

The Economic Insights into the Prachi Valley Civilization (3rd century B.C. to 9th Century A.D)

SARITA DASH

Research Scholar, Ramnarain Ruia Autonomous College, Matunga, Mumbai.
E-mail: saritadash.23@gmail.com

Abstract: This article delves into the economic facets of the lost Prachi Valley Civilization in Odisha, spanning from the 3rd century B.C. to the 9th century A.D. The Prachi Valley, once the cradle of a diverse and culturally rich civilization, flourished along the banks of the sacred Prachi River. Despite its historical significance, the origins of the Prachi Valley Civilization remain shrouded in mystery, with legends tracing its sanctity back to mythical times as documented in various Puranas. Focusing on the economic life of the Prachi Valley inhabitants, this paper underscores the necessity of understanding Odisha's ancient history, including its genealogical dynastic rule. The economic dynamics explored in this study played a pivotal role in the formation and flourishing of this remarkable civilization, situated beside the comparatively modest Prachi River in contrast to the formidable Mahanadi, Brahmani, and Birupa. The research meticulously examines the revenue system, delving into the roles of land-owning individuals, labouring classes, and the intricate land and taxation systems. Additionally, it scrutinizes the trade and industry aspects, encompassing both inland and outland trade, trade routes, trading articles, and the significant trading centres associated with different genealogical dynastic rules. Through this comprehensive analysis, the paper aims to unveil the economic intricacies that contributed to the glory of the Prachi Valley Civilization, shedding light on a chapter of Odisha's history that has remained relatively obscured.

Keywords: Economic dynamics, Genealogical dynastic rule, Prachi Valley Civilization, Revenue system, Trade and industry

Received : 22 March 2024

Revised : 28 April 2024

Accepted : 19 May 2024

Published : 30 June 2024

TO CITE THIS ARTICLE:

Dash, S. 2024. The Economic Insights into the Prachi Valley Civilization (3rd century B.C. to 9th Century A.D.). *South Asian History, Culture and Archaeology*, 4: 1, pp. 95-105.

Introduction

Exploring the depths of time, history reveals itself through a contemplative exploration of individuals, rulers, and the fluctuations of their successes and challenges across different eras. Grounded in straightforward facts and stark truths, this discipline shuns the temptation of embellishments, fantasies,

and myths. The impact of historical accounts is magnified when derived from authentic, primary sources, providing a captivating and intellectually stimulating voyage through the corridors of time. As the bedrock of the present, history is an indispensable facet of modern life, shaping our achievements and providing context to our existence. It stands as the highest good of life, encapsulating the spirit of the time. Universally, countries categorize history into three phases—ancient, medieval, and modern—a convenient framework facilitating comprehensive study in the eternal flow of time. The Odissan historical account unfolds like a rich tapestry, interwoven with a myriad of episodes, spanning across different epochs. While ancient Odisha may not have famous people like: Herodotus or Livy, but its history is not dull or without evidence. There are many scattered clues in its history that help us create a clear picture of ancient Odisha. The link between the history and culture of Odisha with the overall culture of India is clear in their shared Hindu traditions, beliefs, rituals, and philosophy.

Originally rooted in a tribal culture, Odisha underwent a transformative cultural shift with the infusion of Aryan and Dravidian influences from the north and south, respectively. Thus, the pre-Islamic and pre-Western traditional Orissan culture emerged as a synthesis of tribal, Aryan, and Dravidian elements. Since the times of Mahabharata, Odisha has been a territorial, political, and cultural entity with different nomenclatures—Utkal, Kalinga, Trikalinga, Kosala, Odra, Orissa (in its Anglicized form), and now, presently, Odisha—a testament to its enduring significance in Bharatavarsha (India). The landscape, marked by fragmented governance and frequent battles, bears witness to inscriptions etched on rock walls, pillars, and copper plates by different kings. These inscriptions illuminate their achievements and administrations, echoed in old Sanskrit books, Puranas, and Pali literatures. Scientific study of ancient Odissan history relies on diverse source materials such as inscriptions, monuments, coins, secular and religious literature, and accounts from foreign travellers. Our focal point, the Prachi River, divides the land into two halves, coursing through Odisha's history as its holiest river. Despite its modest size compared to the mighty Mahanadi, Brahmani, and Birupa, the Prachi River's valley region, spanning approximately 3600 square kilometers, witnessed the rule of several ancient Kalingan dynasties. Among them, the Chedi, Murunda, Mana, Vighraha, Bhaumakaras, Somovamsi, Suryavamsis, and Gangas stand out. Beyond the rise and fall of empires, Odisha's landscape witnessed the emergence of diverse religions—Jainism, Buddhism, Saivism, Vaishnavism, and Shaktism—adding nuanced layers to its historical narrative. This area was close to the politically dominant centers of Puri, Toshali of Bhubaneswar and Cuttack. It was culturally and economically vibrant region, prosperous with sea-faring trade which continued till the late 18th century A.D.

