



Gifts and Endowments: Temple Patronage in Early Medieval Odisha Gleaned through Epigraphs

Barada Prasad Jena

Ph.D. Research Scholar

Dept. of A.I.H.C. & Archaeology,

Visva-Bharati Central University, Santiniketan,

West Bengal, 731235

INTRODUCTION: Early Medieval Odisha was an important phase of cultural development in the domain of temple art and architecture. Roughly, in Odisha, early medieval temple building activities spans from Sailodbhavs (6th-7thc.CE) to the Narasinghdev I Ganga dynasty (Late 13th century), where temples were built largely. Hundreds of temple had been built across the then costal and interior Odisha. Scholars have divided this temple building period into three phases largely by analysing its nomenclatures in early medieval Odisha. These phases are i) Formative Phase, spans from 6th to 9thc.CE, ii) Intermediate Phase, spans from 9th to 11thc.CE, and iii) Culminate Phase, which spans from 11th to 13thc.CE.¹ During this period, three major dynasties ruled over the land. They were the Bhauma-Karas (c.736 CE to 945 CE),² the Somavamsis (c. 882 to 1118 CE)³ and the Imperial Gangas or Later Gangas (c. 1038 CE to 1434-35 CE).⁴ This period witnessed the emergence and development of the stylised temple architecture in Odisha. Early medieval temples of Odisha were built in Kalingan style of Architecture, which is a branch of the *Nagara* temple architectural style. Percy Brown has classified these temples into three phases of architectural development, i.e., I) Early phase from c. 750 CE to 900 CE, II) Middle Phase from c. 900 CE to 1100 CE, and III) Later Phase from c. 1100 CE to 1250 CE.⁵ The coastal Odishan temples were the nexus of temples of Odisha. They are mostly built around the heart of Bhubaneswar and its vicinity areas. Those temples were: 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. Many of these temples were thrived upon royal patronage. Donative Inscriptional records are the reliable evidences among the primary sources to understand temple patronage in early medieval Odisha.

EVOLUTION OF PATRONAGE: 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.⁶ As 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.⁷ So many *dāna* practices were continued during the Vedic rituals and sacrifices. Various terms denotes the 'act of giving', like *godāna*, *kanyādāna*, *bhudāna* 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/building of wells, water tanks, gardens, roads, pavilions, cloisters and temples etc.

The *dāna* practices continued in the form of community patronage from the 6thc.BCE onwards. The two heterodox religions, Buddhism and Jainism experienced community patronage or *dāna* from the lay community of the then society, as well as royal patronage.⁸ 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.⁹ This type of patronage was different than that of the Vedic period. It is studied as the 'secular patronage' of early 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 the religious 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.¹⁰ 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.

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. 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. 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.¹¹ 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. 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.

UNDERSTANDING THE CONCEPT OF DONATION: 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 not 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 communities etc.

TEMPLES AND ITS PATRONS: 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 building activities and horizontal spread of brahmanical temple culture. The patrons were mainly kings or queens, 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”.¹² 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 ruler, e.g. daughter, son-in-law etc.

In this context, references of some of the early medieval temple patrons of Odisha are given in the following along their religious achievements. The Parvati Temple Inscription¹³ and an inscription found at the Parsuramesvar temple records that Prapanacharya and Bhimabahika made the arrangements for the daily worship of the temple. Likewise, the 9thc.CE Parsuramesvara Temple Inscription¹⁴ 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. The Nagari Copper Plate Inscription¹⁵ 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. Similarly, the Dāsagobā Inscription¹⁶ 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. Another 13thc.CE inscription has praised king Anangabhimadeva as ‘*Rudraputra*’ ‘*Durgāputra*’ and ‘*Purushottamaputra*’.¹⁷ Its’ literary meaning is son of Rudra or Siva, son of Durga or Sakti and son of purushottama that is lord Vishnu or Jagannatha. The Imperial Ganga rulers were patronising all brahmanical religions during their reign in Odisha viz., Saiva, Sakta and Vaishnava etc.

