint grant (*saha-yoga*)⁹³ to be enjoyed by the donees. Under these circumstances, the structural foundation of *nava-khaṇḍa* within the territory of 18 units of *Gondrama* acknowledged in this inscription, if possible, could be viewed in terms of the

⁹⁰ B.D. Chattopadhyaya, *The Concept of Bharatavarsha and Other Essays*, Permanent Black, Ranikhet, 2017, pp. 57-58.

⁹¹ Tribhuvanamahādevī I issued her Dhenkenal grant in the year 160 of Bhauma rule.

⁹² *EI* 38, 1968, pp. 128-131.

⁹³ *Ibid*, pp. 128-131, verse 21-22.

decline of Śulki power at this stage and the formation of new spatial unit to be accommodative of ever-growing stratified social and political structures.

Bhauma queen Daṇḍimahādevī's Santiragrama grant in the year 180 (916 CE) mentions the grant made on the request of the chieftain of Yamagartta-*maṇḍala*, named *Rāṇaka* Apsoradeva. The study of this grant is interesting in the context that the Khadgaprasada plate of Vinītatuṅga in a verse mentions the legend *śri*-Achchharadeva⁹⁴ on which S.K. Acharya citing Srinivasan agreed that Apsoradeva and Achchharadeva were the names of same ruler. Acharya linked Vinītatuṅga as Achchharadeva.⁹⁵ Even though the timeline between the issuance of both the discussed plates is twenty years, the imagery describing *Rāṇaka* Apsoradeva, only as the lord of Yamagartta-*maṇḍala*, who possessed all the virtues of a great man (*sakala-mahāpuruṣa-guṇavat*) in Bhauma inscription confirms that the chieftain was wise and ruled for longer period, and was on the duration of his waning autonomous power but still held on to the Brāhmaṇical perceptions of kingship thus confirming to the ritual privileges with the royal court. Under these circumstances, the mechanism of legitimation seems akin to the Dharmaśāstric ideals.

3 Grants of Vinītatuṅga II whose family hailed from Rohitāsi or Rohitāgiri	Donees	Villages Granted	Nature of the Grant/Economic Terms	Administrative and Social Terms
Bonai Plate issued from Mahāparvata	Bhaṭṭaputra Harasanala, grandson of Kukasa	Koṃjari-grāma in Khemvai- <i>viṣaya</i> of	Permanent and rent free (<i>akarīkṛtya</i>) holding and	Administrative officers- <i>rājanaka</i> , <i>mahāsāmanta</i> ,

⁹⁴ Ibid, p. 127.

⁹⁵ Refer to footnote in S.K. Acharya, *Copper-Plate Inscriptions of Odisha- A Descriptive Catalogue (Circa Fourth Century to Sixteenth Century CE)*, D.K. Printworld (P) Ltd, 2014, pp. 395.

Epithet: <i>Rāṇaka</i>		Yamagartta- <i>maṇḍala</i>	granted with <i>uparikara</i> and <i>uddeśa</i>	<i>kumāramātya</i> , <i>daṇḍapāśika</i> . Social groups- weavers (<i>tantuvāya</i>), herdsmen (<i>gokūṭa</i>), distillers (<i>śaunḍika</i>) and other subjects.
Khadgaprasada Plate issued from Mahāparvata, Bhauma Year 161 Epithet: <i>Mahārāja</i>	Bhaṭṭa Īśāna from Poḍhi and situated at Koṭamala	Khāmbhāra in Lavaṇatāica- khaṇḍa-kṣetra of Yamagartta- <i>maṇḍala</i>	Permanent endowment	Administrative officers- Same as above Social Groups- <i>janapadāns</i> and engraver- <i>Vaṇika</i> Duvadāsa
Talcher Plate issued from Mahāparvata Epithet: <i>Mahārāja</i> , <i>Rāṇaka</i>	1. 1/2 share given to Bhaṭṭaputra Naraka of Bhaṭṭaputra Nararakṣita's family, immigrant from Pundravardhana and resident of Royarā. 2. Other 1/2 given to	Madhhamanḍa- grāma in Yamagartta- <i>maṇḍala</i>	Village was divided into 2 parts and equally shared by the donees as a joint grant. The grant was a permanent endowment.	Administrative officers- Same as Bonai Plate. Donor identified in terms of belonging to the territory he ruled- <i>nava- khaṇḍa aṣṭādaśa- gondrama</i> .

	Lākhādita (Lakṣyāditya), Aṣṭakula's family and immigrant from Mṛthāvastu.			Other markers- <i>kheṭa</i> , <i>ghaṭṭa</i> , <i>nadītara-sthān</i> and <i>gulmakas</i> as a part of the village granted
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Apart from the discussed Tuṅga rulers, Māṇikyatuṅga whose Sanasireipur Plate⁹⁶ is the only dedicated evidence belonging to the Tuṅga family. That he was a devout follower and patron of Pāśupata sect of Śaivism is gleaned from the deification of Māṇikya-bhaṭṭāraka in relation to his name at the request of a Pāśupata teacher Śaṅkhādityadhvaja. The village granted already had *brāhmaṇa* settlements and were local inhabitants (*janapadāns*) of Khimvai-*viṣaya* in the province of Yamagartta-*maṇḍala*. It is interesting to note that while the other Tuṅga rulers issued their copper plate grants from the topography of Mahāparvata⁹⁷, Māṇikyatuṅga did from Jayapura-*koṭṭa*. According to D.C. Sircar, the term *koṭṭa* in South Indian inscriptions refer to a fort or district within a *maṇḍala* or province.⁹⁸ The presence of one *Sandhivigrahika* Āditya in the charter furnishes the ruler's power in adding with the state's apparatus. Interestingly, Māṇikyatuṅga appears to be one of the earlier rulers of the kingdom because Gayāḍatunga's Gatarei Charter was also issued from Jayapura-*koṭṭa*. While the reason behind the former's omission from the genealogical list of the Tuṅga family, since Gayāḍatunga's rule, is unclear, he has been glorified as the 'ornament of the Tuṅga family' (*tuṅga-kula-tilaka*) in his own record⁹⁹. If Jayapura-*koṭṭa* is interpreted as the landscape of swaying capital power and the initial naming of the district, the shift to Mahāparvata, the capital seat, as evident in the charters reveals the enlargement of the core areas from a set of localities. Symbolically, the capital seat

⁹⁶ *El*, 43 (1), 2011, pp. 78-86.

⁹⁷ This could be associated with the worship of lord Śiva symbolically. Refer to footnote in S.K. Acharya, *Copper-Plate Inscriptions of Odisha- A Descriptive Catalogue (Circa Fourth Century to Sixteenth Century CE)*, D.K. Printworld (P) Ltd, 2014, pp. 390.

⁹⁸ D.C. Sircar, *Indian Epigraphical Glossary*, Motilal Banarsidass Publication, 1966, p. 161.

⁹⁹ *El*, 43 (1), 2011, pp. 78-86.

of Mahāparvata could also mean that Tuṅga rulers' growing power. The presence of the *Sandhivigrahika* official could be taken as a consideration of the historical transformation of certain parts of the *Gondrama* territory under his tenure, as a mechanism of strengthening the territorial boundaries by avoiding conflicts. The concerned official was also the engraver of the Sanasireipur charter. There was considerable monopoly over the consolidation of social and political groups on the purpose of land transactions during this period and can be further attested with the reading of near contemporary inscriptions issued in the same region. As discussed earlier in the chapter, that the Śulkis bore the same title in relation to *Gondrama* and historians argued that Bhaumas removed them in support of Tuṅgas and Nandas, it seems that the argument itself shows fallacy to some extent. Śulkis, Tuṅgas, Nandodbhavas/Nandas were the important subordinate feudal chieftains under the paramount lordship of the Bhaumakara dynasty and S.K. Acharya also categorised them as contemporaries¹⁰⁰. Although Śulkis enjoyed the territory, there is also a need to consider the division of boundaries of *Kodālaka-maṇḍala*, *Yamagartta-maṇḍala* and *Airāvaṭṭa-maṇḍala*¹⁰¹ to understand the phenomenon. None of their charters directly talk about conflict regarding territorial acquisition with each other but the advent of Śulki kingdom's rule being prior to the other two kingdoms and their adherence to the popular indigenous Goddess Stambheśvarī¹⁰² as their tutelary deity were not echoed elsewhere in the epigraphic records from this region. Although, it seems the goddess was already appropriated whose prior form could be an anthropomorphic one, it could be possibly associated earlier with the Gond tribe of the area. However, the silence regarding confrontation among each other cannot be dismissed and it needs thorough investigation with the help of other sources. Thus, one can argue in the context of Bhaumakaras that, the cultural and political integrative process of the *Gondrama* territory as a part of the expansion of the state started earlier and it continued to evolve, expand and shrink over time with the enthronement of the other local kingdoms.

¹⁰⁰ S.K. Acharya, *Copper-Plate Inscriptions of Odisha- A Descriptive Catalogue (Circa Fourth Century to Sixteenth Century CE)*, D.K. Printworld (P) Ltd, 2014, p. 371.

¹⁰¹ This could be done by reading of the boundary markers in between these *maṇḍala* divisions.

¹⁰² Goddess Stambheśvarī was a popular cult deity of the Śulkis whose socio-cultural history still needs investigation.

Further, Māṇikyatuṅga entitled as the lord of the whole of *Gondramas*, *mahāsāmantādhipati* and enjoying the ‘loud sounds’ of the ‘five musical instruments’ signifies his privileged position in the sovereign’s court and needs to be seen as a socio-political entity over the *Gondrama* territory in Yamagartta-*maṇḍala*. One could also take into consideration the ideological landscape of Jayapura-*koṭṭa* where the donated temple dedicated to the deity Māṇikya-bhaṭṭāraka was entrusted with rights to *nidhis* and *upanidhis* (treasury). This kind of temple village or *devadāna* might not change the prevailing social and economic status of the landowners, as Y. Subbarayalu opined, they were generally permitted to keep the property within themselves and pay a tribute to the donor¹⁰³, hence the enjoyment of the treasuries to the village granted, in this case. Māṇikyatuṅga seemed to be exercising as semi-autonomous local lord of the districts. The relational pattern of patronage and legitimation by the chief and occupied ranks in the vast hierarchy of local rulers, either minor or major associated with the Bhaumakara court, points to the changing early medieval scenario in the context of shifting territorial controls. Rather than seeing the semi-independent rulers during this period from a top-down approach, the acknowledgement of the existence of multiple central powers emerging in relation to the integrative approach with de facto independence is important, hence accentuating the process of horizontal pattern of the state formation.

Grant of Māṇikyatuṅga	Donees	Village Granted	Nature of the Grant/Economic Terms	Administrative and Social Terms	Epithets of the Donor
Sanasireipur Plate issued from Jayapura koṭṭa	Māṇikya-bhaṭṭāraka, the deity on request of the Pāśupata teacher Śaṅkhādityadhvaja (probably	Vallabho in Khimvai- <i>viṣaya</i> of Yamagartta- <i>maṇḍala</i>	Permanent grant with the right to enjoy treasures (<i>nidhis</i> and <i>upanidhis</i>).	Administrative officers- Same as of Bonai Plate including <i>rāja-pād-opajīvins</i> , <i>vyavahārins</i> .	<i>Paramamāheśvara</i> , <i>samadhigata-pañcamahāśavda</i> , <i>mahāsāmantādhipati</i> and <i>samasta-</i>

¹⁰³ Y. Subbarayalu, ‘Settlement Pattern in the Kaveri Delta, 600-1300 CE’, Presidential Address in South Indian History Congress, 41st First Annual Session, 2022, p. 14.

	the preceptor of the donor)			Engraver of the charter- <i>Sandhivigra</i> <i>hika</i> Āditya.	<i>gondramādhināt</i> <i>ha</i>
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Śvetaka-Gaṅgas

We have seen that how the inscriptional evidences could be a way towards “Perceiving the Past”¹⁰⁴ along with “Producing the Past”¹⁰⁵. Such theoretical perspective drives in the backdrop of the study of the eighteen land grant inscriptions of the Śvetaka Gaṅgas, like the study on Tuṅgas. The corpus of the granted charters seeks a localised form of narrative but is interconnected with the continuous development of the sub-region of early medieval Kalinga thus ensuing, what B.D. Chattopadhyaya opined about the integration of local political structures into wider regional and pan-regional political networks¹⁰⁶. Since the land grants of the Śvetaka Gaṅgas were issued from the Śvetaka-*maṇḍala* and situated within the Kalinga region in the province of Dakṣiṇa Tosali, under the control of the Bhaumakara dynasty, the undertaken study of the polity holds significance in terms of the identity in making and spatio-temporal formation. Speaking of Kalinga, historians have shown its territorial limits being dynamic in nature with changing boundaries since post-fifth century BC period to succeeding historical times¹⁰⁷. It eventually acquired complex structural polity, society, culture and

¹⁰⁴ The concerned theory has been derived after reading Shonaleeka Kaul’s published review of Alok Parasher Sen’s *Seeking History through Her Source: South of the Vindhyas* in the *Frontline* titled as ‘The fragment in history’, Print Edition, Nov 14, 2022. For the print edition of the review, see, [The fragment in history - Frontline \(thehindu.com\)](https://www.thehindu.com/fron...). For the original citation, refer to Alok Parasher Sen, *Seeking History through Her Source: South of the Vindhyas*, Orient Blackswan Paperback, 2022.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid. in [The fragment in history - Frontline \(thehindu.com\)](https://www.thehindu.com/fron...). For the original citation, refer to Alok Parasher Sen, *Seeking History through Her Source: South of the Vindhyas*, Orient Blackswan Paperback, 2022.