Many of the world's great civilizations have thrived along the banks of rivers, and Odisha is no exception. Like other significant civilizations, Odisha boasts numerous geographical areas situated along riverbanks that bear traces of ancient civilizations. Among these, the Prachi valley civilization stands out. The Prachi River, considered the holiest in Odisha, adds a unique and glorious dimension to the region's history. Despite being smaller in size compared to rivers like Mahanadi, Brahmini, Subarnarekha, and Baitarani, the Prachi River preserves remnants of a magnificent past civilization. Regarded as one of Odisha's oldest and most sacred rivers, Prachi is now a modest tributary of the Mahanadi. Its ancient origins can be traced to Dakamba near Naraj in the Cuttack district. Flowing through the coastal region of the undivided Puri district, Prachi eventually merges into the Bay of Bengal through two bifurcations, one at Astarang and the other near Konark. The significance of the Prachi valley Civilization in shaping Odisha's history cannot be overstated.

Today, the Prachi stands as a river on the brink of demise. Upstream, its once-flowing waters have dwindled to the point of almost complete dryness, with occasional disappearances at certain locations. It has sadly forfeited much of its original character. However, during the monsoon season, a faint spark

of vitality remains as it releases floodwaters into the Bay of Bengal for four months. Downstream, a few sections manage to retain water throughout the year, but for the majority of its course, the Prachi runs dry. Encompassing an area of approximately two thousand square kilometres, the river connects with 940 revenue villages across the districts of Khurda, Puri, and Cuttack. Through our survey efforts, we meticulously traced and mapped the entirety of the old channel. Uncovering its journey to the sea, we observed the Prachi branching out, with smaller streams merging with countless rivulets in various locations. Even in its current semi-extinct state, the Prachi maintains its revered status as the most sacred river in Odisha. The Markandeya Purana, Kapila Samhita, Prachi Mahatamya, Surya Samhita, Gyanakosha, Samba Purana, Brahma Purana, and the Skanda Purana all make references to the Prachi, highlighting its spiritual significance. Sarala Das's 14th-century Odia Mahabharata further attests to the river's importance through extensive mentions of the Prachi. From the early days when primitive settlers chose Odisha's soil as their home, this valley emerged as a favoured land, providing fertile plains for agriculture, rivers for irrigation and navigation, and expansive pastures for cattle rearing. As civilization progressed, marked by growing inter-relationships, mutual affection, trade, and the influx and outflow of different races, the history of this region became intricately woven with multi-dimensional events.

Insights into the Prachi Valley Civilization can be gleaned through a meticulous examination of fragmentary details sourced from both epigraphic records of the dynasty and archaeological remnants from that era. Notable among these are the Asokan Rock Edict and the Hathigumpha inscription of Emperor Kharavela, shedding light on the economic activities of the Mauryan and Chedi rulers, respectively. Additional inscriptions, such as the Bhadrak Inscription of Maharaja Gana from the 3rd century A.D., highlight instances of gold donations. Similarly, the Asanpat Inscription from the 3rd to 4th centuries A.D. records Maharaja Satrubhanja's contribution of gold coins. While these records affirm the prevalence of coins in the pre-Gupta period, obtaining a precise understanding remains challenging. The initiation of issuing copper plates for land grants to scholarly Brahmins by the Matharas signified the commencement of economic feudalization, a trend that firmly entrenched itself in the soil of Orissa during the medieval period. These copper plate grants provide valuable insights into the land-tenure system prevalent during that time. The excavation carried out at Sisupalagarh near Bhubaneswar has significantly enriched our understanding of the economic landscape in Odisha during the early period. The artifacts uncovered during these excavations provide compelling evidence of a robust economic advancement, driven primarily by flourishing trade, notably with the Roman Empire. The punched mark coins, the gold coin, the Puri-Kushana coins, and the Gupta coins unearthed at Sisupalagarh shed light on the prevailing coinage system of that era. Additionally, they offer valuable insights into the economic prosperity facilitated by extensive trade networks. Moreover, literature proves to be an equally indispensable source for comprehending the economic state of Orissa. Classical writings, in particular, play a pivotal role in this context. Works such as Pliny's "Naturalis Historia," Ptolemy's "Geographike Huphegesis," and the "Periplus of the Erythraean Sea" make references to the ports along the Orissan coast and the diverse merchandise traded therein. The "Arthasastra" of Kautilya delineates several industries for which ancient Kalinga, part of modern-day Orissa, was renowned, with a special mention of its thriving textile industry. Furthermore, insights into the industry and trade of ancient Orissa are gleaned from the Jatakas and various Buddhist texts, adding layers to our comprehension of the historical economic dynamics in the region.

