

Ph.D. Synopsis

Temple Patronage in Odisha: A Study from 7thc.CE to 13thc.CE



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Introduction:

Every land has its unique geographical location along with a distinct cultural environment. Every society has their own distinctive way of life vis-à-vis ethics, morals and manners, traditions, religion, political, economic and other types of activities. The geography of Odisha consists of rich fertile costal belt, elevated mountains, rivers, deltas, tropical forests, valleys etc. It is surrounded by the Bay of Bengal in its east to the ChotaNagpur Plateau and Chhattisgarh in the west and Eastern Ghats and Andhra Pradesh in south to the plains of the Ganges or Jharkhand and West Bengal in the north. It is extended from 17°49' to 22° 34' N Latitude and from 81° 29' E to 87° 29' E longitude.¹The rich geographical accessibilities of Odisha have been nurtured and nourished in shaping this region through the ages.

Patronisation of temples in Early Medieval Odisha marks as a relevant study in the domain of historical research currently. According to the Cambridge Dictionary, the etymology of the root word 'patron' derives from the Latin 'Patronus', which means a protector, a person, group or organization, etc which gives support, encouragement and often financial aid.²As far as the case of patronage in ancient India is concern, the earliest record is found from the *dāna-stuti* hymns of the *R̥g Veda*. The Indian relative or equivalent term of the word 'donor' can be *dātā*, and the very act of giving can be equated with the term *dāna*. The generic word *dāna* has its etymological root in *dā*, means to give.³ So many *dāna* practices were continued during the Vedic rituals and sacrifices. Various terms denotes the act of giving, like *godāna*, *kanyādāna*, etc. The other items of gift were horse, bull, gold, grains, chariot etc. During the performing of *yajnas* or fire sacrifices, these *dāna* or gifts were occurring. Another term '*Purta*' denotes to the further elaboration of *dāna*. In other words, it was a larger enterprise which meant for the donation of wells, water tanks, gardens, temples.⁴ The *dāna* practices continued in a community patronage from the 6thc.BCE. The two heterodox religions, Buddhism and Jainism experienced community patronage or *dāna* from the lay community of the then society, as well as the royal patronage.⁵ The same trend can be observed during Sangam age generally spanning from 3rdc.BCE to 3rdc.CE. The Tamil Sangam was an academy or assembly of poets and bards. They came to flourish in three different period of time span under the royal patronage of the Pandyan kings. Both sacred and profane literatures developed comprising varied subjects, for example love, sex, war, religious practices, popular deities etc. A large number of literatures were produced during the third Sangam by a group of scholars.⁶ This type of patronage was different than that of the Vedic period. It is studied as the 'secular patronage' of ancient India.

Subsequently, a new process of patronage evolved along with the temple building activities from the Gupta and post Gupta period in the 6thc.CE. Temple emerged as an institution, and played a significant role in the social, political, economic and religious arenas. There was a need for the ‘*devasthanā*’ or permanent place of worship for the brahmanic gods and goddesses. Iconographic study reveals that the aniconic form of images were supplemented by the anthropomorphic form of images. For example, the 6thc.CE *Maninageswari* goddess has been replaced by two excellent images of *chamunda* (perhaps 14th-15thc.CE) which are also considered to represent Maninageswari.⁷ The *vedic* gods were mobile in nature, in contrast, the early medieval period saw a transformation in religious sphere. Temple came to exist as the ‘abode of god’. This period witnessed new pattern of patronisation. These acts were mostly recorded as inscriptions etc. The Gupta and post Gupta period patronization was an important political and social activity which was usually operated in a reciprocal manner. These reciprocal relations were anticipating certain results, and also created nexus among different institutions of society leading changes in social structure.