¹⁰⁶ B.D. Chattopadhyaya, ‘Political Processes and Structure of Polity in Early Medieval India’ in *The Making of Early Medieval India*, Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1994, pp. 202-11.

¹⁰⁷ For detailed discussion, see Sudharshan Seneviratne, ‘Kalinga and Āndhra: The Process of Secondary State Formation in Early India’ in B.P. Sahu and Hermann Kulke (eds.) *Interrogating Political Systems: Integrative Processes and States in Pre-Modern India*, Manohar Publishers, Delhi, 2015, pp. 173-195.

economy and thus has been enormously studied as a valid historical unit in the history of Odisha. However, the historiography somewhat neglected the study of the interaction of ‘localities’ or various *maṇḍalas* within the vast sub-region of Kalinga that ultimately contributed in the shaping of the region of what is known as today’s Odisha.

Coming to Śvetaka Gaṅgas, they were a collateral branch of the early Eastern Gaṅgas of Kalinganagara. After the decline of the Śailōdbhavas, the Śvetaka Gaṅgas acquired the northern parts of Ganjam district on the left bank of the Baḍanai or the ancient Mahānadī of Odisha.¹⁰⁸ Since all their inscriptions talk about the capital of Śvetaka from where the charters have been issued and discovered in the Ganjam district, the former has been identified with the present locality of Chikiti, Asha and Dharakote regions of Odisha¹⁰⁹. As the only and major source of the study of this dynasty, land grant records talk of the agrarian expansion and land holding rights mostly to *brāhmaṇas* with no taxes. It is interesting to note that as a part of the branch of the early Gaṅgas who rose to power in south Kalinga by the end of the fifth century and ultimately forming an imperial kingdom till the middle of the fifteenth century¹¹⁰; the Śvetaka Gaṅgas followed both Ganga Era for dating the inscriptions and Bhauma Era from the eighth century CE to the end of ninth or the beginning of the tenth century CE. They also dated their inscriptions in terms of their own regnal years. As discussed earlier, the rulers of Śvetaka *maṇḍala* were a feudal polity under the Bhaumakara dynasty of the central coastal Odisha or Tosali¹¹¹ region where the former equally exercised autonomous power.

¹⁰⁸ Snigdha Tripathy, *Inscriptions of Orissa Vol I (Circa Fifth-Eighth Centuries AD)*, Indian Council of Historical Research and Motilal Banarsidass Publishers Private Limited, Delhi, 1997, p. 82.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid, p. 82.

¹¹⁰ B.P. Sahu, ‘Changing the Gaze: Facets of Sub-Regional Agrarian Economies in Early Medieval Orissa’, in B.D. Chattopadhyaya, Suchandra Ghosh and Bishnupriya Basak (eds.) *Inscriptions and Agrarian Issues in Indian History: Essays in Memory of D.C. Sircar*, The Asiatic Society Publishers, Kolkata, 2017, p.86.

¹¹¹ The Bhaumakaras ruled from Jajpur in central coastal Odisha and emerged as a larger political institution (730 CE-936 CE) that set the foundation for the successors to become a regional polity bringing together several subregions. The Bhaumas had several feudatory states under them namely Śulkis, Tuṅgas, Nandas, Bhanjas and Śvetaka Gaṅgas.

The four records of Jayavarman such as Ganjam Plates of the time of Unmattakeśarī, Badakhemundi Plates A and D and Kama-Nalinaksapur Plates A¹¹² shows the trajectory of the ruler from *Rāṇaka* to *Mahārāja* respectively. Even though the chronology is unknown; it is discernible that Jayavarman was closely associated with courtly politics of the Bhaumakara dynasty when the former issued Ganjam plates in his 20th Regnal Year mentioning his *Rāṇaka* entitlement. The charter seems to be issued two times by invoking the same *praśasti*. Initially it states that *Mahārāja* Jayavarmadeva was the donor but again *Rāṇaka* Viśavārṇṇava executed the grant after acquiring permission from the Bhauma king Unmattakeśarīn who has been identified as Śivakaradeva II, to grant the village to Bhaṭṭa Nannaṭa-Mahattara¹¹³. At this stage, taking S.K. Acharya's accepted analysis into account of viewing Viśavārṇṇava and Jayavarmadeva as the same person, it can be stated that the independent Śvetaka king was taken as the administrative official under the Bhaumas. On the other hand, Snigdha Tripathy pointed out that "the charter was, in fact, issued jointly with *Mahārāja* Jayavarmadeva, an independent king of the early Gaṅga family ruling from Śvetaka, while both of them were on pilgrimage to the holy centre of Virajā".¹¹⁴

However, if inscriptions are read in relation, it can be found out that, in the Bhauma records, Nannaṭa's son Bhīmaṭa, a highly acclaimed physician had been granted land by Śāntikaradeva¹¹⁵. On the other, Nannaṭa had also been granted village by later Śvetaka ruler

¹¹² See, Snigdha Tripathy, *IO, Vol. 2* (1960), pp. 258-63, *EI, Vol. 23* (1935-36), pp. 261-69 and *IO, Vol. 2* (1960), pp. 253-57, respectively for the name of the Plates mentioned above.

¹¹³ The person had been mentioned in the Bhauma Inscriptions as a physician or *vaidya* Bhīmaṭa's son. Refer to 'No. 5 Dhauli Cave Inscription of Śāntikara; Year 93' and 'No.6 Gaṇeśagumphā inscription of the time of Śāntikara' in Snigdha Tripathy, *Inscriptions of Orissa Volume II: Inscriptions of the Bhauma-Karas*, Indian Council of Historical Research and Pratibha Prakashan, Delhi, 2000, pp. 116-120.

¹¹⁴ Virajā, the capital city of the Bhaumakaras, a pilgrimage centre too.

¹¹⁵ Refer to 'No. 5 Dhauli Cave Inscription of Śāntikara; Year 93' and 'No.6 Gaṇeśagumphā inscription of the time of Śāntikara' in Snigdha Tripathy, *Inscriptions of Orissa Volume II: Inscriptions of the Bhauma-Karas*, Indian Council of Historical Research and Pratibha Prakashan, Delhi, 2000, pp. 116-120.

Anantavarman¹¹⁶ entitled as *Mahārājādhirāja*. Thus, it seems that the earliest ruler Jayavarman as feudatory *Rāṇaka* under the Bhaumas who even in his Badakhemundi Plates¹¹⁷ accepted the Bhauma Year until he rose up in the hierarchy as subordinate *Mahārājā* evident in later inscriptions point to the fact that, the Śvetaka Gaṅgas in the initial year of their rule were a kind of tributary state and later on exercised considerable autonomy. The political role of such feudal titles in emerging *maṇḍala* principalities attest to the pattern of inter-dependence in the hierarchy of kingships in the integrative process of state formation. It is clear that the Bhaumas had exercised actual political control as a sovereign during the initial reign of subordinate Jayavarman's Śvetaka-*maṇḍala*. The interrogation regarding the subordinate position of the Śvetaka Gaṅgas still remain unclear at this juncture. However, if we look into related evidence, we might find implicit evidence regarding such complex pattern. The Talcher Plate of Śivakaradeva IV granted in the Bhauma Year 149¹¹⁸ while tracing the legacy of the Bhauma dynasty mentioned about Unmattakeśārīn who 'subjugated the Kaliṅgas'. Further, if we look into the Chaurasi Grant¹¹⁹ of Śrī-Śivakaradeva II in 12th Bhauma Year, whom scholars noted as Unmattakeśārīn or Unmaṭṭasimha¹²⁰, one of the earliest rulers, we could trace the representational evidence of his political control. Though the claim of conquering the Kaliṅga has not been corroborated by any other inscriptional evidence or even his own, he had been endowed with great military prowess by his successors. Notably, Chaurasi Grant has been discovered from the Puri district (in an around the same area of Śvetakas, the Ganjam district) and even the name of the *brāhmaṇa* donee, Jāllubhaṭṭa, seems to be the inhabitant of the donated place. The name of the donor implies his coastal connection in southern Odisha-northern Andhra region which comes under the province of Śvetaka- *maṇḍala*. Since Jayavarman's record talks of seeking permission from the Bhauma overlord and the entitlement of *Mahārājā* of the former and *Paramabhaṭṭāraka –Mahārājādhirāja* of the latter attests to the possibility of the subjugation of the Kaliṅga region by this period. Moreover, Śivakaradeva I, the father of Śivakaradeva II, has been given epithet of *mahān-Utkalendra* (the great king of Utkala)¹²¹, in the later inscriptions. Utkala, as we are aware, were a part of Koṅgoda-*maṇḍala*

¹¹⁶ *EI*, Vol. 24 (1937-38), pp. 129-37.

¹¹⁷ S.K. Acharya, 'Badakhemundi Plate of Jayavarmadeva' in *op.cit.*, pp. 184-185.

¹¹⁸ Snigdha Tripathy, *op.cit.* pp. 140-144.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid*, pp. 105-109.

¹²⁰ *Ibid*, p. 19.

¹²¹ *Ibid*, p. 18.

and in the region of Kalinga and consequently merged with it as various early Indian sources on Odisha sometimes interchangeably viewed Kalinga as Utkala. Śivakaradeva I did not execute any grant and the earliest land grant has been recorded by Śivakaradeva II or Unmattakeśarīn. Thus, that the Śvetaka Gaṅgas were located within the contiguous territory of Bhauma control and the provinces were in political and cultural communication with each other, it cannot be thwarted that the Śvetakas felt the subjugation to an extent by the Bhaumas as inscriptional evidences suffice. Tripathy is of opinion that to avoid conflict and maintain good political relation, the Śvetaka Gaṅgas used the Bhauma Era and were never really a feudal polity of the Bhaumakara dynasty ¹²², but evidences point towards them being a semi-independent polity under the latter.

The Badakhemundi Plate's Dānārṇavadeva could be associated as the same subordinate chief *Rāṇaka* Dānālava/ Dānārṇavadeva who happened to be the *dūtaka* of the Ganjam Plate (Year 180) of the Bhauma princess-queen Daṇḍimahadevī. Even though there is no substantial evidence to corroborate the association, the palaeographic date of both the inscriptions of 10th century attests so. If we take Anantavarman's Padmatola A & B charters¹²³ and the one stated above, his rise from *Mahārājā* to bearing full imperial title of *Mahārājādhirāja-Parameśvara-Paramabhaṭṭāraka* in later records is coeval with the consolidated royal power and a complex courtly culture with the presence of important administrative officials such as *akṣaśali*, *mahāsandhivigraha*, *mahāsāmanta* among others. Such portrayal of titles renders the significance of the acts of personal donations and political validation over consolidated spatio-temporal zones of the Kalinga sub-region. On the other, the status enjoyed by the non-royal person, Nannaṭa and his physician family, as a donee finding frequent mention in multiple records, points to the interconnected patterns of social and economic functions attached to the courtly polity. The act of procuring legitimation is also evident in Bhupendrarvarman's Badakhemundi record¹²⁴, where his father, *Rāṇaka* Gaṅgakavilāsa donated a plot of land (*khaṇḍa-kṣetra*). Bhupendrarvarman held full imperial title while the donor attempted in seeking legitimation for the identity of the family of Śvetaka Gaṅga. The presence of the charter's engraver Vimalacandra belonging to the family of royal engravers (*kāmsāra-kula-*

¹²² Ibid, p. 22.

¹²³ *EI*, Vol. 43 (2011), pp. 138-47.

¹²⁴ *EI*, Vol. 23 (1935-36), pp. 265-267.

putra) and chief queen's (Mahādevī) registering the grant¹²⁵ necessitates the idea of holding the popular imagery of hierarchical kingship and the act of patronage as political communication. In this context, I would like to argue that the title *Rāṇaka* of the donor could be an indication of being nobility in the court of his son, Bhupendrarvarman, rather than assuming a feudal position under the Bhaumas, considering the reigning ruler was entitled with independent royal titles. The donated grant also indicates an ownership of certain landholdings by the donor under the reigning monarch. One can argue that the early medieval kingship as a complex landscape of power relations emerged in regions filled with diversity and variability.