Similarly, the 13thc.CE Meghesvara Temple Inscription¹⁸ records the construction of the Siva temple named Meghesvara by Svapnesvaradeva, the brother-in-law of Rajaraja of the Ganga dynasty who married Suramadevi, the sister of Rajarajadeva. He also served as a powerful general of the Ganga kings. He founded a magnificent temple for god Siva Meghesvara, gave a number of female attendants to the god, laid out a garden near the temple; built a tank near it, and created a *mandapa*. He also provided wells and tanks on roads and in towns, lights in temples and cloisters in the study of the Vedas and to the pious brahmanas he gave a brahmapura which has superintendent by the Saiva teacher named Visnu who also consecrated the temple of Meghesvara. Likewise, the Kapilasa Temple Inscription¹⁹ records that the reigning king Narasimhadeva I constructed a temple for the god Kailasasikharesvara, in the tenth regnal year of his reign and that in all the four *yugas*, viz., *Satya*, *Treta*, *Dvapara* and *Kali*. The early medieval temple builders of Odisha were so much influenced to develop temple art and architecture. They not only built temple but also ensure other necessary arrangements pertaining to the smother functioning of those temples.

PURPOSE OF DONATION: The act of patronization corroborates the meaning of giving by the patron himself/herself, or employing somebody else to run an institution etc. 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. Sometimes, the patron wanted to show their religious devotedness to a certain deity or cult as a result of which grandeur shrines like Lingaraja or Konark built. The Chola

rulers built lofty shrines one after one to show case their status and greatness than others. A value of reciprocity is always attached with Donation and religious offerings. The act of giving or donating is considered as meritorious in religion. For Instance, the Narsimha Temple Inscription²⁰ refers that the gift of a perpetual lamp to the deity *Krsna* by one *Rayana* along with his wife *Ratnama* along a village called *Manda-grama* of *Vengi desa*, during the reign of *Chodagangadeva* for the increase of religious merit. Here, one of the donative records directly mentions the purpose of donation of a temple donor.

ITEMS OF DONATION: Various items had been donated to the gods and goddesses of the Brahmanical temples of Odisha. We are getting references about various donated items to temples *viz.*, rice, *caru*, *bali*, wheat, sugarcane, sweet, milk, clarified butter, curd, ghee, insane, flower, other food grains, betel nut and leafs, earthen pots, swinging cradle, cooked foods, cow, goat, buffalo, sheep, lamp, oil, gold, land and the list goes on. In a temples life, the milkman provides 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. The temple staffs associated with different services are known as *sebāiyata* or servitors.²¹ Likewise, there were multiple actors played vital role to up keep those temples of early medieval Odisha. Kulke also argues that according to the *MadalaPāñji* (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.²² *Madalapanji* is the chronicle of Jagannath temple, Puri. It deals about the historical events of Odisha related to Jagannath and Jagannath temple. The Vateswar Temple Inscription²³ records the gift of a two perpetual lamps by the General (*Senapati*) *Dandapani* and garland of flowers apparently of jasmine in favour of the deity *Vatesvaradeva* during the second regnal year of Anangabhimadeva of the Ganga family. Likewise, the Sonapur Copper Plate²⁴ records that a group of merchant association of *Suvarnapura* having received the charter, made the gift village over two temples of the gods *Kesava* (Vishnu) and *Aditya* (Sun), for making provision of *bali*, *caru*, and *naivedya* and repairs of the temples by means of a charter. From these records we get to know about various donated items to the temples and gods during this study period.

TEMPLE REPAIRMENT: Temple needs to be maintained properly and timely, because those were the houses of living gods and goddesses. There are certain references found inscribed in those early medieval Odishan inscriptions about temple repairing and up keeping. For example, the 13thc.CE *Lingarāja Temple Inscription*²⁵ of Anangabhimadeva III 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.

WATER SUPPLY, ROAD AND GARDENS: Living temples were daily negotiated in carrying out the daily rituals of the deity inside temple premises. Being living gods on earth, the deities were worshiped with a set of rituals from morning to night. Like a human being, deities were brushed, bathed, ate, play, sleep, and falls in sick. Water was an important thing needed ever after in the temple to carry out many works. For procuring food for deity and temple staffs, washing pots, cleaning temple premises and the list goes on. Therefore some patrons excavated water sources nearby these religious shrines to mitigate the need for water. The *Hamsesvara Temple Inscription*²⁶ records that the temple of the god *Bhava* (Siva) was built on behalf of the queen named *Madhava Devi*, the queen of the illustrious *Subhakaradeva* of the *Bhauma* family. It further records the excavation of a *vapi* (stepped well) near the temple. Similarly, the *Lingaraja temple Inscription* also refers about the arrangement of *paniyapatri* or water jars called *dharapatra* etc during the time of Anangabhima III. Likewise, The *Megheswar Temple Inscription*²⁷ records that *Swapneswaradeva* built the *Megheswar temple* at *Bhubaneswar* and also laid out a garden near the temple; built a tank near it, and created a *mandapa*. He also provided wells and tanks on roads and in towns, lights in temples and cloisters in the study of the Vedas and to the pious brahmanas he gave a *brahmapura* which has superintendent by the *Saiva teacher* named *Visnu* who also consecrated the temple of *Meghesvara*. Beautiful gardens before the *Mukteswar temple*, *Rajarani temple*, *Chitrakarini temple* and *Konark* are established as a part of temple decoration. Roads are