In the context of early medieval Odisha, the temple building activity started under different rulers. So the temple patronage begins roughly from 7thc.CE. Temple patronage could have continued along with different phases of architectural development. Growth of temples in number shows the intentional religious patronisation among different dynastic rulers. Larger temples like the Lingaraja temple of Bhubaneswar, the Jagannatha temple of Puri, and the Sun temple of Konark were hugely patronised by the kings. The implications of royal patronage can be found from different aspects, for example donations, gifts, endowments, temple policy, rituals, services, sculptural motifs etc. This period from 7thc.CE to 13thc.CE marked as a period of temple patronage in a larger scale than that of the subsequent period.

The patrons were mainly a king or queen, in the context of early medieval Odisha. According to the kingship ideology of the Gajapaties, the Later Ganga rulers claimed to rule as son (*putra*) and vassals (*rauta*) of lord Jagannatha. Narasimhadeva I was the first Odishan king came to known by the title *Gajapati* means “Lord of the Elephants”.⁸ Therefore others also do not directly take the credit of being a patron of the temples they built. Apart from that, donors include those patron groups who made various types of donations, like the military officials, elite groups of society, local chiefs, relatives of the king, e.g. daughter, son-in-law etc.⁹ The *Ananta Vasudeva Temple Inscription* mentions that the temple is built by Chandrikadevi, the daughter of king Anangabhimadeva III.¹⁰ Likewise, the *Parvati Temple*

Inscription and an inscription found at the Parsuramesvar temple records that Prapanacharya and Bhimabahika made the arrangements for the daily worship of the temple.¹¹

Temple patronage emerged from the post Gupta period onwards for various reasons. Land grants became widespread during this period. The landed intermediaries emerged along with the land grants mainly to the brahmanas as well as religious institutions. Specifically in Odishan context these were known as *brahmottara* or lands granted to brahmana, and *devottara* or lands given to the religious institutions.¹² Temples were built on some of these granted lands. The grants of land and villages to temples during the Pallava and Chola period gave rise to so many important developments. Firstly, it increased the temple personnel who were paid in kind or through allotments of land.¹³ Patronage to so many brahmanical religious deities came to practice with a deep intention or multiple purposes for patronage. Huge temples were built along with huge donation. Temple Patronage continued for legitimization of power. But it could have other causes also, like glorification of superiority, for getting the support of people, extension of political supremacy, economic control over land and subjects, religious vows and devotion etc. The accumulation of donated lands by the temples might have led to the formation of a class of landed magnets like early medieval south Indian temples.¹⁴ Temples played the role of a bank for lending money to those needy people, consumer of local products for performance of the rituals, and as an employer of a number of occupational groups.¹⁵ Temple patronage has been marked as an evolution an period of transition, germinated from land grants and subsequently survived through huge agricultural surplus and other sources.

There are so many differences between the act of giving and the act of patronizing. All giving does not necessarily mean to patronize. Similarly, all patronizations are confined within the act of giving. The acts of giving have several reasons, for example abide by rules and regulations or voluntarily. Firstly, some people use to give in order to provide services to the temples abide by the rules and regulations. They were the temple staffs mainly, for example, a potter gives a pot, or a carpenter gives some chairs to temples. Here, they give for money, which was for their livelihood or as their occupation. So a sense of economic dependency was there. Sometimes, the act of giving was coercive, especially some temple services. Secondly, some givers give by choice, which is a voluntary act in nature. This voluntary giving could be related to belief or faith, for example, for the fulfilling of certain vow devotees make donations etc. By and large the purposes of giving were fixed for this two types of giving, for example, a devotee gets blessings, or a servitor gets his livelihood in

return of their donation or services. So the temple experiences a group of givers, namely, an individual devotee or a group of pilgrim, temple staffs, and occupational groups etc.

In contrast to this, the act of patronizing corroborates the meaning of giving by the patroniser himself, or employing somebody else. In the latter case, the patron does not give directly, rather a third party functions to give the required services to the client or recipient. By and large, it includes the idea of giving goods, materials, and arrangement of services by choice or by intention of a given result or benefit. The purpose of patronizing can be getting *punya* or virtue; sometimes it may be to show superiority. Sometimes it is for legitimization of power or getting the support of subject.