The region of the reigning polity in the southern coastal area of Odisha evokes a different economic pattern from where revenues could be granted and in turn implies that the sole ownership of the land remained with the king. The Gautami (4th Regnal Year) and Padmatola Plates of Indrarvarman¹²⁶ along with the charters of Anantavarman in the Badakhemundi¹²⁷ (also known as Sanakhemundi) area of Ganjam district recorded the varied nature of lands donated in parts. These were rent-paying land or *kara-śāśanas* fixed with the amount of *murajas* of rice. Consequently, the donated lands appeared to be under cultivation along with attached homestead land or *grha- vāstu / pāṭaka-vāstu*¹²⁸. The east coastline is known for the rice cultivation and Odisha majorly contributes to the production revenue. It is no doubt that in early Odisha, the inhabitants of the land were required to pay taxes from the cultivation. The boundaries of the gifted portions of lands were well specified with the presence of *vyavahārins* (administrator, merchant), *daṇḍanāyakas* to administer the locality. One could also trace the strategic socio-economic importance of this place because there is a mention of *rāja-mārga* in these charters. The associated homestead land in the route of *rāja-mārga* would have served as the prominent cultural marker during festivals considering there is a strong relevant history of ritualised festivals associated with rice cultivation in Odisha and even Bengal that continues even today. Moreover, the presence of small traders or merchants is also of considerable importance regarding the trans-local and hyper local linkages with the economic activities in

¹²⁵ Ibid, pp. 265-267.

¹²⁶ S.K. Acharya, *op.cit.*, p.177.

¹²⁷ Ibid, pp. 178-179. Here, the Padmatola Plates of Anantavarman have been referred whose Badakhemundi and Sanakhemundi block in the present day Ganjam district of Odisha is the find-spot of the charters.

¹²⁸ *EI* 43 (1), 2011, pp. 138-47. *Pāṭaka* means village.

connection with Badakhemundi area, where the later Imperial Gaṅgas also seemed to have donated grants.

Thus, the various changes coming from within and the multifaceted socio-cultural, political and economic components in specific societies helped in continuous shaping and re-shaping of regions. Evident through the study of the six issued grants of Śvetaka rulers Indravarman and Prthivīvarmadeva¹²⁹, only three records provide the complete independent status of Śvetakas, and talk about the migration of the rulers from the region Kolāulapara. Their *praśatis* revered them as the lord of the city of Kolāulapurapattana or Śri-Nandagirinātha-Kolāulapurapattana (*śri-kulāulapura-paṭṭanakasya kavalya-varaya-ghoṣa*) or (*śri-nandagirinātha-kolāulapurapattana-vinirgata-kāmvalya-kāyaghoṣa*)¹³⁰. Subrata Kumar Acharya mentions that Kolāulapara has been identified by Rice with modern Kolar in east Mysore and well-known fortified hill of Nandīdurga¹³¹. While the absence in mentioning about the history of migration in further inscriptions can be assumed as the city (*paṭṭana*) being lost from their control, the initial control over the city in a far-off region from the coastal district of Odisha can be taken as an indication of trans-regional cultural and economic transactions. Indravarman's record of the India Museum Plates talks about the donation of the village to the deities Lokamādhava (Viṣṇu) and Svayambhūkeśvara (Śiva) along with the *brāhmaṇas*.¹³² The naming of the deities appears to be of local nature, possibly, known among the oral tradition of the inhabitants. The donees appeared to be the inhabitants of the village and the deities must have belonged to these *brāhmaṇas* in the form of images since the record is silent of the presence of temple structures. Such descriptions can be analysed as a mode of economic and social behaviours in the context of the controlling over the city for resources as well as memory and patronage. The donor being the queen Śri-Ela, wife of Indravarman, the title of *Mahārājādhirāja-Paramēśvara*, the association with the hill Nandagiri and the usage of the bull in the seal, speaks of the believer of Viṣṇu and Śiva¹³³ as well as extending patronage

¹²⁹ For Indravarman, see *EI*, Vol. 23 (1935-36), pp. 78-80 and *EI*, Vol. 26 (1941-42), pp.165-71. For Prthivīvarmadeva, see, *EI*, Vol. 4 (1896-97), p.198-201.

¹³⁰ For the phrases, see *EI* Vol. 4 (1896-97), p.198-201 and *EI* Vol. 26 (1941-42), pp.165-71 respectively.

¹³¹ See the footnotes in Subrata Kumar Acharya, *Copper Plate Inscriptions Of Odisha: A Descriptive Catalogue (Circa Fourth Century to Sixteenth Century CE)*, D.K. Printworld (P). Ltd, New Delhi, 2014, p. 187.

¹³² *EI*, Vol. 26 (1941-42), pp.165-71.

¹³³ *Ibid*, pp. 165-71.

associated with the landscapes of the king's homeland, now only evoked as a memory in the epigraphs. If we look into other records of Indravarman, he did not claim to have belonging from his homeland with the only entitlement of *Mahārājā*. Here, I would like to opine that the act of patronage here should be seen as a ritual act which was really a political act of communication for economic purpose and the silence of the other remaining inscriptions of Śvetaka Gaṅgas can be taken as the forgetful memory of the homeland, assumed to be either slipping away of power control or could be in terms of troubled land associated with the succeeding rulers.

B.D. Chattopadhyaya opined that to understand the process of forming into regions, there is a need to look into the particular characteristics associated with them.¹³⁴ Here, I would like to contextualise the existence of geographical and cultural elements at the local level exercised by Śvetaka Gaṅgas, characterised by a strong autonomy. Paleographically, historians have dated Śvetaka ruler Sāmantavarman's Pherava Plates to sixth-seventh centuries CE. The *praśasti* boasts of the family of the Gaṅgas, tracing back to the early Eastern Gaṅga lineage, as historians could find similar cultural and ritualistic practices of worshipping Lord Gokērṇeśvara installed on the summit of the mount Mahendra¹³⁵. It is further interesting to study that the *praśasti* gets emulated in every other grant of the Śvetaka Gaṅgas. However, what is significant to Sāmantavarman's identity and status is his entitlement as 'lord of the entire Kalinga' (*sakala-kalingādhipati*). At this point, the Śvetaka dynasty had the entire territorial boundaries of Kalinga along with subordinate chiefs or local chiefs (*sāmanta, janapadān*) paid obligation to him. Even though the stretch of Kalinga is not mentioned in the inscription, the river Meghāvatī flowing on the west of the boundaries of the gift village indicates the coastal area of the region. If Sāmantavarman's two later records are to be taken under review, he could be seen without any regal titles assumed the epithet of *śveta-kādhirājya* instead of *kalingādhirajya*¹³⁶. In this context, I would like to argue that the Sāmantavarman even after capturing the Kalinga sub-region as the *Mahārājā*, gradually, the sub-region would

¹³⁴ B.D. Chattopadhyaya, 'Space, History, and Cultural Process' in *The Concept of Bharatavarsha and Other Essays*, Permanent Black Publishers, Ranikhet, 2017, p. 40.

¹³⁵ For the details, look in the Chidivalasa Plate (also known as Pherava) in *EI*, Vol.27 (1947-48), pp. 108-15.

¹³⁶ Refer to the Plates of Kama-Nalinaksapur and Dhanantara by Sāmantavarman in *IO*, Vol. 2 (1960) pp. 318-22 and *EI*, Vol. 15 (1919-20), pp. 275-278, respectively.

have slipped under the domination of the Bhaumas, whose evidence we find in Jayavarman's records. Even if identifying the self as the lord of the sub-region indicates the settlement of the Śvetaka Gaṅgas, later, the emergence of the localised form of identification, i.e., *śveta-kādhirājā* can be seen as the form of acquiring legitimation through association of the region. This is important because the dynasty came to be known as Śvetaka Gaṅgas and hence, in this context, the local histories stand significant for the study of the integrative process in the making of a region. Further, the mention of *Kaliṅga-mārga* in the record¹³⁷ in relation to the boundaries of the gifted village, the geographical awareness formulates an overlapping sense of regional identity and resonance with the lost territorial control affirming spatial hierarchies during the early medieval period. The ecological diversity was invoked through the multiple layers of landscape of southern Odisha and adjoining area such as *puṣkariṇī*, *nadīpada*, *āraṇya*, *valmīka*, *aṭavī*. Spaces like *aṭavī* finds mention as the part of the donated villages indicates the coastal Śvetaka rulers had their power control in the forest lands that might had served as hinterlands. There is no reference of the forest-spaces but inclusion of *aṭavī* and all the other natural resources for the rent-free enjoyment of the *brāhmaṇa* donees were not devoid of conflict and negotiation.

This brings us to the discussion of societal patterns during the time of Śvetaka-Gaṅgas as gleaned from their charters. Their inscriptions are replete with the presence of *Mahāsāmantas* and *sāmantas* who were important in the transaction of the charters culturally and socially. One such high ranking *Mahāsāmanta* Pūrṇadeva who also enjoyed *pañcamahāśavda* was the *dūtaka* of the grant of Jayavarman.¹³⁸ Some of the *sāmantas* were engravers; possibly, they were skilled craftsman and locally recognised. This implies that Jayavarman enjoyed the strong allegiance of feudal officials working for his court. The group and hierarchy of *sandhivigrahikas* were locally based as they seemed to be associated with the courtly politics hereditarily. They appeared to be writers of the charters claiming well acquainted with the ecology and etymology of early medieval southern Odisha. *Mahāpratihara* Āditya-varman was the writer of Indravarman's Bhismagiri charter.¹³⁹ Further, it is equally imperative to mention

¹³⁷ Snigdha Tripathy, *Inscriptions of Orissa, Vol. 2, op.cit.*, pp. 318-22.

¹³⁸ S.K. Acharya, 'Badakhemundi Plate of Jayavarmadeva' in *op.cit.*, pp. 184-185.

¹³⁹ *EI* 19, 1927-28, pp. 134-37.

that the social groups of *bhogīs*, *grāmapatis*, *rāṣṭrakūṭas*, *viṣayapatis*¹⁴⁰ were the part of administrative apparatus and were recognised in all the charters to secure their position with the agrarian changes in their localities. Such patterns of horizontal mode of integration were typical of early medieval polity. Reference of Svayumbhū as the engraver, brazier (*kāṃsakāra*), merchant (*śreṣṭhi*) along with designated feudatory status from Indravarman's plate¹⁴¹ is noteworthy. Here, it can be argued that the courtly personnel's skills on different activities would have secured him the status of *śrī-sāmanta*. While in the Ganjam plates of Prṭhvīvarmadeva, Svayumbhū was not the merchant (*śreṣṭhi*) yet but during the period of his son Indravarman. He was probably a merchant associated with the trading activities of the temples of Viṣṇu and Śiva for whom the granted village with its land, water and forests and streams were donated. Further, the reference of Svayumbhūkeśvara as the deity Śiva is an indication of the deification of the donor queen's husband Gaṅgasvayumbhū. This indicates the grandeur of the temples' strategic importance in the landscape as well as the socio-economic activities associated with it. The presence of hamlets, waste lands of the donated village denotes that the worship of the deities was prevalent and the inhabitants equally participated in it. It is no less imperative to note that the Śvetaka Gaṅga rulers were devout followers of Śaivism and the ideological landscape was created to seek legitimation.

The presence of one *akṣaśalin* Padmacandra as engraver for three different Śvetaka rulers namely Indravarman, Anantavarman and Sāmantavarman, also served as *bhogika* in the Ganjam district invites discussion. Scholar such as Dev Kumar Jhanj in his masterly article have delineated the terms *akṣaśalin*, *akṣaśalika*, *suvarṇakāra* appearing in Odishan inscriptions from 7th-11th centuries on the basis of their contextualised regional administrative structures. He evaluated that Śvetaka Gaṅgas, like the Eastern Gaṅgas only used the term *akṣaśalin*, rather than *akṣaśalika*. The usage of the former term possibly denotes the sub-regional influence comprising Srikakulam, Vishakhapatnam, and Ganjam districts of early Odisha.¹⁴² That these

¹⁴⁰ Ibid, p. 135.

¹⁴¹ S.K. Acharya, 'Badakhemundi Plate of Indravarman' in *op.cit.*, pp. 189.

¹⁴² Dev Kumar Jhanj, "PROFESSOR V.K. THAKUR MEMORIAL PRIZE PAPER: AKṢAŚĀLIKA, AKṢAŚĀLIN AND SUVARṆAKĀRA AS THE ENGRAVERS OF COPPER PLATE CHARTERS OF ODISHA (C. 7TH-11TH CENTURIES CE)." Proceedings of the Indian History Congress 78, 2017, pp. 117-26. The article can be accessed online- <https://www.jstor.org/stable/26906076>.

groups did not appear in other regions as engravers other than Odisha is also mentioned in the scholarly work. The *akṣaśalin*, in Kautilya's *Arthaśāstra* related to the goldsmiths but Odishan epigraphs did not provide any evidence of that connection. Jhanj further opines that, the terms are different in their nature but in Odishan inscriptions they are used interchangeably. It is to be noted here that the engravers in the Śvetaka Gaṅga records who appears to be in the service under various rulers holding different administrative positions at different times. One can argue that these changing social and political status were along the path of sub-regional development in southern Odisha-Northern Andhra because this coastal zone was exposed to diversities and variations because of its porous nature. We are also aware that littoral or coastal society is different to that of the inland or its hinterland societies. A careful meticulous reading of the facets of these societies from the epigraphs also bring out the differentiated pattern in invoking one's social identity, particularly gender identities which will be discussed in detail in the next chapter.

A closer look into the details from the inscriptions will address the complexities clearer (tables are not in chronological order).