Methods and Procedures Adopted

In conducting the research on "The Economic Insights into the Prachi Valley Civilization (3rd century B.C. to 9th Century A.D.)," a comprehensive and multifaceted methodology was employed,

encompassing both primary and secondary sources. The primary data were meticulously gathered from various authentic outlets, including original texts, Gazetteers, literatures, inscriptions, reports, practical observations, and interviews with respondents during the experimental field survey period. The qualitative research methods employed for data collection comprised field studies and personal interviews. A thorough field survey was conducted to amass detailed information on the art, architecture, legends, traditions, and tentative dates of all monuments in the Prachi Valley, employing a qualitative approach. Thus, the empirical method was adopted to collect primary data for the research. The secondary data pertaining to the temples of Prachi Valley, constituting a significant aspect of the present work, were sourced from an array of scholarly materials such as books, magazines, reviews, journals, periodicals, texts, proceedings, manuscripts, encyclopaedias, antiquities, records, and reports. These secondary sources were accessed from various educational institutions in Odisha and throughout India. The institutions consulted included the State Museum Library in Bhubaneswar, Odisha State Library in Bhubaneswar, Central Library, State Archives in Bhubaneswar, Parija Library at Utkal University, Bhubaneswar, Archaeological Museum in Kenduli, Archaeological Museum in Niali, and Prachi Gaveshana Prathisthana: Amaresvara, along with other educational institutions associated with the material relevant to the research article.

The methodology applied in this research was guided by a meticulous review of previous research works, following in the footsteps of earlier scholars. Additionally, secondary data on the history and culture of the Prachi Valley Civilization played a complementary role in shaping the narrative of the research article. The integration of data collected from both primary and secondary sources was a fundamental aspect of the methodology, with a rigorous examination of all materials to ensure only pertinent and valuable data were incorporated into the article.

The primary occupation of the populace revolved around agriculture, constituting a significant portion of the State's income. The escalating population growth likely exerted pressure on production, prompting the cultivation of additional lands. Kharavela, through extensive conquests in both southern and northern territories, expanded cultivated areas, substantially boosting the State's agricultural revenue. This augmented financial strength empowered the emperor to embark on ambitious public utility projects. Following the conquest of Pithunda in his eleventh regnal year, Kharavela orchestrated the cultivation of the newly acquired land using ass-drawn ploughs, a strategic move aligning with his imperialistic policy to enhance cultivated areas. Landownership was communal, with the monarch serving as the land trustee. The monarch assumed responsibility for agricultural development by extending irrigation to farmers' fields and offering other essential facilities. The Hathigumpha inscription revealed that Kalinga's irrigation system was initiated during the Nanda rule and later expanded and renovated by Kharavela. Peasants were obligated to pay a tax, known as Bali, to the monarch for such infrastructure endeavors. While Manu proposed land revenue rates between 1/6th and 1/12th of the total produce, contingent on soil characteristics, the Arthashastra fixed it at 1/6th. Given Kalinga's incorporation into the Mauryan realm, it is plausible that the 1/6th rate persisted during the Mauryan and Post-Mauryan periods. The Nandas, renowned for excessive taxation, possibly imposed higher rates. Instances of tax remission, either as a favor to a village or town or during poor harvests, were not uncommon, as exemplified in the Hathigumpha inscription. In this aspect, Kharavela aligned with his Mauryan predecessors, exhibiting a nuanced approach to taxation and agrarian policies.

The Guptas, as well as the Matharas in Orissa, conferred authority over lands and villages upon the Brahmanas. In such instances, the beneficiaries were bestowed with the sole right to enjoy the revenue generated from the donated lands. Additionally, the Guptas allocated land to their Kshatriya subordinates in recognition of the services they provided to the state. Consequently, this entire system

laid the groundwork for private land ownership. Some lands were directly under the possession of the king, termed as crown lands and cultivated through share-cropping arrangements. During this period, there was a gradual expansion of crown lands, primarily driven by the conquest of new territories. An examination of the economic life in the Prachi Valley during the Bhaumakara rule can be reconstructed by piecing together fragmented information gleaned from the dynasty's epigraphic records and archaeological remnants of that era. While references to the Toshali region appear in the Dhauli Inscription, it attains greater significance during the Bhaumakara period, when they governed both the northern and southern divisions of Toshala or Ubhaya Toshala. Political concepts related to Udhaya Toshala are documented in the plates of Vakula Mahadevi, the 10th-century Bhauma ruler, with historical roots extending to the 6th century A.D. or even earlier. Numerous plates of King Sambhuyasa mention these two divisions of Toshala, and the recent discovery of the Asanpat Inscription, edited by Aniruddha Das, designates these divisions as distinct political entities, albeit its dating remains uncertain. While Pandit S.N Rajguru suggests a composition date of the 4th or 3rd century A.D., Dr. Snigdha Tripathy places it in the 6th century A.D. Despite this ambiguity, the natural border between the two divisions was the Mahanadi River. Hence, our study primarily focuses on the southern division, Dakshina Toshali, encompassing the Prachi Valley.