So many works have done on the structural study of the earliest temples of Odisha. But very less research works has been done on the socio-religious activities of those temples, and their association with the different social strata and professional groups. For example, the milkman provide milk and ghee every day, likewise the gardener gives garlands and flowers, and other people give vegetables, woods, water and cleaner of temple premises etc. It is known as the '*chhattishā niyoga*' or 36 kinds of services to lord Jagannatha in the Puri temple.¹⁶ The temple staffs associated with different services are known as *sebāiyata* or servitors.¹⁷ Likewise, there were multiple factors behind the functioning of those temples of Odisha.

Trends on the writings and study of patronisation were already developed and accustomed with the South Indian History of Chalukyas, Cholas, Andhras and Kakatiyas. Hence the demand of the discipline urges to negotiate with the sources to ask questions and cross-check to see whether the early medieval temples activities of Odisha also experienced same kind of trend or not. Some important questions needed to ask pertaining to present study are- how do the sources assist us in understanding the socio-religious life of Odisha in the context of different social groups of people associated with the daily activities of those early medieval temples? What were the circumstances, conditions and factors leading to the establishment of temples in any certain location, and how all these factors assist in understanding the temple activities in early medieval context? Whether and to what extent the coastal areas came within the orbit of the integrative policy of state formation and temple building activities? Did the coastal areas experienced a coastal polity or at least capable of such a formation as coastal policy? All these research questions needed to ask to the sources in order to have a broader understanding of the history of patronage.

Area of Study:

The central focus of study is the coastal belt of Odisha and the lower portion of Mahanadi basin, in particular. The historical happenings occur in a certain chronological sequence and framework of time period accordingly they are to be studied. The coastal districts of Odisha are the area of study in general. Puri, Bhubaneswar and Konark will be the central focus of study in specific. The present work will focus on the period from 7thc.CE to 13thc.CE. From the vantage point of epigraphic source availability, this period from 7thc.CE to 13thc.CE comprises huge number of inscriptions. During this period, three major dynasties ruled over the land. They were the Bhauma-Karas (c.736 CE to 945 CE),¹⁸ the Somavamsis (c. 882 to 1118 CE)¹⁹ and the Imperial Gangas or Later Gangas (c. 1038 CE to 1434-35 CE).²⁰

The period also witnessed the emergence and maturity of the stylised temple architecture in Odisha. The so-called Kalinga type *Nagara* temples were built here. These temples also have three phases of architectural development, as Early (c. 750 CE to 900 CE), Middle (c. 900 CE to 1100 CE), and the Later (c. 1100 CE to 1250 CE).²¹ The coastal Odishan temples mainly the nexus of temples centred on Bhubaneswar and its vicinity areas are the central focus of study. The temples are the Parsuramesvara temple, Vaital temple, Uttaresvara temple, Isvanesvara temple, Satrugnesvara temple, Bharatesvara temple, Lakshmanesvara temple, Lingaraja temple, Muktesvara temple, Brahmesvar temple, Megheswar temple, Ramesvara temple, Siddhesvara temple, Kedaresvar temple, Ananta Vasudeva temple, Jamesvara temple, Rajarani temple, Somesvara temple, Sari Deul in Bhubaneswar, the Sun temple of Konark and the Jagannatha temple of Puri etc.²² Many of these temples were receivers of patronage as well. Inscriptional evidences and some portrait evidences are helpful sources to understand the process of patronage. Hence, from this context we can get more variety of sources to study about patronage which signify the validity of scopes. It requires to co-ordinate the patronisation and legitimisation in socio-politico-economic realm to understand the history in a broader manner. Based on the historical developments and the availability of sources, the period from 7thc.CE to 13thc.CE is the focus period of the research.