Grants of Jayavarman/Jayavarmadeva	Donees	Villages Granted	Nature of the Grant/Economic Terms	Administrative and Social Terms
Ganjam Plates of the time of Unmattakeśārīn of Virāja city	Bhaṭṭa Nannaṭa Mahattara	Valamaśṛṅga in Varttani- <i>viṣaya</i> of Kongoda-mandala	Permanent and rent-free holding. The activity of seeking permission from overlord is mentioned here.	Administrative officers- <i>rājanaka</i> , <i>mahāsāmanta</i> , <i>kumāramātya</i> , <i>daṇḍapāśika</i> . including <i>vahirangas</i> , <i>bhogin</i> .

Badakhemundi Plate A Epithet of the Donor: <i>Mahārāja</i>	Raviśarman	Bhusuṇḍā- grāma in Andedāśṛṅga <i>viśaya</i>	Permanent and land free holding.	Officers- <i>sāmantas</i> , <i>rājanaka</i> , <i>bhogin</i> , <i>bhāgin</i> , <i>pradhān</i> - <i>puruṣa</i> , <i>daṇḍanāyaka</i> . Other term- <i>śakti</i> - <i>traya</i> . Writer- Khaṇḍin, the son of <i>Mahāsandhivigrahī</i> Śrī Sāmanta, Engraver- Vicitrahasta, <i>Dūtaka</i> - <i>Mahāsāmanta</i> Pūrṇadeva (was also the beholder of five loud sounds) <i>Vyavahārin</i> - <i>Devapratihāra</i> .
Badakhemundi Plate D, Bhauma Year 100 Epithet of the Donor: <i>Rāṇaka</i>	Bhaṭṭaputra Padma Mahattara	Paḍalaśṛṅga in Khaluga- khaṇḍa- <i>viśaya</i>	Permanent and rent-free holding. Boundary of the village with a house and a land has been specified. Boundary marker of	<i>śrī-sāmantas</i> , <i>mahāsāmantas</i> , <i>rājanakas</i> , <i>grāmapatis</i> , <i>kumāramātya</i> , <i>daṇḍanāyaka</i> . Sāmanta as the writer

			Gaḍaridhruva ends in the Temturagrāma is mentioned.	Vimalacandra as the engraver and Trikalīṅga-Mahādevī as the executor
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Grants of Sāmantavarman	Donee	Village granted	Nature of the village	Administrative/ Social / Economic Terms
Kama-Nalinaksapur Plate B The ruler was known as <i>Mahārāja</i> and the lord of entire <i>Śvetakādhirājya</i> . Worshipper of lord Gokarṇeśvara	Nārāyaṇaśarman	Vadaribhaṣṭhi in Sāmantabhukti- <i>viṣaya</i> of <i>Śvetakādhirājya</i>	Unspecified about the nature but provided descriptions of the gift village. One landmark was mentioned as Dharmarāja-Kalīṅga-mārga.	<i>Vyavahārins</i> and the <i>karaṇas</i> . Writer- Bhogin Umvaradeva Engraver- Bhogika Padmacandra. Other term- <i>śakti-traya</i> .
Chidivalasa/Pherava Plate, Gaṅga Year 185 The ruler was known as <i>Mahārāja</i> and the lord of <i>sakala-kalīṅgādhipati</i> .	4 <i>brāhmaṇas</i>	Pheravagrāma in Lauhaśṛṅgāra <i>viṣaya</i> of Kalīṅga	Village was permanent and tax-free endowment. The charter describes the boundaries	<i>Sāmanta</i> . Social categories- <i>janapadān</i> Other terms- <i>śakti-traya</i> , <i>agrahāra</i>

Worshipper of lord Gokarṇṇeśvara			of the gift village.	
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Grant of Pṛthvīvarmade va	Titles held by the donor	Nature of the village granted to the donee	Economic Terms	Administrati ve Terms	Social Terms
Ganjam Plates	<i>Mahārājadhiraja Parameśvara Paramabhaṭṭāra ka</i> , the lord of the city of Kolaūlapurapata na	The village of Dolaliti was a permanen et endowme nt with descriptio n of four boundarie s including the land and forest.	The land was a <i>kara- śāsana</i> . The donee Bhaṭṭpautr a Śubhamka ra had to pay 4 <i>palas</i> of silver as the rent.	<i>Sāmanta, mahāsāmanta, rājanaka, kumāramātya, danadanayaka, viṣayapati, grāmapati, rāṣṭrakūṭa</i>	<i>Sandhivigra hī Śrī- Sāmanta as the writer Śrī - Sāmanta Svayambhu as the engraver Śrī Mahādevī as the executor of the grant including kuṭumvina. Other term- śakti-traya.</i>

Grant of Dānārṇavadeva	Donee	Village granted	Nature of the village	Administrative Terms/ Social Categories
Badakhemundi Plates B Epithet of the Donor: <i>Rāṇaka</i>	Bhaṭṭa Durgakhaṇḍika	Kasidda- grama situated in Jayaḍā <i>viṣaya</i> in Kaliṅga kingdom.	Permanent free landholding with the description of four boundaries and the right to use land, water, waste lands, forests and bushes.	Administrative officers- <i>śrī-</i> <i>sāmantas</i> , <i>mahāsāmantas</i> , <i>rājanakas</i> , <i>grāmapatis</i> , <i>bhogikas</i> . Writer- <i>Sandhivigrahin</i> Dhanadatta (<i>sakala-karaṇa-</i> <i>vidhita</i>) Engraver- Dāmodara. Presence of <i>mahādevī</i> , <i>yuvarāja</i> , <i>dharmādhikaraṇa</i> , <i>mahattara</i> and the <i>pratihāra</i> in the record and were associated with the grant.

3 Grants of Anantavarman	Donees	Nature of the land granted	Economic Terms/ Attributes	Administrative/ Social Categories
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Padmatola Plates A Epithet of the donor: Mahārāja	Ādityadeva, Rāmadeva and Viṇudeva	The village of Salavaṇikā was divided into 2 pieces in the form of an arable land or <i>khaṇḍa- kṣetra</i> and the other one as homestead land or <i>gṛha- vāstu</i> measured in <i>hasta</i> . Boundaries were specified.	The land was a <i>kara- śāśana</i> . Revenue of fixed 100 <i>murajas</i> of rice to be paid.	Officers- <i>sāmantas</i> . Other social groups- <i>vallabha-jātiyāns</i> Engraver- <i>Akṣaśāli</i> Padmacandra. Other terms- <i>śakti- traya</i>
Padmatola Plates B	Vināyakasvāmin, Durggalyasvāmin, Sarvasvāmin and Nārāyaṇasvāmin	The Bhullavaṇikā divided in the form of a 1 arable land or <i>khaṇḍa-kṣetra</i> with 4 <i>pāṭaka</i> or homestead land or <i>gṛha- vāstu</i> measured in <i>hasta</i> . Boundaries were specified.	Taxes were to be paid.	Same as above except no mention of the engraver in the charter.

Svalpavelura Plates, Regnal Year 19 Epithet of the Donor: All the imperial titles.	Bhaṭṭa Nanaṭaśarman	Svalpavelura village of Kaliṅga was granted as a permanent and rent-free holding. The boundaries are specified.	No Taxes	Same as above. Including <i>Mahāsandhivigrahika</i> Govindaeva as writer, Mahindrabhīma as the engraver, <i>Mahāsāmanta</i> Aśokadeva as the <i>dūtaka</i> or the executor <i>Mahādevī</i> Vāṣabhaṭṭarika as the fixer of the seal.
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Grant of Indravarman	Donee	Village Granted	Economic Terms	Administrative and Social Categories
Padmotala Plates C Epithet of the donor: <i>Mahārāja</i>	Vināyakasvāmin, Durggasvāmin, Dharmmasvāmin and Nārāyaṇasvāmin	Village of Kārāgrāma divided in the form of 1 piece of arable land or <i>khaṇḍa- kṣetra</i> with homestead land or <i>grha-vāstu</i> measured in 100 <i>hastas</i> . Boundaries	Revenue to be paid in the form of <i>murajas</i> of rice.	<i>Vallabha- jātiyans</i> , including engraver- <i>Akṣaśāli</i> Padmacandra.

		were specified.		
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Conclusion

At this juncture, I would like to point out that the existence of such multiple political centres in the early medieval period emphasised the importance of the study of *maṇḍala* states by the historians in historical and socio-cultural research of the region and state formation. One may ask, why *maṇḍala*? The localised spatial unit or principalities known as *maṇḍalas* is as significant as the study of sub-regional or regional process in the making. To understand the multicentric pattern of the great regional tradition of Odisha, historians have opined that the emergence of local and subregional identities had its roots in early medieval processes of state formation when local autonomous *maṇḍala* states emerged. They were not just disruptive factors in the politics of these kingdoms but through processes of adaptation and inclusion became integral part of them, strengthening their coherence and helping to extend their realm.¹⁴³

Through the detailed ongoing study, it is discernible that even local elements are not fixed and are continuously in interaction with trans-local, trans-subregional centers as well as shifted over time. The chapter was not an attempt to read the issued land grant inscriptions chronologically but in terms of several motifs and ‘ingredients’ the epigraphs could offer to understand the ‘minor’ ruling dynasties in relation to other records. The frequent mention of the epithet *Śrī* in the epigraphs under study as historians pointed out, was because of the Oḍiā influence. We are aware that the full-fledged Oḍiā script developed around eleventh-twelfth century, but the early centuries of the early medieval period saw the Sanskritised usage of the vernacular. I would like to state this as an idea of being identified as a specific local cultural

¹⁴³ Hermann Kulke and Georg Berkemer (eds), *Centres out There? Facets of Subregional Identities in Orissa*, Manohar Publishers, 2011, p. 9.

marker and hence used as a tradition. Prior to becoming a literary tradition, what we find today in the historical sources, it must have been orally spoken and were also attached to courtly vocabulary. Apart from kings and queens, the epithet was also used by significant royal officials (eg. *Mahāsandhivigrahī Śrī-Sāmanta*)¹⁴⁴ hence could be opined as a localised yet regional form of courtly gesture. Accordingly, whether Śrī-Sāmanta was the name or a designated feudatory status is unknown in this context.

Both the Tuṅgas and Śvetaka Gaṅgas were the feudal polities under the bigger subregional power, the Bhaumakara dynasty, but they enjoyed strong autonomy in their own rights indicating the nature of complex power relations in the hierarchy. The Śvetaka Gaṅgas had their rule contiguous to the territory of the Bhaumakaras, namely Kōṅgōda-*maṇḍala*¹⁴⁵ in Tosali, east of Kalinga, hence assessing the changeable royal control in condition to geographical setting. However, as Hermann Kulke has put it, the feudatory states, or ‘minor’ ones should be seen as emerging ‘centers of power’ rather than considering them as hinterland or peripheral ones.¹⁴⁶ This could be further attested with the cultural markers associated with making of a regional identity and participating in supra-local histories. The inscriptions of the Śvetaka rulers rightfully points out the formation of its state in different pattern to that of the Tuṅgas. By invoking the imageries of the multiple layers of landscape of Kalinga, they could carve out their territory independently. It is to be noted here that early Odisha was known as Utkala, Kalinga and Trikaṅga among others and Śvetaka Gaṅgas participated in that narrative by exercising political control and contributing to the socio-economic changes in the southern coastal region of Odisha.

¹⁴⁴ Such mention of the epithet can be found in record of Śvetaka ruler Jayavarman. See, *EI*, VOL. 23 (1935-36), pp. 261-263.

¹⁴⁵ Kōṅgōda-*maṇḍala* finds mention in the inscriptions of Śvetaka Gaṅgas, Bhaumakaras and Śailodbhavas. In the context of Śvetaka Gaṅgas, the Ganjam Plates of Jayavarman talks about the *Rāṇaka* Viśavārṇava alias Jayavarman in charge of the Bhauma territory of Kōṅgōda-*maṇḍala* (translated as Country). Such description can be corroborated with the Bhauma Inscription also. For detailed discussion refer to, *IO*, Vol. 2 (1960), pp. 258-263.

¹⁴⁶ Hermann Kulke and Georg Berkemer (eds), *Centres out There? Facets of Subregional Identities in Orissa*, Manohar Publishers, 2011, pp.61-63.