made for proper communication and transportation to those temples. In this process, of argument is that there were certain people associate in digging these water tanks, canals, and in charge of cleaning and supplying water to these temples which can be seen from the present day's observation in some of the grandeur shrines viz., the Jagannatha temple of Puri and Lingaraja Temple. Though inscriptions directly did not mention anything about this, however, we cannot simply exclude these connections of various occupational groups with the temples live in terms of their association to various works for temples maintenance.

ESTABLISHMENT OF LOCAL MARKET: Temple was also a centre of economic activities. Several petty merchants, vendors and agriculturalists were associated with the local markets established vicinity of a temple. Two times we have found references of the establishment of *hattas* nearby build temples. It indirectly refers that temples were directly dependent on these weekly or daily local markets for the supply of their necessary items. Similarly, that market can mitigate the needs of the daily visitors and devotees to those temples. Like nowadays we have seen devotees purchasing needy ritual worship things i.e., *dwipa* (wick), *bhoga* (food offerings) sweet, coconut, banana, *vastra* (cloth), *sindura* (vermilion), flower garlands, *gua* (betel nut) and *pan*(betel leaf) etc from the nearest market of the vicinity of that temple. The Hamsesvara Temple Inscription²⁸ refers about the establishment of a market or *hatta* in the vicinity of the temple by the Bhauma queen Madhaba Devi. Likewise, the Allalpur Charter²⁹ refers that an area of 33 *vatis*, 5 *manas*, and 1 *guntha* covered by the land around the *mathas* and *mandapas* under the enjoyment of the gods and Brahmanas of the certain part of the locality called Hattapura as well as the boundaries of the land granted to the local physician, tanks, canal, *gopatha* was subtracted from the said plot, leaving the total reminder of 37 *vatis* and 8 *manas* and 14 *gunthas*. The boundary of the village touched the boundary lines of Simpalo-Vankesvara *hatta* in the north, *gola-puskarini* means the tank attached to the granary of the Harionta *grama* in the south. The record of the charter is made on Saka year 1215 that was 1292 CE, *Anka* year 19 or regnal year 16 of Narasimha II, on Tuesday, the second day of the solar month *Kumbha*, the fifth day of the lunar month *Falgun* of the dark fortnight. Temples association with these kinds of several activities signifies that the temples were connected with the lay society and occupational communities living within it and nearby villages during early medieval Odisha.

WOMEN AS TEMPLE PATRON: Royal ladies played an important role in patronising those early medieval brahmanic temples of Odisha. Wives of kings, queens, mother or daughters of the ruling king also donated to support those brahmanical religious institutions. Royal ladies, elite women had their possession on tangible property. Hence, they had the choice or right to gift to anybody; religious institutions. In this context, the Terundia Copper Plate³⁰ of Sivakaradeva II refers that the Bhauma queen constructed the Mohini temple at the heart of temple city Bhubaneswar of early medieval Odisha. Likewise, the Chamunda Image Inscription³¹ of Jajpur refers about the installations of the image of Chamunda by queen Vatsadevi of the Bhaumakara family during 8th century CE. Likewise, The sixty-four Yogini temple of Hirapur has constructed under the patronage of the Bhauma queen Hira Mahadevi. It is a sakta temple which is situated 10 kilometres away from Bhubaneswar.³² Similarly, the Brahmesvara Temple Inscription³³ refers that Kolavati, the mother of Udyotakesari, is stated to have caused the erection of a lofty shrine of god Brahmesvara along with four miniature shrines at *Siddhatirtha* of *Ekamra*, which is the ancient name of Bhubaneswar. The temple was adorned with golden pinnacles. Queen Kolavatidevi also made over to the temple some beautiful maids. Likewise, the inscription further refers that the queen dedicated to lord Brahmesvara (Siva) three beautiful women, who were to sing and perform dance before the deity. The record of the donation made on the regnal year 18, the third day of the bright fortnight of the month of *Falgun* probably 1058 or 1060 CE. The Ananta-Vasudeva Temple Inscription³⁴ records that Chandrikadevi daughter of Anangabhimadev III who married the Haihaya prince Paramadri or Paramadrin, cause to built the temple of Visnu at *Ekamra-siddha-tirtha*, in the Utkala *visaya*, where flows the vicinity, the stream called Gandhasindhu and the Bindu-saras or Bindu Sagar pond. She offered with great magnificence to *Baladeva*, *Krsna* with *Subhadra* in the said temple. The record of the donation is made on *Saka era* 1200 that is 1278 CE.