A Review of Previous Works:

Some of the works which has been done on patronage and the relative area is very important to analyse here. To begin with the general history of Odisha, there is ample sources to discern

about the political scenario and so on. R.D. Banarjee's work '*History of Orissa*' (1930) is one of the earliest works which gives a fundamental idea about the political history of Odisha.²³ '*Dynasties of Medieval Orissa*' (1933) of B. Misra constitutes another work which deals about the early history of Odisha and the political developments under different dynasties.²⁴ '*The Comprehensive History and Culture of Orissa*' (1997) is also very relevant book edited by P.K. Mishra and J.K. Samal. The first two parts of volume I comprised of 38 chapters which deals about the political and cultural history from early times to c.1568CE.²⁵

Coming to the part of temple studies of the area the following works are relevant to study. In this regard, A.K. Pattanayak has done a rigorous work in this area entitled '*Religious Policy of the Imperial Gangas*' (1988). This book discusses about temple rules and regulations, functions and practices of rituals under later Ganga period.²⁶ S.K. Panda's book '*Medieval Orissa*' (1991) also helps in understanding the temple and its linkage with different communities of its vicinity.²⁷ '*Cultural History of Orissa*' (1993) is a precious book written by R.R. Misra gives a glimpse on the aspects of Odishan cultural domain.²⁸ H. Kulke's work '*Kings and Cults: State Formation and Legitimization in India and Southeast Asia*' (1993), gives an account on different aspects on the temples of Odisha, its patronization, sanctification with response to the political developments.²⁹ Kulke also argues that according to the *MadalaPānji* (12thc.CE), it was Anangabhima III who established the traditional 36 kind of services or *niyoga* at the Jagannath temple and made extensive land donations to the temple.³⁰ Likewise, the work of U. Singh, '*Kings, Brahmanas and Temples of Orissa: An Epigraphic Study*' (1994) is very essential work. It assists us in studying the socio-religious linkages with those temples of Odisha.³¹ S. Pradhan's edited book '*Orissan History Culture and Archaeology*' (1999) also attempts to portray the cultural history of Odisha comprised of relevant chapters by various authors.³²

Thirdly, the pan-Indian study of temple patronage roughly starts from 20thc.CE onwards among so many historians and scholars. In this regard, J. Heitzman's article "*Temple Urbanism in Medieval South India*" (1987), analyse about the Rajarajeswar temple of Thanjavur during the medieval Chola period, which assists us to understand patronage in a broader manner. The author focuses on the ritual polity and economy of the temple which were functioning through a transitional network, where different groups of individuals were negotiated. For example kings revenue villages, watchman, dancer, ritual specialists, accountants and service workers.³³ B. Stein's article "*The Economic Function of a Medieval South Indian Temple*" (1960), talks about the economic function of a medieval south Indian

temple that is the Tirupati temple during the time of Vijayanagar Empire. Stein discusses about those temple association with different groups of donors and individuals for its survival, for example the state and local donor, pilgrims, temple functionaries, temple manager and trustees.³⁴ C. Talbot's article '*Temples, Donors and Gifts: Patterns of Patronage in Thirteenth Century South India*' (1991), discusses about the temple donors and gifts within the context of the thirteenth century south India. In this article she has taken the coastal region of Andhra Pradesh to study from the period c. 1175 to 1325 CE. She also discusses about different types of donors and their social background, and the amount of gift they had made in a comparative manner.³⁵