The land charters of the Bhaumakaras reveal that their kingdom encompassed the Midnapore district of West Bengal, along with Mayurbhanj, Keonjhar, Balasore, Bhadrak, Jajpur, Cuttack, Kendrapara, Jagatsinghpur, Dhenkanal, Angul, Puri, Nayagarh, Khurda, Ganjam, Baudh-Phulbani, and Gajapati districts in present-day Odisha. Feudatories of the Bhaumakaras administered a portion of the kingdom with internal autonomy, while the remainder was organized into various administrative units, including Mandalas (revenue divisions), Visayas (districts), Khandas (sub-divisions), and Patakas or Patikas or gramas (villages). The capital of the Bhaumakara kingdom, identified as Guhadevapataka or Guhesvarapataka, was the issuing point for the dynasty's charters and stood as a significant urban centre. Scholars generally associate it with modern Jajpur in the Jajpur district, situated on the southern bank of the Vaitarani River, near the Viraja shrine, covering an area of five square kilometres. While the king was regarded as the symbolic proprietor of the entire kingdom's land, in reality, the tenants and farmers were the actual owners and cultivators. The Bhaumakara rulers, who held dominion over the entire kingdom's land, generously granted land to pious and knowledgeable Brahmanas, as well as various religious shrines. The dynasty's charters predominantly document land donations in favor of Brahmanas from diverse gotras, pravaras, caranas, sakhas, and representing various perspectives within Brahmanism. The Bhaumakara feudatories, such as the eastern Gangas of Svetake, the Sulkis of Kodalaka, the Tungas of Yamagartta, the Nandadohavas of Jayapura, and the Bhanjas of Khigingakotta, Khinjali, and Vagulvaka, made land donations either independently or with the permission of their overlord. Hence, the king granted land following approval from the sovereign lord.

The grants consistently detailed the description of the bestowed landed property, clearly demarcating its boundaries. Following the act of donation, the rulers of the Bhaumakara dynasty and their vassals conveyed the lands to the recipients, granting them control over both wet and dry areas (sa-jalaschala), as well as rights to fishes and tortoises (sa-matsya-kachapa), thickets, and forests (vanagulmaka), among other privileges. These gifted lands were exempt from taxation, intended for the recipients who held the title of ownership and enjoyed various fiscal rights. The ruler, entitled to a customary share (bhaga) in the agricultural produce of the realm, collected it at a rate of 1/6th of the gross yield. Additionally, the ruler received periodic supplies (bhoga) and taxes (kara) from the populace. The recipients were specifically instructed to diligently maintain the donated properties, adhering to the *nividharma* or laws of perpetuity. Should the recipients suffer any loss of land due to

diverse reasons, the donor ensured compensation. According to the Bhaumakara epigraphic records, the “nala” served as a unit of land measurement during this era. Regarding the use of metallic currency, the Hatigumpha inscription notes that in the ninth year of his reign, King Kharavela expended a total of thirty-eight hundred thousand coins to construct the grand Victory Palace, also known as the Mahavijaya Palace. Various forms of metallic money are mentioned, including aripindaka churnika, pala, pana, mada, and mashaka. The exploration of different societies under our current discussion reveals several prevalent taxes. Epigraphic studies uncover that villages served as the genuine and enduring sources of diverse revenues. According to the Mathara inscription, when a village underwent transformation into an Agrahara, it was granted exemption from all taxes and designated as an ‘akara grahika grama,’ implying that no one was permitted to levy taxes on a tax-exempt village.

Concerning the taxes levied on the agricultural yield of the village, historical records from Mathara mention terms such as ‘meya hiranya’ and ‘meya varima,’ while the Nala records refer to ‘hiranya,’ and early Ganga records discuss ‘bhaga’ and ‘bhagabhoga.’ The term ‘meya’ essentially denotes items such as grains, crops, and rice. Some historians propose that ‘meya’ likely represented a land revenue extracted from agricultural land, akin to bhaga and bhogakara. Alternatively, certain historians argue that ‘meya’ might have been a contribution in kind, indicating it was the yield of the land, possibly constituting an agricultural tax paid with a portion of the produce. Similarly, ‘meya varima’ appears to be linked to agricultural produce, remitted with a specific share of the crops. Regarding ‘hiranya,’ there is divergence among historians; some posit it as a tax paid in currency or agricultural goods. Others interpret it as a form of income tax, symbolizing the state’s right to gold and potentially other mines. Some historian suggests ‘hiranya’ as the king’s share of specific crops paid in cash, while others propose it was an agricultural tax paid in currency.