Thus, to conclude, with the understanding that inscriptions could be interrogated to find out about the otherwise neglected ‘minor’ ruling dynasty of early medieval Odisha, since the source have been approached both in terms perceiving the past narratives critically as well as itself held as a contextual production of the socio-economic, political and material culture in its entirety. The study of the two different *maṇḍalas* or principalities under the sovereign control of the Bhaumakaras located in the two divisions of Uttara and Dakṣiṇa Tosali have revealed the continuous manifestation of socio-economic and cultural patterns demanded different ways of formulating the state structure and sub-regionally defined administrative apparatus. Here, even the pattern of asserting local power and exercising as feudal lord seemed different in the case of Tuṅgas and Śvetaka Gaṅgas. The theory of integration showed that it could not only be viewed in the context of transformation of a pre-state polity to a state structure but also on the existing structures of the state formation. The continuous shift in the structure with the presence of various political apparatus according to the changing economic context is also discernible from the study. That the connotation of the word ‘feudatory’ is much more loaded and expanded as we have seen through inscriptional evidences and in this chapter, I have preferred to use the original terms associated with the courtly culture. Lallanji Gopal had shown the different meanings of the term *sāmanta* it had acquired at various historical junctures. He critically opined that what started off as originally meaning a neighbouring king, it came to be applied to those neighbouring kings who had been made subordinate¹⁴⁷. That the kings entitled as *sāmantas* were of considerable importance in their respective regions, exercised their rights in terms of revenues and grants have been analysed in the chapter regarding their inscriptions. It is equally important to consider that both polities under discussion bore the nobility position or the feudatory title of *Rāṇaka* and some of them even enjoyed the ritualised practice of five great sounds as a cultural marker of their subordinate identity. The feudal ranks and the courtly eligibility of enjoying the ‘loud sound’ were not interdependent on each other. The method of governance also included highest and privileged ranks bearing titles *mahāsamantādhipati* with a host of smaller rank of *sāmantas* and other officials in the hierarchy. They were entitled to pay allegiance with *kara* and other cultural representations. Some of the charters addressed directly to the inhabitants of the village asking them to pay taxes attests to the point that the pattern of transactions whether political or economic were diverse in nature according to the contextual rural settlements in the early

¹⁴⁷ Lallanji Gopal, ‘Sāmanta: Its Varying Significance in Ancient India’ in *The Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland*, No. 1/2, Cambridge University Press, 1963, p. 26.

medieval period. Some of the feudal polities governed by the ruler entitled *Mahārāja* and *Mahāsamantādhīpati* attests to the fact that the neighbouring subordinate rulers were allowed to stay within the dynasty or kingdom. Also, at the time of the waning power or tumultuous situation could be heard about the sovereign rulership, the feudatories tried to shake off the subordination¹⁴⁸ and rose as the fully independent ruler. Some of the rulers exercised the subordination only symbolically in changing political scenario. Thus, it can be said that as much as the feudal polities needs to be studied within the framework of the political and economic situation in relation to their overlords, these ‘little kings’¹⁴⁹ with landed properties should also be studied in their own local histories and settlements.

The ongoing local level study is a part of knowing the larger process of making of early medieval sub-regions and regions of Odisha, as B.D. Chattopadhyaya rightly pointed out about such research to be examined in four levels: i) All India- the subcontinent, ii) The Region- generally defined by a literary language and caste-patterning, iii) The subregion, iv) The local level¹⁵⁰.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid, p. 34.

¹⁴⁹ B.P. Sahu and Hermann Kulke (eds.), *Interrogating Political Systems: Integrative Process and States in Pre-Modern India*, Manohar Publishers, New Delhi, 2015, pp. 123-124.

¹⁵⁰ B.D. Chattopadhyaya, ‘Space, History, and Cultural Process’ in *The Concept of Bharatavarsha and Other Essays*, Permanent Black Publishers, Ranikhet, 2017, p. 35.

Chapter 4

Bhaumakara Epigraphic Records: Representation of Royal Women

Today, while writing a general social history or particularly gender history, one needs to be critical and aware of the shifts made in methodological and historiographical issues since the 1980s. Sources are critically analysed, deviating from their simple literal reading. Recent studies by Devika Rangachari¹⁵¹ and Shatarupa Bhattacharya¹⁵² on the Bhaumakara epigraphs issued by the women rulers of the family explored the concept of queenship in Indian context and the identities of these rulers enjoying relative autonomy. The attempt of correlating the evidences showed that within the kinship system of the Bhaumakaras, women enjoyed a position of importance and exercised political control and at the disposal of certain economic and cultural resources. This phenomenon however, was not devoid of divergences and complexities. The scholars looking into the concept of queenship are cautious about the variations of access and power position as they argued women rulers in history are seen more as deviation than the norm in relation to kingship and state. Even though the early Indian sources are replete with the evidence of women rulers across the Indian subcontinent, it is true that the social history of elite women rulers have been looked either as regent or in relation to any collateral branch in the absence of a male heir. They have also been studied in the context of marriage relations, which was necessary for political and socio-cultural purposes. The interrogation of looking at the regnant ruler in context of women falls into the category of understanding queenship in the historiography. In this regard, Bhattacharya in her work cogently pointed out that in early Indian context the differentiation between the varied nature of the queenship such as being regent, regnant, queen-consort, queen-mother among other social identities depended on the spatio-temporal political context of a period. Thus, it is possible to raise a methodological question at this juncture; with the view of what could be the

¹⁵¹ Devika Rangachari, *From Obscurity to Light: Women in Early Medieval Orissa (Seventh to Twelfth Centuries AD)*, London and New York, Routledge, 2020.

¹⁵² Shatarupa Bhattacharya, 'The Bhaumakara Queens, Identity and Epigraphs: Exploring Queenship in Early Medieval Odisha' in Uma Chakravarti, Naina Dayal, Bharati Jagannathan and Snigdha Singh (eds.) *Of Thieves and Therīs, Potters and Pativrātās: Essays on Early Indian Social History for Kumkum Roy*, Primus Books, New Delhi, 2022, pp. 345-362.

other ways of studying the representational identities that in turn would help in tracing the nature of queenship and the state.

In this chapter, inspired by methodological developments in looking into sources, I have dealt with the examination of the land grant charters issued by the royal queens of the Bhaumakara dynasty of central coastal Odisha (7th c. CE-10th c. CE). As we are aware that the practice of recording royal orders by polities in copper sheaves throughout the first millennium CE for economic, social and cultural purposes initiated the technology of writing¹⁵³ and was linked with power and patronage, it is also understandable that since inscriptions are read as texts, it automatically defines the donor's identity and aspirations. It is essential to look into a particular identity of an individual emphasized in a given record, because it reflects a conscious choice, though the recording of the identities was also shaped by the principles of those individuals or groups who were organizing the record.

The relations of the Bhaumakara royal queens issuing land grants in terms of their power and patronage exercised point towards the intertangled royal politics of the women rulers as well as evident domestic and royal anxiety while assuming the throne. Thus, looking into the royal representations and acceptance of the collectives evident in the records prompted me to think how women rulers upheld the courtly emotions and gestures as a virtue in a patriarchal setting and equally exercised strong independent power in mobilizing, adapting and alienating resources.

We are aware that the visibilisation of royal/aristocratic women in early Indian sources has made access easy to deconstruct their social and cultural history. However, it is essential to acknowledge the silence of the sources at times, considering gender identities are not monolithic. Out of the 24 published corpus of inscriptions of the Bhaumakaras, 14 land grant charters are in the documents of the women rulers. Odisha (Jajpur) in the early medieval period saw the enthronement of queen Gosvāminī assumed Tribhuvanamahādevī (I), Pṛthvīmahādevī

¹⁵³ Daud Ali, 'The Image of the Scribe in Early Medieval Sources' in Kesavan Veluthat and Donald Richard Davis (eds) *Irreverent Histories: Essays for MGS Narayanan*, Primus Books, 2004, p. 166.

assumed Tribhuvanamahādevī (II), Gaurīmahādevī, Daṇḍimahādevī, Vakulamahādevī, and Dharmamahādevī, in succession, extended over six generations. The last women ruler of the family, the Taltali copper plate of Dharmamahādevī narrates the whole story of succession. Prior to the Taltali plate, in the Sāntiragrāma grant and four other grants of Daṇḍimahādevī and successor Vakulamahādevī's grant we find the description of their reign acknowledging their immediate woman predecessor and the male rulers of the Bhaumakara family. Anjali Verma's genealogical table shows that the four royal women successfully ruled the Bhauma kingdom after Śubhākaradeva IV, possibly indicating no male heir to the throne.¹⁵⁴

The charters mention Tribhuvanamahādevī I (Bhauma king Śāntikara I's widowed queen) as the daughter of a southern Nāga chief Rājamalladeva and Tribhuvanamahādevī II (Śāntikara I's one of the grandsons and Bhauma ruler Śubhākāra V's queen), was the daughter of the Svabhāvatunga of Sitāṃśuvaṃśa, king of the early historical subregion of Dakṣiṇa-Kośala and queen-mother Nṛttamahādevī (daughter of Yaśovṛddhi). Yogender Dayma's thesis on Western Gangas mentions about the feat of Rājamalladeva I (c. 819-40 CE) against Rāṣṭrakūṭas in restoring the glory during the turbulent phase of the Western Gangas. With the help of the former feudatories of Rāṣṭrakūṭas, the Nolambas, Rājamalladeva I reinstated the acquired territories and set free the captured the predecessor Shivamara II (c. 788-800 CE) from imprisonment¹⁵⁵. The expression found in Tribhuvanamahādevī I's grant on her father Rājamalladeva as 'the frontal mark of the southern region' (*dakṣiṇāśā-mukha-tilaksya-rājamaladevasya*)¹⁵⁶ rightfully substantiates the evidence on the glorious proclamation. Here, it can be argued that during her hurried enthronement, Tribhuvanamahādevī I must have garnered support from her influential father and who go revered with the metaphor of goddess Kātyayānī by the subjects and her own feudatories¹⁵⁷. Henceforth, as stated in her charter,

¹⁵⁴ Anjali Verma, 'Capacity for governance' in *Women and Society in Early Medieval India: Re-interpreting Epigraphs*, Routledge Publishers, 2019, p. 161. Verma pointed out the step-motherly jealousy led Vakulamahādevī to oust Daṇḍimahādevī with the help of her father's (Bhañja) family.

¹⁵⁵ Yogender Dayama, 'Chapter 4: The Emergence of Political Society and the Early Western Ganga State' in his *State and Society under the Western Ganga*, a published PhD thesis submitted to University of Delhi, New Delhi, 2018, p. 147. The thesis can be accessed online- <http://hdl.handle.net/10603/372174>.

¹⁵⁶ Snigdha Tripathy, 'Dhenkenal Grant of Tribhuvanamahādevī; Year 160 No. 15' in *Inscriptions of Orissa Volume II (Inscriptions of the Bhauma-Karas)*, ICHR New Delhi and Pratibha Prakashan Delhi, 2000, p 168.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid, p. 171.

during this period, the Bhaumakara succession was in difficult phase. Snigdha Tripathy opines that the concerned queen Gosvāminī, ascended the ruling position twice in her life. Only during the Bhauma year of 160 and 164, of her reign, she granted her own Dhenkenal and Odranga charter respectively, revealing she was instrumental in restoring the family feud and lived a long life as scholars suggest through her epithet *Śrī- Gosvāminī*.¹⁵⁸ On the other, from the two Baud Grants of *Pr̥thvīmahādevī* also known as *Tribhuvanamahādevī* (II), issued respectively in the Bhauma Year 158 and 160, Tripathy interestingly argued that probably the grants were never issued to the village and land situated within the far off *Daṇḍabhukti-maṇḍala* but were kept in the Baud palace. The crux of her argument is that during the period, Baud area then was already under the control of her brother Somavaṁśin king Janamejaya I *Mahābhavaguta* and also since *Pr̥thvīmahādevī* was already acquainted with *Tribhuvanamahādevī* I *alias* *Gosvāminī* in the courtly household as the elderly and strong-abled ruler, the former wanted to portray herself as the legitimate entitlement of *Tribhuvanamahādevī* to the throne.¹⁵⁹ It is important to mention that the Baud area was located in the contiguous territory of the Bhaumakara's rule and hence these evidences also implicitly imply the interconnection of the developing sub-regions. Thus, Tripathy could rightfully argue there was a considerable influence on *Pr̥thvīmahādevī* from her brother. Moreover, both the queen's charters ascribed themselves as *Śrī-Sindagaurī*. In this context, I would like to state that the Gopalpur charter of Janamejaya I *Mahābhavaguta* issued in his 1st regnal year dated to 9th c. CE mentioned the name of his parents, king *Svabhātuṅga* and queen *Sindhīrūragaurī*.¹⁶⁰ It could be possible that *Pr̥thvīmahādevī* associated her epithet of *Śrī-Sindagaurī* with her metronymic name and *Tribhuvanamahādevī* I with her paternal association belonging to *Sinda* king¹⁶¹ of family. Shatarupa Bhattacharya opines that *Pr̥thvīmahādevī* claimed the throne as *Tribhuvanamahādevī* II, the wise and the former royal queen of the family *Tribhuvanamahādevī* I again reclaimed the Bhauma throne as regnant. Even if this opinion remains unclear due to the limitation of the sources, we can ask if this is pointing towards the presence of resistance through the epigraphic medium. Whether the resistance came from the queen themselves or influenced by external and internal forces, the curiosity to recover active

¹⁵⁸ Ibid in same cited above. Refer to the footnote of the page.

¹⁵⁹ Snigdha Tripathy, *Inscriptions of Orissa Volume II (Inscriptions of the Bhauma-Karas)*, ICHR New Delhi and Pratibha Prakashan Delhi, 2000, pp. 40-43.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid, in 'Gopalpur charter of Janamejaya I *Mahābhavaguta*; Year 1', p. 224.