R. Thapar's '*Community and Patronage*' (1992), is one of the earlier theoretical work dealing with different types of patronage in an elaborate manner. Thapar defines patronage as a form of exchange which is interlinked between the patron, the artist and the object. She also adds that patronage is a deliberate act of choice.³⁶ '*Female Patronage in Indian Buddhism*' (1992) is another very important work of J.D. Willis. This chapter discusses about how various *Jātakas* and *Therīgāthā* records about female groups association with the Mahayana Buddhist patronage. The first group were the lay women of society and second group belonged to the Buddhist nuns of the *sangha*.³⁷ D. Desai's work on '*The Patronage of the Lakshmana Temple at Khajuraho*' (1992) is a pioneer one in his arena. In this chapter she has done a precise study of brahmanic religious motifs of the temple, and implications of Vishṇu-Kṛishna related images.³⁸ Leslie C. Orr's work '*Donors, Devotees and Daughters of God: Temple Women in Medieval Tamilnadu*' (2000), talks about the *devadasi* association and women patrons. The author also narrates that the temple women or *devadasi* were related to one another, and women played the role of a donor, during Chola period in the earl medieval south India.³⁹ B. Patra in his article "*Devadasi System in Orissa: A Case Study of the Jagannath Temple of Puri*" (2004), talks about the arrangements made by different Later Ganga kings and queens for the continuation of dance and music performances during the daily temple rituals of the lord Jagannath in Puri. Subsequently, the *devadasi* or 'daughters of god' became an integral part in various daily services of lord Jagannath.⁴⁰

Likewise, R. Chakravarti's article '*The Pull towards the Coast*' (2011), gives ideas about 'cult appropriations', the profusion of regional and local powers is a salient feature in the pan-Indian political scenario during the period under review.⁴¹ Along with this, S. Rakshit has done a relative study in her article '*Patronage to Brahmanical Religious Institutions in Early Medieval Odisha*' (2014). It talks about different features and aliments associated with

temples. It reflects temples affiliation with kings, agricultural lands, religious rituals, endowments, lamps, other sacred centres and pilgrimage.⁴² A. Pariti in her book '*Genealogy, Time and Identity*' (2015), discusses about the Chalukyan patronage in south Indian context. The author argues that the purpose of patronage had so many social manifestations, it became a strategy through which economic and social control could be effectively exercised. Therefore, it came within the purview of the broader understanding of the significance of patronage.⁴³ In another article '*Portrayal of Hierarchy through Patronage*' (2018), S. Rakshit analyses about the reflection and existence of hierarchy through patronages in the realm of early medieval Ganga temples really assist us to nurture our ideas about the scopes on this topic.⁴⁴ These works guides us about the historical developments and further study with response to the topic of this present work.

Methodology:

This research work will be mainly based on the historical methodology. Firstly, the sources which are relevant to this present study can be categorized as literary sources and archaeological sources. Further the archaeological study can be classified as inscriptions and monuments. As far as the literary sources are concern, the early Indian literature is an indirect but important source of history of early period. *Madalapanji* (12thc.CE) is a chronicle of Jagannath temple, Puri. It deals about the historical events of Odisha related to Jagannath and Jagannath temple.⁴⁵ *Kalingatuparni* (12thc.CE) of Jayamagondar is also another literary source describes about the relationship between the Cholas and later Ganga dynasty.⁴⁶ *Tabāqat-i-Nasiri* (13thc.CE) of KaziMinhas-i-Siraj enlists as one more contemporary source. It informs about the political and military history of the Later Gangas.⁴⁷

Primary sources, mainly inscriptions are the key sources of this research. It deals about the patient examination of inscriptions without which the history of early India and Odisha will be largely unknown. Inscriptions, which are very important for present work, are the donatives records of the Later Ganga inscriptions, which revels the temple patronage. The *Lingarāja Temple Inscription* of Anangabhimadeva III (13thc.CE) describes that *pāncavātikā* or five 'vāti' donated to GovindaSenapati. The land was granted for the smoother functioning of the temple, and making provisions for the sweeping of the *maṇḍapa* three times in each day, washing its walls once in a year. So, out of five *vāti* of land, two were allotted to a potter to repairmen the roofs of the Lingaraja temple *maṇḍapa*, two to the *churnakāra* or lime washer for white washing and one to sweeper to cleaning the floor.⁴⁸ The *Dāsagobā*