Upon further examination of inscriptions, it becomes evident that kings received a rightful portion of taxes derived from village produce, including fruits, flowers, valuable trees, and fish cultivation. Additionally, taxes on houses, lands, roads, and water were systematically collected. The historical record suggests a gradual introduction of new taxes within the village community, particularly notable during the Bhaumakara rule in Odisha. As previously mentioned, the Bhaumakaras imposed moderate taxes on their subjects, contributing to the development of feudalism. Instead of offering salaries, the rulers facilitated the feudal system by granting land to their officials on a hereditary basis. Land grants were also extended to religious institutions such as monasteries, temples, and Brahmins. In villages bestowed as donations, peasants paid taxes to the beneficiaries rather than to the king. In the administrative apparatus of the Bhaumakara kingdom, various officials were instrumental in overseeing land revenue administration. Notable figures included the Vishayapati, responsible for district-level collections, the Tadayuktaka, serving as a Sub-divisional officer, the Aksapatala entrusted with maintaining accounts and records, the dutaka executing royal decrees, the Mahamahattara fulfilling the role of a village headman, the Vrihatbhogi, a revenue officer enjoying rent-free holdings, and the Pustakapala, responsible for village accounts. Land revenue stood as the primary financial pillar for the Bhaumakara state. In addition to this, the monarch levied various taxes, such as the uparikara (an additional tax), and imposed duties on textiles, cattle, dairy products, hamlets, landing places, ferry points, and thickets. The occupational castes referenced in historical records encompassed the tantavaya or weaver, Gokula or cowherd, and Saundhika or distiller of liquor.

In Odisha, fiscal records and epigraphic sources highlight various industrial arts, including stone and metalwork, carpentry, poetry, ivory, perfumery, jewelry, and the oil industry. Temples and images serve as testimony to artistic activities, while copper plates and bronze images indicate metallurgical advancements. Kautilya classified industries as state-controlled or private, emphasizing

their interdependence with trade. Internal and external trade routes, like parakalamarga and jalamarga, suggest both land and sea-borne commerce. Bhaumakara records mention “ghatta naditarasthanadi gulmaka,” possibly referring to ferry places and outposts near rivers, suggesting the vital role of rivers in trade expansion. ‘Gulmaka’ may have originated from ‘gulma,’ meaning thicket. Historians suggest ‘gulmadeya’ was a fee paid for protection at military stations, ensuring security for traders and goods against robbers and unruly elements during export and import activities. As the Mahanadi meanders into Odisha from its origin in Raipur, Chhattisgarh, it traverses diverse regions, each contributing to its growing historical significance. Along this extensive riverbed, intriguing architectural and sculptural remnants emerge abruptly, ceasing at Cuttack and reappearing on the banks of the Prachi River. The artistic and architectural heritage of the upper Mahanadi valley seamlessly persists in the Prachi valley, signifying a continuous cultural thread. As the river descends from the hilly terrain near Naraj (Cuttack), it takes a southward turn and enters the plains, aligning with the course of the Prachi River. Beyond Cuttack, Mahanadi transforms into a narrow river, with the bulk of floodwaters from the upper catchment area flowing through the Prachi, establishing it as Odisha’s principal navigable river.

Odisha, known by various names in antiquity, held a prominent position in India’s maritime activities. Its territorial expanse spanned from the Ganges in the north to the Godavari in the south, featuring excellent ports and harbors throughout ancient times. These ports played a crucial role in facilitating maritime trade, as evidenced by archaeological remains and literary texts from the early and medieval periods. The Prachi, with its numerous tributaries and distributaries, once formed a vital network, now silted up and visible during the rainy season. The entire catchment area, known as the Prachi valley, encompasses a complex web of waterways, with the Kadua River being its largest branch. After interlacing and convoluting, the branch rivers converge into the Prachi and Kadua, eventually uniting and flowing seaward. The triangular promontory of Sirei, where the rivers meet, was named “Mundiamara” in ancient days. Sailors from Kalinga, known as Sadhavas, would anchor here, paying homage to the goddess and seeking blessings during their journeys. Today, only archaeological remnants, folklores, and tales about Odisha’s maritime history in the 20th century remain, as the temples and deities have vanished into the vast waters. Travel writers, journeying alongside ancient maritime travelers, documented the profound transformations in historical geography and cultural history. These accounts offer insights into the metamorphosis of Kalinga into a textual space, comprehended through diverse discursive models. The acceptance of a plurality of histories, moving beyond a mere scientific rendering, has opened the door to alternative perspectives. Among these developments is the acknowledgment of oral history and a form of cultural history, enabling subjective and immersed viewpoints to gain prominence. In addition to the writings of Pliny and Ptolemy, ancient texts like the Periplus of the Erythraean Sea, Kautilya’s Arthashastra, and the jataka tales shed light on the maritime trade and industry of ancient Odisha. Archaeological findings from Sisupalgarh reveal trade relations between ancient Kalinga (Odisha) and the Roman Empire, depicting Kalingan sailors as the courageous “Kalingosahasika.”