¹⁶¹ Ibid, p. 44.

voices of women from early Indian sources is immense. However, the evident political chaos and the anxiety-driven courtly politics brings out the power rivalry but also a thoughtful query on seeking perceptions of the reason behind such usage of both patrilineal and matrilineal connections by the women rulers while recording their own grants, will be discussed further.

For Vakulamahādevī, the step-mother of Daṇḍimahādevī, Anjali Verma notes it as an uncommon state of affairs in succession.¹⁶² Vakulamahādevī was the daughter of the Bhañja family, the latter became a feudatory of the Bhaumakaras and Dharmamahādevī succeeded the former. While describing her succession, the Taltali Plate of Dharmamahādevī¹⁶³ undeniably stressed the importance of the connection with the Bhañja family both for Vakulamahādevī and herself. This can be opined as a form of the political policy of the court exercised by the women rulers as a part of their elite social identity. It is worth mentioning that although Bhañjas were the subordinates of the Bhaumakaras, the former before the latter's advent were a powerful *maṇḍala* polity ruling in the then Utkala region, modern Keonjhar district of Odisha.¹⁶⁴ The representation of such familial relations denoting socio-political dimensions in the land grant charter to a learned *brāhmaṇa* free of taxes was important in the context of women rulers asserting authority and power as well as upholding the traditions. This is also a powerful visual reminder of the vast and diffused political network controlled by the rulers both queens and kings alike.

While looking into some of the specific information in the inscriptions of the ruling classes as donors, it reveals interesting facets about the inheritance, proprietary rights and its wider socio-economic contexts. The Santiragrama Plate of Daṇḍimahādevī issued in the Bhauma year 180¹⁶⁵ stands testimony to her matrilineal succession in the Bhaumakara dynasty.

¹⁶² Ibid, pp. 162-163.

¹⁶³ Snigdha Tripathy, 'The Taltali Plate of Dharmamahādevī No. 23' in *Inscriptions of Orissa Volume II (Inscriptions of the Bhauma-Karas)*, ICHR New Delhi and Pratibha Prakashan Delhi, 2000, pp. 216-221.

¹⁶⁴ The example has been written based on the readings of B.P. Sahu's works on early medieval Odisha notably from *The Making of Regions in Indian History*, Primus Books, New Delhi, 2020.

¹⁶⁵ *EI* 29, 1951-52, pp. 79-89.

Gaurīmahādevī, her queen mother, does not have any known inscription in her name, but Daṇḍimahādevī issued more six charters till the Bhauma 190th year, to her credit which bears evidence of accruing imperial titles and clearly performing every usual social rites of maintaining the legacy of the Bhaumakara family, keeping the latter as beneficiary, through the issuance of the inscriptions. That she received enormous resources during her succession is prevalent from the lands and villages she granted in both the Tosalis. Both the Ganjam Plates of the reigning queen in the Year 180 brings out an interesting practice of re-gifting as the only instance in Bhaumakara dynasty of the donated village situated in Koṅgoda-*maṇḍala* of Dakṣiṇa-Tosali, by the donees to other learned *brāhmaṇas*. The original donee of Ganjam Plate A and B was *Pratihāra* Dhavala immigrant from Veṅgipāṭaka and Bhaṭṭaputra Puruṣottama respectively.¹⁶⁶ The recognition of two socially different people in the stratification as the eligible done by the reigning queen is significant. Even though Dhavala was recognized with his *gotra*, *sakha* and his family lineage and born as a *Brāhmiṇ*, he was a state functionary too. This is important to consider in the context of the royal household and its personnel¹⁶⁷. The elaborate and differentiated spaces within the royal household in early medieval period had different officials in the political hierarchy. Also, with the ownership of land, comes the liberty to take decisions of the distribution of resources, which Daṇḍimahādevī prominently exercised being the only princess-ruler of the family because of her inherited properties and accumulated ones through revenue collection. The Angul Plate of Dharmamahādevī implies its existence as a *kara-śāśana* with the collection of annual revenue in the form of silver (*kara-triṇi-pala-ru(pya)kaḥ*).¹⁶⁸ Thus, royal women were also involved in imposing heavy taxes on land and excruciating economic powers from multiple functioning levels of the state. Equally significant is her Taltali Plate where she maintained the *dharmanīti* and addressed about her land grant vehemently with all the important attributes of the land to the done. The state's participation in the formation of the society continuously was not gendered as Bhaumakara inscriptions show.

¹⁶⁶ *El 6*, 1900-1901, pp. 133-142. It is to be mentioned that Veṅgipāṭaka is clearly the town of Vengi located in Northern Andhra Pradesh and Bhaṭṭaputra Puruṣottama was a *brāhmaṇa* village. This is an indication of trans-local and trans-regional linkages.

¹⁶⁷ Snigdha Tripathy, 'Ganjam Grant of Daṇḍimahādevī; Year 180, Plate A, No 17', in *Inscriptions of Orissa Volume II (Inscriptions of the Bhauma-Karas)*, ICHR New Delhi and Pratibha Prakashan Delhi, 2000, p.181.

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid*, 'Angul Copper-Plate Grant of Dharmamahādevī, No. 22', p. 213.

Kumkum Roy is of opinion that the identities of elite women were constituted in variety of ways in the early Indian sources. The inscriptions under study reveal all the women rulers of the Bhaumakara family with imperial titles of *Paramabhaṭṭārikā-Mahārājadhirāja Parameśvari*. Stray evidence from the Talcher Grant of Śubhākara¹⁶⁹, Bhauma year 141 reveals the existence of his queen mother Hirāmahādevī, who was further entitled as *Mahārājadhirāja Parameśvari*. One can notice the feminine representations as a visual marker of confirming to gender identity. Apart from exercising their own agency as discussed above in the context of complex political and economic affairs, other queen who were not rulers but are known through different inscriptions. Chaurasi Grant of Śivakaradeva II¹⁷⁰, one of the earliest Bhauma rulers, in the 12th year of Bhauma rule acknowledged the existence of Śivakaradeva I's chief queen *Mahādevī Śrī-Jayāvalidevī* in relation to their son, Śrī-Śubhākara I also known as Kṣemaṅkaradeva, encountered in Hamśesvara temple inscription. There is also an evidence of Śivakara III's queen Mohinidevī of Bhavāna-*vaṁśa*, the mother of Śubhākara III, when the latter issued his Terundia Plate in the Bhauma year 100. The Bhauma king also mentioned his queen Nṛnnādevī.¹⁷¹ This is related with the fact that the identity of an individual is in accordance with their access to resources. Such patterns reflect the multiple strategies of communication related to gender in early medieval contexts. The Dhenkenal Grant of Tribhuvanamahādevī I¹⁷² have been associated with the metaphor of goddess Kātyāyāni while she ascended her throne. The verses in the grant say that she protected the *maṇḍala* polity of the Bhaumakara territory and her subjects as *Gosvāminī* with feudatories being loyal to her rule. The holding of such *brāhmaṇical* titles describes her immense attribution towards the upholding of the Brāhmaṇism. Elsewhere, in the Baud Grants¹⁷³ Tribhuvanamahādevī II was associated with the acts of *dāna* or donation to temple of Umā-Maheśvara, a host of ritualistic materials as well as garments to the Shaivite mendicants. It is interesting to note that while the concerned queen called herself *Paramavaiṣṇavī*, the co-existence and extended patronage to

¹⁶⁹ Ibid, 'Talcher Plate of Śubhākara; Year 141, No. 10' pp. 135-136.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid, 'Chaurasi Grant of Śivakaradeva, Year 12, No.3', pp. 105-106.

¹⁷¹ Ibid, 'Terundia Plate of Śubhākara, Year 100, No. 7', p.121.

¹⁷² Ibid, 'The Dhenkenal Grant of Tribhuvanamahādevī, Year 180- No. 15', pp. 167-172.

¹⁷³ Ibid, 'Baud Grant Plate A and Plate B of Tribhuvanamahādevī No. 13-14' in *Inscriptions of Orissa Volume II (Inscriptions of the Bhauma-Karas)*, ICHR New Delhi and Pratibha Prakashan Delhi, 2000, pp. 154-166.

diverse religious establishment along with the village granted to the family of *Dānapati* or the Brāhmaṇa in charge of all functions of the donated grant indicates the complex social emotion that must have been arisen in the court. This is because one part of the grant given actually functioned in terms of payments for services as *uparikara* (additional taxes) that have been imposed and the other part of the grant has been made as a gift out of affection to mendicants or the *pādamūlas* for their food and clothing and maintenance of the family of the *brāhmaṇa*. However, due to the evolution of political systems and networks in early medieval period, the social mobility and acknowledgement of the *brāhmaṇas* also increased. Even though the inscription is silent on acquiring merit by the queen, one cannot ignore the striking invisible anxiety of the religious nature of gift-giving.

Shatarupa Bhattacharya argues, the practice is not straightforward because gift-giving depends upon the relation between the donor and donee. As she claims, the ritual acceptance and reciprocation become essential in this context.¹⁷⁴ I opine on this term that the act made both by the donee and the donor affirmed own identity and status as well as formed a kind of social bonding. Grants for repairing and construction of temples, as well as the building of wells, are evident in multiple inscriptions issued since the first millennium CE. For instance, the Haṁseśvara Temple inscription¹⁷⁵ was built in the early years of for the god Mādhaveśvara or Śiva and the installation of the deity Cāmuṇḍā by queen Vatsadevī¹⁷⁶ in the capital seat Jajpur. Vatsadevī's religious inclination and worship are evident related to Tantrism where the goddess Cāmuṇḍā belonged to, else about whom are unknown due to the lack of evidence. It can be always said that the religious landscape of early medieval Odisha saw the pattern of diffusion,

¹⁷⁴ Satarupa Bhattacharya, 'Gender, Dāna and Epigraphs' in Kumkum Roy and others (eds) *Beyond the Woman Question: Reconstructing Gendered Identities in Early India*, Primus Books, 2018, p. 65.

¹⁷⁵ Snigdha Tripathy, 'Haṁseśvara Temple Inscription of the Time of the Bhauma-Kara Dynasty No.1', in *Inscriptions of Orissa Volume II (Inscriptions of the Bhauma-Karas)*, ICHR New Delhi and Pratibha Prakashan Delhi, 2000, pp. 101-102. Cited in Satarupa Bhattacharya, 'Gender, Dāna and Epigraphs' in Kumkum Roy and others (eds) *Beyond the Woman Question: Reconstructing Gendered Identities in Early India*, Primus Books, 2018, p. 73. Bhattacharya states that 'Cynthia Talbot holds that naming the deity of a new temple after an individual was a method of honouring the person'.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid, Cāmuṇḍā Image Inscription of Vatsadevī No.24, p. 222.

appropriation and a constant negotiation while trying to establish one's own belief. This also shows the patronage of the queens even not being the rulers; they had control over resources like the ruling queens of the Bhaumakara family. Interestingly, the deification of the queen Mādhavadevī after the naming of the deity while the reigning king Śubhākaradeva I followed Buddhism indicates the mutual relations of extending patronage hence the gendered status in the royal household seemed to be altered deviant of the prescribed societal norm of a faithful wife.

As Bhattacharya mentions about the Dharmaśāstras, the notion of giving gifts was legalised with rules and regulations. With growing popularity, confidence and power among the women rulers, the inscriptions are evident of the patronising social categories for public validation. The act of dāna was seen an act of legitimation.¹⁷⁷ While looking into the land grant document as a royal legal one, it is visible how Bhaumakara inscriptions followed the prescribed treatises of when and how the villages and uncultivable land could be granted to the *brāhmaṇas* or religious establishments. The records of the women rulers contain enormous mention of certain occupational groups endowed along with the land like *tantuvāya* (weaver), *śauṇḍika* (vintner/distillers), *gokuṭa* (milkman) as *prakṛitikāḥ* or subjects¹⁷⁸. One can also notice the scribe's multiple administrative designations and fluid identity inscribing the record. In the Baud Grant of Tribhuvanamahādevī II dated about 9th century CE, Śrī-Malloka, the executor of the grant was designated as *Mahākṣapaṭalādhikṛta* and *Rāṇaka*. On the other, Śakrasena, the grant writer, had been appointed as *Mahākṣapaṭalika* and *Bhōgin*.¹⁷⁹ It denotes that the imagery of the scribe could co-exist in the courtly hierarchy. These professionals many at times happened to be *sāmantas* too. Thus, the inscriptions

¹⁷⁷ Satarupa Bhattacharya, 'Gender, Dāna and Epigraphs' in Kumkum Roy and others (eds) *Beyond the Woman Question: Reconstructing Gendered Identities in Early India*, Primus Books, 2018, p. 75.

¹⁷⁸ Such listings of social/occupational groups are ubiquitous in all the Bhaumakara land grant records. The issuance of all the land grants was from their capital city Jajpur or *Guheśvrapāṭaka* (victorious camp). See, for instance, Snigdha Tripathy, 'Ganjam Grant of Daṇḍimahādevī, Plate A, No. 17' in *Inscriptions of Orissa Volume II (Inscriptions of the Bhauma-Karas)*, ICHR New Delhi and Pratibha Prakashan Delhi, 2000, pp.178-184.