Inscription of Rajaraja III (c. 1198 CE) talks about the happiness of the god *Purushottama*, when he was able to move together with his wife *Lakshmi*, in to new temple built by Gangeswara or Chodagangadeva.⁴⁹ An inscription found at Draksharam (c. 1216 CE), in which king Anangabhimadeva praised as ‘*Rudraputra*’ ‘*Durgāputra*’ and ‘*Purushottamaputra*’.⁵⁰ The *Nagari Copper Plate Inscription* of Anangabhimadeva III (*Saka era* 1151-1152) describes that king Anantavarman Chodagangadeva built a temple of Purushottama Jagannatha on the shores of the Bay of Bengal and he undertook the great task of his ancestor to build such a marvellous temple at Puri.⁵¹ The *Parsuramesvara Temple Inscription* (9thc.CE) deals with terms like *bhoga*, and *kshetrapāla* or ‘the keeper of the field’ which can be trace with the idea of ritual offerings and management of the temple economy.⁵² The monuments act like the foundation source of information.

Secondly, the methods of data collection are very important from the methodological point of view. Data will be collected from the field visits. Published data will be collected from libraries and other sources, like museums etc. The sources can be collected from different places i.e. National Library Kolkata, Indian Museum Kolkata, Harekrushna Mahatab State Library Bhubaneswar, Odisha State Museum Bhubaneswar, Odisha State Library, and different University Libraries etc.

Thirdly, the methods of data analysis are as important as the second one pertaining to this present work. Therefore, it includes the collection of various data, followed by studying, understanding, making notes, reviewing, interrogating, cross-checking, verification of data, develop the analytical composition of writings, making chapters and making drafts. It will be more of a qualitative approach. A careful observation of the sources that could render research analysis is Inscriptions, Literature and Published sources i.e. Books, Reports prepared by Research Scholars, Articles, and Journals etc. For data analysis field observations, available primary sources and secondary sources will be corroborated and further scientific methods will be employed. After thorough analysis, suitable theory shall be employed for proper explanation of patronage.

Aims and Objectives:

The followings are the main aims and objectives of this present work.

- The present work will focus on different forms of patronage from 7thc.CE to 13thc.CE. The changing pattern of patronization under different dynasties will be

another objective of research. Further the socio-religious premises of patronage will be discussed in an elaborate manner.

- This research attempts to find how the Identity and social positions of patrons had impacts on patronage. It also attempts to see if the patrons had administrative role, or were there ‘minor rulers’ or leaders other than the king and royalty also involved in patronage.
- The present study will highlight on the implications of patronage in political, economic, cultural, and theoretical domain.
- In addition to this, the research also aims to establish possible links between the religious and political establishments in different levels. It also tries to trace the study of possible changes in temple institutions with changes in political establishment.
- The research will focus on the study and interpretation of the socio-religious context in which temple came to be established. It also focuses on the location of temples in a contextual manner.
- It aims to study the implications of patronage on consumption of temple surplus.
- An understanding of the association of professional groups with the everyday temple activities is another objective of study. It will attempt also to study about the relation between the adjacent villages with the functions of temples.
- The present study also aims to see the community linkages with the religious practices of temples. It also aims to trace the pilgrimage circuits with the places of other cult centres.

Tentative Chapterization:

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

CHAPTER II: This chapter discusses about patronage, temples religion and polity in early India. The chapter also explores patterns and forms of patronage in early India. It attempts to understand the links between religious and political establishments.

CHAPTER III: This chapter deals with temple patronage under various major dynasties Odisha from 7thc.CE to 13thc.CE. So includes temple patronage under Bhauma-Karas, temple patronage under Somavamsis and temple patronage under the later Gangas in this period.

CHAPTER IV: This chapter explores the forms and patterns of patronage as far as the case of Odisha is concern. The process of patronage in Odisha will be contextualized in the pan-Indian scenario to develop a comprehensive history of the issue.

CHAPTER V: This chapter attempts to understand the implications and influences of the patronage on the contemporary society.

CHAPTER VI: CONCLUSION

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