Odisha established maritime connections with distant southeastern lands such as Java, Sumatra, Bali, Borneo, Malaya, Burma, Cambodia, and Indochina. Various literary works, including Raghuvamsa by Kalidas, Mahabharata by Sarala Das, Parimala Kavya by Narasimha Sena, and Tika Govinda Chandra by Yosawant Das, reflect maritime terms like “Boita,” “Naha,” “Sadhava,” “Sadhabani,” “Manga,” and “Nabika.” Islands like Sri Lanka, Java, Bali, Subarna Dwipa, and Bramhadesh find mention in these texts. The Araya Manjusri Mulakalpa, a Mahayana text, even refers to the Bay of Bengal as the Kalinga Sea, while the term “Kalinga Sahasika” is recurrent in ancient texts, signifying the brave sons of Kalinga. Odia literature is profoundly influenced by maritime activities, evident

in references to sea voyages in works like *Lavanyavati* and *Vaidehisa Vilasa* by the celebrated Odia poet Upendra Bhanja. Dinakrushna Das, in *Rasakallola*, narrates overseas trade and shipwrecks due to storms, while Narasimha Sena's *Kavya Purnimala* mentions ancient Odisha's trade with Ceylon. Archaeological findings, literary sources, epigraphic evidence, and art and sculptural remains all emphasize the significance of ports, shipbuilding activities, and cultural contacts with other countries in Odisha's history.

Port towns around Chilika Lake in Odisha established cultural and commercial contacts with Ceylon, Java, Sumatra, Borneo, China, Rome, and African countries during the early centuries of the Christian era. Rock carvings at the Puri Jagannath temple provide evidence of Kalinga's sea trade and cultural relations with Bali, Sumatra, Borneo, and Indonesia. Tamralipti, Palur, Pithunda, Gopalpur, and Chelitalo were among the famous ports of ancient Kalinga, exporting elephants, finely crafted items from elephant tusks, diamonds, iron, jewels, and exquisite cloth. Records indicate an abundance of elephants and horses, imported through maritime trade from foreign countries. Overseas trade holds a pivotal role in the history of Odisha. Despite small harbors along the Prachi River, merchants known as "Sadhabas" sailed through their ships to the Bay of Bengal. Noteworthy locations, such as "Boita Bandha" banyan tree and "Kudhapatana" on Amaresvara Road, were crucial stops for ships on their way to various destinations. The presence of a hermitage under a banyan tree, now dedicated to Lord Jagannath, and the statue of Lord Ramachandra at "Goplakuda" highlight the historical significance of these sites.

Mentions of river Chitrotpala, a tributary of Prachi, indicate a great port at Konark in the 1st century A.D., according to the famous Greek traveller Ptolemy. The merging of the Kadua tributary with the Bay of Bengal at Chitresvari, named after the goddess worshipped there, connects to the Chinese traveler Huen-Tsang's possible visit. The dilapidated Utpalesvara Siva Temple and the broken palace known as Gollargarh near Chitresvari hint at a history of piracy and tyrannical rule, with pirates robbing Sadhabas and sailors for wealth. Numerous boats once sailed the river Prachi, fostering the establishment of markets along its coast, still holding their historic names. The river, adorned with many ports, witnessed the affluence of Oriya traders who surpassed their counterparts in wealth. Today, echoes of this maritime legacy resonate in the river's worship. Beyond mere historical records, the maritime trade and shipbuilding of ancient Odisha live on in tales, folklore, songs, and traditional festivities, serving as enduring evidence of sea voyages. Among these, the tale of "Taapoi" stands out, reflecting Odishan culture, values, and beliefs. Festivals, too, carry profound significance, with Khudurukuni Osha exemplifying the bonds between siblings. Celebrated in coastal districts during Bhadraba, it sees young girls worshiping Goddess Mangala for their brothers' safety, prosperity, and health, epitomizing the sanctity of sibling relationships. Preserving this maritime history, the Odisha State Museum showcases a sculptural image of Sadhavas navigating the seas of trade, linking the past to the present.