¹⁷⁹ Snigdha Tripathy, 'Baud Grant of Tribhuvanamahādevī; Year 158, Plate A- No. 13', in *Inscriptions of Orissa Volume II (Inscriptions of the Bhauma-Karas)*, ICHR New Delhi and Pratibha Prakashan Delhi, 2000, pp. 154-160.

deviating from the norm captured the 'actual' social world of the occupational groups, officers, and subjects. Hence, analysis of the mobilities of such social groups is essential through inscriptional evidence to understand the everyday histories. It is also important to understand the deviation markers from the prescribed social treatises that other literary sources are silent.

Thus, it is to infer that the land grant charters are viable sources for understanding economic power, and women who acquired political prominence had significant control and access to resources. However, in a patriarchal courtly setting, one cannot avoid the power relations between male members and women rulers or vice-versa. In the inscriptions, the mention of the whole genealogy and the women rulers' praise of the kings as rulers and predecessors are instances of maintaining both domestic attachments and reclaiming agency. The Ganjam Grant of Daṇḍimahādevī¹⁸⁰ states about her long rule of the kingdom and her prowess as well as making grants to acquire merits for her parents and all other creatures of the earth. While this indicates the aesthetic sensibility in writing a record but the agency of the reigning queen exercised is noteworthy. The grants issued by both queen Tribhuvanamahādevī I and Daṇḍimahādevī¹⁸¹ talk about the incredible feat against rebellions and efficiently maintaining both administrative and revenue fields. Notably, Daṇḍimahādevī claimed succession in the Bhaumakara dynasty from her ruling mother Gaurimahādevī and called herself as a *rājahanṣī*, thus asserting her superiority. The acceptance of the princess's sovereignty and adherence to her subjects is visible in her rhetorics as well as the details of the granted land. Bhattacharya points out that none of the inscriptions of Daṇḍimahādevī talks about the presence of her father and accession to the throne. Thus, she flaunted her authority in full view and while administering the two regions of Tosali in her own right exercised the degree of self-assurance without the support or presence of any male from the dynasty or heir. That the holding of multiple imperial titles was acknowledged by the subjects considering the land grants were public proclamations to the range of administrative officers, courtly counsels, village subjects

¹⁸⁰ Ibid, 'Ganjam Grant of Daṇḍimahādevī', Plate A, No. 17', pp. 178-184.

¹⁸¹ The grants of both Tribhuvanamahādevī I and Daṇḍimahādevī were studied from Snigdha Tripathy's *Inscriptions of Orissa Volume II (Inscriptions of the Bhauma-Karas)*, ICHR New Delhi and Pratibha Prakashan Delhi, 2000.

and beyond and the Kumurang Grant of Daṇḍimahādevī¹⁸² informs about the suppression of the hostile kingdoms and securing the Bhaumakara territory during her reign. This could also be corroborated, along with other inscriptions issued by the subordinate rulers and feudatories of Bhaumakaras, which need focus and research. Vakulamahādevī's grant in the Bhauma Year 204 who expressed herself as *sa-patna-jananī* of Daṇḍimahādevī¹⁸³ also enjoyed allegiance of the subordinate ruling chiefs under her who were equally associated with the transactional process of the grant.

Unlike the Bhaumakaras, the queens of the notable subordinates such as Śvetaka Gaṅgas and Tuṅgas did not assert their rights in granting inscriptions except getting associated with the execution in several ways. In one of the Śvetaka Gaṅgas's land grant records, the donor happened to be the queen Śrī-Ela, wife of Indravarman, the latter held the title of *Mahārājādhirāja-Parameśvara*, to the construction of the temple of Viṣṇu and Śiva¹⁸⁴ as well as extending patronage associated with the landscapes of the king's ancestral homeland. Jayavarman's grant executed under the permission of the Bhauma king had his queen *Rājñī* Prthvīmahādevī¹⁸⁵ who was associated with registering the royal seal (*lañchita*). Likewise, Anantavarman's queen *Mahādevī* Vāṣabhṭārikā¹⁸⁶ did register the royal seal. Other queens who were part of the transaction in terms of execution of the grant were Trikalīṅga-mahādevī, Śrī-mahādevī, and *Paramavaiṣṇava* Gosvaminī-mahādevī as inferred from the plates of Javarmadeva, Prthivīvarmadeva and Indravarman¹⁸⁷ respectively. It is to be noted that the adjoining suffix *mahādevī* could be both the names and the title of the chief queens. The confirmation of the aspiration in bearing territorial titles is evident from *Trikalīṅga*. Such instances seek adherence to the occupied positions in the courtly culture and undertaking of the act of patronage with a certain degree of mobility. That the non-ruling queens were also a part

¹⁸² Ibid, 'Kumurang Plate of Daṇḍimahādevī; Year 187, No. 20', pp. 197-202.

¹⁸³ Ibid, 'A Grant of Vakulamahādevī; Year 204, No.21', p. 204.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid, pp. 165-71.

¹⁸⁵ S.K. Acharya, 'Indian Museum Plates of Indravarman' in *Copper Plate Inscriptions of Odisha: A Descriptive Catalogue (Circa Fourth Century to Sixteen th Century CE)*, D.K. Printworld (P) Ltd. New Delhi, 2014, pp. 134-135.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid, 'Ganjam Plates of Jayavarman of the time of Unmattakeśarī', p. 182.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid, 'Badakhemundi Plates (D) of Jayavarmadeva', p. 185; 'Ganjam Plates of Prthivīvarmadeva', p. 187; 'Indian Museum Plates of Indravarman', p. 187-188.

of the execution of the land grants suffices to the assumption of their involvement in non-confirming gendered activities. However, the striking indication of self-confidence by the elite royal queens and their ability to perform agency in variable patterns is noteworthy.

I would like to mention that this chapter has not been approached with looking into the gender divisions in terms of exercising power and authority in a monarchical polity but how the epigraphic records make one read the indications and representations of the complex social world linked by ties and networks. So far, the inscriptions mentioned have shown that the elite royal women were well acquainted with the convergence of wielding relations in domestic and courtly contexts. A notable instance of forging social relation is evident as the story of friendship among the royal women of different social status in the hierarchy from Tribhuvanamahādevī II or Pṛthvīmahādevī's Baud Grant in the 158th year. The reigning queen ruler's grant was executed on the request of Śaśilekhā, the queen of *Mahāmaṇḍalādhipati* Maṅgalakalaśa, in favour of the temple and the deity of Uma-Maheśvara was installed by Śaśilekhā for the temple in memory of her father Śrī-Nanna of Virāṭa lineage and named Nānneśvara.¹⁸⁸ The emotive bonding among father-daughter and royal women is expressive from this inscription. The social and cultural world of the early medieval period was transactional but the forging of relationships that goes beyond the hierarchical status is equally discernible. The status of the reigning queen and Śaśilekhā belonging to the affluent lineage were different in terms of the power relations in the hierarchy as she was the queen to the *maṇḍala* chief. The chief seemed to be local influential one and his queen possessed resources for taking out the construction. This was a kind of strategic communication for the world to know in an otherwise patriarchal setting.

On the one hand, the deity was named after the queen or on behalf of their any kinship ties even if they did not possess the throne, it indicates her honorable position in the polity. In contrast, on the other, the independent royal queen assuming the throne without a male heir did not lead to any disruption in the succession as well as strengthened the heightened anxiety of power politics and the right to resources by reclaiming their elite status widely. That the royal

¹⁸⁸ Snigdha Tripathy, 'Baud Grant of Tribhuvanamahādevī; Year 158, Plate B- No. 14', in *Inscriptions of Orissa Volume II (Inscriptions of the Bhauma-Karas)*, ICHR New Delhi and Pratibha Prakashan Delhi, 2000, pp. 163-164.

queens also followed the mechanisms used by kings to strengthen ties with the people in a locality is evident through the mention of clear demarcations and well-defined boundaries of the gift village. The knowledge of the geographies, for instance, the presence of a certain well known Kālemvura tree or Ekatāla (one palm tree) in the locality, as well as the existence of Samudra-kara-vandha (bridge or embankment) and *goherikā* (paddy field or village road)¹⁸⁹, indicates that the woman donor's association with the area. One can also argue that the presence of local chiefs residing in such localities must have been associated with the royal court. In this context, I would like to opine that the knowledge of sites and resources might have built up some negotiation, contestation, and endured cultural product to enter into a more extensive exchange network. This brings me to the discussion of what B.D. Chattopadhyaya suggested a possibility of demarcating a subregion.¹⁹⁰ That the subregion can be described as a cultural space with both continuities and shifts over time with influence from outside and coming together of local governance and changes from within. Chattopadhyaya's opinion makes me ponder the role of inscriptions exercised with authority and power by royalities.

This brings to the question of looking into the making and remaking of a space historically and culturally with the help of multiple socio-economic and political forces. The charters issued by the royal queens equally devoted their documents mentioning well-defined boundaries, flora, fauna and activities related to the concerned village linked to multiple nodes of the region. This is how, I would argue, even though the Bhaumakaras did not emerge as a regional power, they could consolidate themselves as subregional power in the territories of both Uttara and Dakṣiṇa Tosali and surrounding localities.

That the royal queens could uphold all the gestures and courtly virtues with a long-term rule making the Bhaumakara kingdom a subregional power is indicative through their inscriptional imprecatory and benedictory verses as all the male rulers of the dynasty did. Interestingly, the

¹⁸⁹ Ibid, p. 202. The use of the term *goherikā* is an Oriya term suggesting the cultural implication and representation of one's own region/ subregion/ locality.

¹⁹⁰ B.D. Chattopadhyaya, 'Space, History and Cultural Processes' in *The Concept of Bharatavarsha and Other Essays*, Ranikhet, Permanent Black, 2017, p. 47.

document writing pattern is strikingly similar for all the published grants one is acquainted with. This could be mainly to uphold the courtly legacy of governance by the rulers.

To conclude, I would like to opine that the participation in the courtly elements to exchanges, grants, and control over resources on the part of the royal queens have their significance in a patriarchal setting. While the elite royal women come with their privileges, the visibilisation of their gender identities, status, and prowess through land grant study is noteworthy. What Bhaumakara women rulers could own and to what extent they could claim their authority can be studied through their long-term rule with no male heir or advisor. Moreover, the concern with looking into the cultural practice of *dāna* or gift-giving to construct social identities brought out many linkages of conducting social and economic history. One can argue that the concern of reconstructing an individual's identity with access to resources is relational¹⁹¹. Instead of looking into their rule as another flat socio-space, I have tried to contour a different engendered space in terms of their self-owning subjectivity, power, and anxiousness, even though the readings sometimes fall back on reconstructing these identities. These were some of the specific ways in which relations of gender were constituted and patriarchal institutions and practices got consolidated. However, one also needs to consider that the royal women in ruling positions were also the bearers of patriarchy and equally exercised facets of rulership and kinships embedded in the institutions of patriarchal notions. If one investigates the descriptions of the seals affixed to the copper plate charters, the emulation pattern of identifying themselves with the legend as the rulers only but not differently as queens, for instance, in the form of *śrimad-daṇḍimahādevyāḥ*¹⁹². The varied social status even between the royal women also needs to be considered as we have seen the meaning of queenship and the recognition of the women rulers equally with the epithet of queen are contextual and different. The 'queens' were not a homogeneous category, to be precise. Thus, the nature of queenship impeccably varied according to the context from which they were proliferating power, resources and control. What is noteworthy in the case of the Bhaumakaras is that the women rulers' wielded

¹⁹¹ The understanding of the concerned article by Satarupa Bhattacharya, 'Gender, Dāna and Epigraphs' in Kumkum Roy and others (eds) *Beyond the Woman Question: Reconstructing Gendered Identities in Early India*, Primus Books, 2018, pp. 63-92.

¹⁹² S.K. Acharya, 'Ambapua Plate of Daṇḍimahādevī, Year 180' in *Copper Plate Inscriptions of Odisha: A Descriptive Catalogue (Circa Fourth Century to Sixteenth Century CE)*, D.K. Printworld (P) Ltd. New Delhi, 2014, p. 214.

power and politics based on their sub-regional specificities for the consolidation of ruling territories in terms of excellent administrative, financial and military capabilities. Such evidence as seen was found in contemporary early medieval Kashmir¹⁹³ too.

One can argue that the association of the royal women rulers in acquiring social sanctions was necessary with the concomitant socio-political and economic transformations in the society. Did the subordinate rulers and the subjects thought about paying attention during the enthronement of the queen? Certainly not as the inscriptions reveals, they were welcomed in terms of their capabilities of governance and revered highly because of their power and skills. Hence it is deducible that the study of the inscriptions showed that the succession indeed was a complex affair.

Thus, the foregoing assessment of the land grant charters issued by the queens require a revisit in future to probe them in relation to other inscriptional and textual evidences as well as visual markers while engendering the materials in writing history beyond the woman question as they were the pertinent force in state societal structure. Equally important is to consider the role of non-royal men and women while studying the societal and gender questions for the history of regions and state formations.

However, the table below will give a bird's eye view of the Bhaumakara royal queens. It is to be noted that I have provided the tabular data only of few records.

Grant of Tribhuvanamahādevī (II)	Name of the woman seeking request	Donee	Donor's identity	Village granted

¹⁹³ During the draft of the current chapter, my supervisor Prof. Suchandra Ghosh shared some anecdotes on 'Women and Empowerment: Case Studies from Early India', from a presentation she prepared for a lecture at University of Hyderabad, Telangana. She explained me the existence of similar narratives of women rulers in context of Kashmir and Odisha.

Baud Plate A in the Bhauma Year 158, issued from Guheśvarapāṭaka	Śaśilekhā	The temple constructed by Śaśilekhā named Nānneśvara.	The reigning queen Prṭhvīmahādevī or Tribhuvanamahādevī (<i>Maharājadhirāja</i> along with other multiple royal titles), daughter of Kośala, wife of Kusumahāra. Also known as Sindagaurī.	Village Koṭṭapurā together with another locality called Nānneśvara-tala-pāṭaka situated in the district or viṣaya of Tamālakhaṇḍa
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Grants of Tribhuvanamahādevī (I) Gosvāminī	Village Granted	Nature of the Grant	Administrative/ Social Categories	Identity markers of the donor
Dhenkenal Plate, Bhauma Year 160, issued from Guheśvarapāṭaka	Kontasyarā-grāma in Olāśrama-viṣaya situated in Gayāḍapura of Dakṣiṇa Toṣalī	Permanent and rent-free land with <i>uparikas</i> and <i>uddeśas</i> . The charter states that the grant was executed with the intention to bring down the rain. the land was granted <i>tantuvāya</i> (weaver)	<i>Mahāsāmantas, mahārājas, antaraṅgas, kumārāmātyas, uparikas, vṛhadbhogins, viṣayapatis, tadāyuktakas, dāṇḍapāśikas, sthānāntarikas.</i> Writer- Nāgaḍadeva, the <i>Mahākṣapaṭalika Bhogin.</i>	The donor is said to have maintained the four <i>varṇa</i> system. She even had a <i>guru</i> preceptor named Dhruvamitra. She held the titles of <i>Paramavaiṣṇavī, Paramabhaṭṭārikā Maharājadhirāja-Parameśvarī</i> , also credited with the imposition of light taxation on the subjects.

		<i>śauṇḍika</i> (distillers), <i>gokuṭa</i> (milkman/herd sman) outposts (gulmakas), <i>kheṭa</i> (hamlet), <i>ghaṭṭa</i> (harbour) and <i>nadītara-</i> <i>sthāna</i> (ferries).	Engraver- Harivarddhana. Heater- Virāsena known as <i>malin-</i> <i>amba-vaha</i> (the bearer of uncleaned water) Dūtaka of the grant- Balabhadra, the <i>Mahāksapaṭalādhi</i> <i>kṛta</i> .	
Udaranga or Odaronga, Bhauma Year 164, issued from Guheśvarapāṭak a	Odaroṅga village in Dharmmana gara-viṣaya of Uttara Toṣalī	Same as above but here intention for granting the land was different from the previous one.	Same as above. Writer- Sakrasena, the <i>Mahāksapaṭalika</i> <i>Bhogin</i> . Engraver- Harivarddhana. Heater- Vinītabhaḍḍa known as <i>malin-</i> <i>amba-vaha</i> (the bearer of uncleaned water Dūtaka of the grant- Harṣa, the <i>Mahāksapaṭalādhi</i> <i>kṛta</i> .	Same as above.

Grant of Daṇḍīmahādevī	Village Granted	Nature of the village	Other Terms
Amabapua Plate in the Bhauma Year 180, issued from Guheśvarapāṭaka Epithets: Imperial sovereign titles, same as the above queen-ruler.	Name of the village is absent but it had been granted in Dakṣiṇa Tosali and issued from Guheśvarapāṭaka	Permanent and rent - free holding with the land being distributed in portions or <i>apara-khaṇḍa-kṣetra</i> among the donees.	<i>akarīkṛtya</i> .

Grant of Vakulamahādevī, Bhauma Year 204 Epithet: Imperial sovereign titles, same as the above queen rulers.	Donee	Village Granted	Important Economic/ Social Categories
Find Spot Unknown but issued from Guheśvarapāṭaka	Brāhmaṇa Mihadhīca, migrated from Śravasti and settled in the village of Kānteḍa.	Choḍātavutsa in Uregoḍḍa-khaṇḍa in Uttara Tosali	Composer of eulogy- <i>Mahākavi</i> Jambhala <i>Dūtaka</i> or the executor- <i>Mahākṣapatalādhikṛta</i> <i>Rāṇaka</i> Śrī Indra. Engraver- Kumāraka.

Grant of Dharmamahādevī	Donee	Village granted and nature of land	Administrative officers	Other social and economic terms
Taltali Plate, issued from Guheśvarapāṭaka Undated Epithet: Imperial sovereign titles, same as the above queen rulers.	Brāhmaṇa Padmanābha, immigrant from Kolañcha and resided at Komsallā	Taratolai village in Talamura- viṣaya. Permanent and rent free land with uddeśas.	<i>Mahāsāmantas,</i> <i>mahārājas,</i> <i>antaraṅgas,</i> <i>kumārāmātyas,</i> <i>uparikas,</i> <i>vṛhadbhogins,</i> <i>viṣayapatis,</i> <i>tadāyuktakas,</i> <i>dāṇḍapāśikas,</i> <i>sthānāntarikas</i>	<i>Pustakapālas,</i> and the land was granted <i>tantuvāya</i> (weaver) <i>śauṇḍika</i> (distillers), gokuṭa (milkman/herdsman) outposts (gulmakas , <i>kheṭa</i> (hamlet), <i>ghaṭṭa</i> (harbour) and <i>nadītara-sthāna</i> (ferries).

Image Vatsadevī	Inscription of	Date	Place
Insatllation of deity	Cāmuṇḍa	10 th century	Jajpur, Cuttack District.

Chapter 5

Conclusion

In this dissertation, I have tried to consider questions arising from the conceptual framework of ‘integrative model’. The charters taken into consideration provide the researcher with its implicit and explicit evidences that ultimately forms history-writing. The first problem that concerns one in the study of copper plate inscriptions is how to define its characteristics. The visible social and economic markers are a part of political forces under which the charters were granted. Therefore, there is a need to approach those categories of sources within a framework or multiple frameworks. First and foremost, with the issue of *agrahāra* lands, the *brāhmaṇas* either migrated from their native place or were already the inhabitants which were few in case, settled on the granted lands along with considerable rights on the various professional and social groups granted with the land. The lands were itself spatially divided into multiple units, some of the units were entitled to revenue payments to the kings and also, to be enjoyed by the donees. This seems to be a process of coming together and getting consolidated that ultimately forms a state society. Under these societies, sharp hierarchical divisions among the elites and non-elites, affluents and non-affluents got momentum. They ultimately formed into various castes, and needless to mention, the early medieval had complex socio-economic patterns ultimately setting the foundation for the later periods where caste divisions and occupations became tight-knitted. One can refer to the claims of the early medieval rulers across male and female ones belonging to both *brāhmaṇic* and *śrāmaṇic* school of beliefs to be the protector of the four *varṇa* systems. The Bhaumakara epigraphic records are also the sites of such reference.

On the other, the *brāhmadeya* lands or the settlement of *brāhmaṇa* households emerged as the most socio-economic category among the strategic villages under the Bhaumakara rulers as we have seen. The establishment of such settlement evident from the Neulpur grant confirms patronisation and an aspiration in expansion of the ruling territories. It also created a new stratum among various social groups. In this context, it is to be noted that the establishment was not always an easy one. There must have occurred contestations and forceful imposition of economic and political barriers that an enormous range of distillers, weavers, local traders, local notable chiefs seems to get transformed and addressed with the land grants. The expansion of the Bhaumakaras and their local subordinate rulers holding titles according to their territorial inclinations further confirms the claim, for instance, in the Kalinga region and the Gondrama region as we discussed in the third chapter of this dissertation.

In order to conclude the ongoing study, it is now established that the copper plate records are an important source to study to understand the hierarchical continuum in the polity that contributed in the structural changes of society and economy. Simultaneously, it also continued to change the administrative structure for the political purposes. After a thorough study of the Bhaumakara inscriptions along with their feudatories' as discussed above, it can be opined that the relational nature between the sovereign sub-regional power and the local level powers developed a scenario of the appropriation, contestation and negotiation. Each of them retained their own identity with some universal characteristics while issuing land grants. The processes of state formation in this context seem to be based on integrative method with the presence of host of subordinate rulers who either owed allegiance for their legitimation purpose or for administrative purposes in administering a region. It needs to be mentioned that this does not confirm to the decentralisation of the political structures but instead as the records prominently show, both the local and sovereign rulers maintained their epithets of subordination, semi-independent status and sovereignty respectively.

The dissertation started with the concern of whether the Bhaumakaras showed any trace of imperial ambitions through their records. While the study shows the emergence of the sub-regions of Tosalis shows considerable consolidation in terms of society, polity, culture and economy that lasted for about three centuries were a formidable power in the coastal region of Odisha. Nonetheless, they had fluvial and inland interactions with the other regions namely *Daṇḍabhukti-maṇḍala*. The southern Odisha and Northern Andhra's Kalinga region were also a part of their interactions and donation of lands. The ideological landscape of patronised Buddhism and Saivism also upheld the cultural tradition of the region for the later rulers who formed an imperial kingdom in Odisha that ultimately emerged as regional power. There is also a need to consider the allegiance of at least five subordinate rulers spreaded across the subregions of Tosalis under the Bhaumakaras that had itself generated considerable local level power. The imperial titles held by the rulers both king and queen alike and enormous range of patronage towards the *brāhmaṇas* and other religious institutions are also an indication of their sovereign status.

If we consider the activities of the rulers according to the different sub-regions under the sovereign rule, it is discernible that the identity markers and cultural representations retained

their own practices but was largely integrated into the state structure. The charters also sometimes provide glimpse of the influence of the subregional identities at the time of the grant. The writer, composer and executor of the grant according to the Bhaumakara inscriptions as well as of their feudatories have shown how they migrated from the coastal region of the Tosalis and were in constant interaction with each other thus becoming skilful in many professions. This is further attested by the fact that, they held many important administrative positions as shown in the form of tabular data in the preceding chapters of this dissertation. Following such pattern, the trajectories of the evolution of regional traditions and the questions of the formation of regional identities could be addressed.

The dissertation also engaged with the issue of hinterland from the coastal areas as an imperative part of the state structure that were negotiated and taken as a part of the rule under the rulers from coastal region. The minimal presence of traders, merchants, and other professional groups mentioned in the charters under consideration should not be seen as their absence but instead how they formed part of the local production that helped in garnering resources for the state needs to be taken into consideration. This is also how the engagements and influences one sub-region comes to acquire of the other could be studied. This seems to be a point of convergence of multiple ruling lineages coming together through matrimonial relations, subordinate relations or contestations that in turn helped in the convergence of historical processes in the making of the region.

Moving forward, it could be further stated that the corpus taken under consideration were a huge source in reconstructing the powerful aegis of women rulers that further talks about the pattern of culture and polity under the state society. The women rulers, it has been shown did not confirm to the prescribed norms only by enthroning as a regent, rather, all of the women rulers were active in exercising power and administrative positions. That the patriarchal setting did sometimes leave their impressions on the women ruler's records but one can argue that the association of the royal women rulers in acquiring social sanctions was necessary with the concomitant socio-political and economic transformations in the society. Even the subordinate rulers and the subjects were in allegiance during the enthronement of the queen. Certainly as the inscriptions reveals, the assertion that they claimed while on throne as the protector from the feuds and even found to be imposed light taxations. They were welcomed in terms of their

capabilities of governance and revered highly because of their power and skills. But, they equally asserted claims on their own and seized power legitimately apart from being actively engaged in donation and construction activities. Hence it is deducible that the study of the inscriptions showed that the succession indeed was a complex affair.

Hence, after a detailed analysis in the preceding chapters, it can be stated that the Bhaumakaras could have accentuated the process of resource mobilisation under the state apparatus that hierarchised the society further. This reveals an important characteristic of the sub-regional entities coming into being. It is hard to say firmly that they showed traces of imperial regional power but they surely set the apparatus on which the later regional powers built and expanded their state formation. One can further state that the land grant records provides excellent lens to all of these relational nature of local level state formation along with the perspectives on royalty, history of social identities, cultural and material practices, gender issues and economic developments/changes.

I would like to finally conclude with the dearth persisting in historiography on studying coastal societies. At this point, I would like to bring the understanding of the co-relation between the state, the merchants and the mercantile community in the coastal context to light. This also entails probing into the other emerging social communities and diverse categories involved in the shaping and re-shaping of the eastern littoral society and economy. It needs to be taken into consideration that though Odisha has a strong coastline, there is a dearth of strong corpus of literature on it unlike the western coast and the Coromandel Coast of India. What kind of connection, then, could be discerned by looking into the sources between coastal trade and maritime trade network? In this scenario, the current dissertation seems to be a future scope to address the concern through the perspective of ‘connected histories’ method in relation to maritime networks and the coast dotted with numerous ports that might have experienced multi-political, social and economic entity.

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