Odisha's trade thrived in chief centres known as 'hattas' or markets, 'puras' or towns, and 'nagaras' or cities. Temple inscriptions reveal that Bhauma Queen Madhavadevi established a hatta near the Madhavesvara temple, suggesting its income might be dedicated to the temple. Local trade operated in villages, with merchandise transported via safer river routes than land routes through forests. Epigraphic records reveal a diverse array of traded commodities in ancient Odishan kingdoms, encompassing metals such as iron, copper, tin, lead, gold, and silver, along with pearls, precious stones, ivory works, luxury items, woven goods, food, and various animal and forest products. The prominence of metalwork, particularly gold and silver, often resulted from conquests or royal gifts. King Kharavela's Hatigumpha Inscription highlights victories over the Tamil confederacy and the acquisition of pearls,

precious stones, and jewels. These coveted materials were skilfully crafted into ornate accessories like necklaces, earpieces, waist-girdles, wrist bands, and anklets. Pearls, notably esteemed during the Bhaumakara period, symbolized wealth across the Odishan landscape, while other metals like iron, copper, tin, and lead served purposes in industries, war weapons, and agricultural tools.

Textile industry roots in Odisha trace back to Buddha's era, likely a leading commercial enterprise. Arthasastra mentions importing the finest cotton fabric from Madura, Aparanta, Kalinga, Kasi, Vanga, Vatsa, and Mahisha. Cunningham notes Kalinga for its fine muslins. Spinning, weaving, washing, and dyeing-colored dresses were recognized ancient and medieval industries. The Bhaumakars and subordinate chiefs collected taxes from weavers, integrating them into Odishan society. Textile goods held significant trade value, contributing to the economic fabric of ancient Odisha. References to the use of woven materials such as walking sticks, umbrellas, fly-flappers, and palanquins are found in historical records. Musical instruments were also crafted as part of industrial art during this era. The art of wine manufacturing was a significant facet of indigenous industries, with wine being considered a luxurious beverage since ancient times. The Bhaumakaras and their subordinates collected taxes from 'saundhikas,' who were involved in wine production.

Hieun-Tsang documented the distinctions in the consumption of wine among different castes. Kshatriyas favored wine made from vines and sugarcane, while Vaishyas preferred strong distilled spirits. Buddhist monks and Brahmins indulged in syrup made from grapes and sugarcane. In contrast, the lower castes did not have a distinct preference for any particular drink. The consumption of wine by both men and women is vividly described in various historical records, often associated with the trade of prostitution, which gained prominence after the Bhaumakara period. The state benefited significantly from the profitable connection between the wine trade and prostitution. Raw materials for wine production included twelve principal liquors, such as jackfruit, grape, honey, palm, date, cane, mowa, long pepper, soapberry, rum, coconut, and arrack (also known as varuni or paishti). Records mention a village called 'somavataka,' presumably named for the abundant availability of the soma plant in the region. Paddy was the primary agricultural product, extensively cultivated alongside various grams and vegetables. Essential and sacred foodstuffs included milk and its products, sugarcane, palm products, and items related to oil, pearl-fishery, and pearl-manufacturing. Other industries like brick making, lime production, rope making, and toiletries (perfumes, incense sticks, vermilion, talcum powder, etc.) flourished, supporting both internal and external trade.

As previously explored, Odisha has held a significant role in India's maritime activities throughout its history. Boats played a crucial role in facilitating these maritime endeavors. The frequent mentions of terms such as 'ghatta nanditarasthanadi' in the Bhaumakara records highlight the prevalence of boats at ferry places and landing sites along riverbanks. Noteworthy is the presence of a boat in the Bhoga Mandapa of Puri's grand temple. Additionally, various Odia folktales, including khudurukuni, kuhuka mandala chadei, chari mahajana katha, and biota bandapana, are interwoven with narratives about ships and the women of affluent merchant households, indicating the existence of boat-making industries in Odisha. In conclusion, the exploration into the economic insights of the Prachi Valley Civilization from the 3rd century B.C. to the 9th century A.D. has unveiled a rich tapestry of historical significance. Through a meticulous examination of the dynastic history of ancient Odisha, this chapter has intricately woven together the lives of the common people who inhabited the Prachi valley, shedding light on the multifaceted dimensions of their existence. The comprehensive study delved into the traditions, rituals, practices, and lifestyles of its people, a vivid panorama of the past emerged, allowing us to glimpse into the everyday lives of a civilization that thrived on the banks of a seemingly modest river, in stark contrast to the grandeur of the neighbouring Mahanadi, Brahmani, and Birupa.

However, the crux of this exploration lay in the illumination of the economic condition that served as the bedrock for the development and prosperity of this glorious civilization. The Prachi Valley, though geographically modest, stood as a testament to the transformative power of economic vitality. The intricate interplay of trade, agriculture, and commerce, meticulously unravelled in this work, revealed the economic dynamics that fuelled the growth and sustenance of this civilization. As we reflect upon the economic insights harvested from this research, it becomes evident that the Prachi Valley Civilization's success was not merely a product of its geographical setting but a testament to the resilience, innovation, and enterprise of its people. This epilogue, therefore, marks the culmination of a journey through time, unravelling the economic intricacies that shaped the destiny of a civilization nestled along the banks of the Prachi, leaving an indelible mark on the annals of history.

References

- Banerjee, R.D. 1919-20. *Neulpur Grant of Subhakara: The 8th year, Vol. XV. Epigraphia Indica.*
- Banerjee, R.D. 1931. *History of Orissa, Vol. I.* Calcutta: New Age Publication.
- Basak, R.G. 1935-36. *The Puri Plates of Madhavavarman, Vol. XXIII. Epigraphia Indica.*
- Behera, K.S. (1994) 'Maritime Contacts of Orissa: Literary and Archaeological Evidence'.
- Behera, K.S. 1992. "Glimpses of the Maritime Activities of Kalinga." *Orissa Review*, Bhubaneswar, Vol. XLIX, No. IV, p. 1-5.
- Behera, K.S. 1993. *Ancient Orissa/Kalinga and Indonesia: The Maritime Contacts.* Cuttack: Journal of Orissa Academy.
- Birupakshya, Kara. 1931. "Maritime Activities in the Ancient Utkala." *The Prachi*, Vol. I, part- II, p.1- 32, Cuttack.
- Bruhat Tapoyi (1-5) ba Khudurukuni Osa. Badambadi, Cuttack: Lokanath Printers.
- Buhler, G. (Year not specified) 'The Sohgaura Copper-Plate', *Indian Antiquary*; 'Junagarh Rock Inscription of Rudraman I', *Indian Antiquary*, Vol. VIII; 'Hirahadagalli Copper-Plate Inscription of Sivakandavarman', *Epigraphia Indica*, Vol. I & II.
- Dikshit, M.G. (1955-56) 'Sirpur Inscription of the time of Balarjuna', Vol. XXXI, *Epigraphia Indica.*
- Ghadai, Balabhadra. (2009) 'Maritime Heritage of Orissa', *Orissa Review*, July, pp. 63-64.
- Jayaswal, K.P. 1917. "Hatigumpha Inscription of the Emperor Kharavela (173 B.C-160 B.C), Vol. III, Part IV." *Journal of the Bihar and Orissa Research Society*, Patna.
- Lokaratna. Vol. V and VI. Representation of the Socio-cultural Ethos of the Odia Community.
- Mansingh, Mayadhara. 1967. "Tapoi. Odia Sahityara Itihasa." Cuttack: Granthamandira.
- Mitra, S.K. 1997. "The Prachi River Valley: A study in religion, Art and Architecture." Unpublished PhD thesis, Utkal University.
- Mitra, S.K. 1997. "The Prachi River Valley: A Study in Religion, Art and Architecture." Unpublished PhD thesis, Utkal University, Bhubaneswar.
- Naik, J 2019, *Archaeological Remains in the Prachi Valley*, Mayur Publications, Bhubaneswar.
- Nayak, R & Mohanty, S 2013, 'Reading Bruhat Tapoyi (Khudurukuni Osa): A', [Title of the Journal/Book], [Publication Information].
- Panigrahi, KC 1961, *Archaeological Remains in Bhubaneswar*, Kitab Mahal, Cuttack.
- Panigrahi, KC 1981, *History of Orissa*, Kitab Mahal, Bhubaneswar.

- Panigrahi, KC 1982, *Chronology of the Bhaumakaras and Somavamsis of Orissa*, The Modern Book Depot, Bhubaneswar.
- Pradhan, AC 1984, *A Study of History of Orissa*, Surekha Printers, Cuttack.
- Prusti, H 1997, *Buddhist remains in Cuttack District*, Unpublished PhD thesis, Utkal University, Bhubaneswar.
- Ray, P.K. 1974-1975. Archaeological Survey Report on Prachi Valley. Bhubaneswar: Orissa State Archaeology.
- Satapathy, N.N. 2011. Vaishnavite Sculptures and Monuments of the Prachi Valley. Unpublished PhD thesis. Bhubaneswar: Utkal University.
- Sircar, D.C. 1947. "A Note on Bhaumakaras of Orissa." *Journal of Kalinga Historical Research Society*, Vol. II, No.2, 103.
- Subuddhi, U.K. 1978. The Bhaumakaras of Orissa. Calcutta. Utkala Historical Research Journal. Bhubaneswar. Vol. V.