Other than the royal donation, there were other female donors and temple staffs from lay society. The female temple staffs were *devadasis*, dancers, musicians, lady-garland maker- or *malani*, lady-sweeper, etc. The Patalesvara Temple Inscription³⁵ records the grant of two pieces of land by the *Sri-Karana* Suru- Senapati in favour of the god

Purushottama for making provision of the supply of 1 *mana* to the deity with cognizance of Mahadeva-Pathin. One of the two plots of land was situated at Alisana in Ravanga division. The other piece of land measured 10 *manas* ($\frac{1}{2}$ *vati*) was apparently situated in the same locality and was granted for making provision for the supply of 10 *hala* (10 pairs of bundles) of fragrant flowers apparently per day. This grant was made with the cognizance of one *Kalua-malani* or lady garland maker. So, here the lady garland maker as the supervisor of the grant made to the temple as the second person to maintain it. The record of the donation was made on *Saka era* 1158 that was 1236 CE, on Friday, on the first fortnight of the month of *Falgun*, in the thirty-first *srahi* or *anka* year of the reigning king Anangabhimadeva III.

ROLE OF VARIOUS OCCUPATIONAL COMMUNITIES: Various Occupational Communities were played a vital role in supplying necessary things to maintain those temples of early medieval Odisha. They were an inseparable part of temples' daily life. Agriculturalist, florist, herdsman, potter, carpenter, oilmen, betel nut dealer, conch seller, musician, mason builder, sweet vendor and lime washer etc. The Narasimha Temple Inscription³⁶ of 12th century CE records that the *Kampus* of the village headed by Jayaraja were entrusted for making provision and maintenance of a perpetual lamp in the temple of god Purushottama. The inscription also states that Bhimanath designated as *Srikarana* who hailed from Arasavali gifted 100 gold coins in favour of god Purushottama and the *kampu* community were also assigned to spend the money for maintaining the temple. Here, the identification of the *kampus* can be recognized with agricultural communities who are seen to supply agricultural products for the upkeep of certain temples. Similarly, the Markandesvar Temple Inscription³⁷ records that during the reign of the illustrious Chodagangadeva, one Jivanta-*sresthin* accepted the gold offer after the termination of the previous endowment for the supply of two hundred measures of oil every month, for a perpetual lamp held in the hand of the image of three persons, namely Hari the *pujhari* (the priest) of the god Markandesvara, Vadau and Vasu the *pujhari* of another god named Kohrnesvara. Another 12th century Nrusimha Temple Inscription³⁸ records the gift of a perpetual lamp in favour of the god Purushottama by a lady named Klingamma, the wife of Narayana, on the occasion of Mahadvadasi she is also stated to have donated to the temple treasury an amount of five *niskas* (*mada* in Telegu) and to have entrusted to a family of florist for the maintenance of the gift lamp and for supply of garlands of flowers daily to the temple for the worship of the god Purushottama. Here the lady garland maker played a vital role of a caretaker, a supervisor and the chief witness of the grant that is made in favour of the god Purushottama or lord Jagannatha of Puri temple.

Several inscriptions directly refer that headers were associated with the work of supplying milch animal products to certain temples. The Inscription of Chodagangadeva³⁹ refers to the gift of lamp and fifty female buffalos to god Bhimesa by *Banapati*, the commander of king Chodagangadeva. No doubt that a group of people were there for taking care of those gifted buffalos whose role cannot be undermined even though that was not directly mentioned in any of the inscriptions. The Lingaraja Temple Inscription⁴⁰ describes that *pāncavātikā* or five '*vāti*' donated to Govinda Senapati. 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 whitewashing and one to sweeper to cleaning the floor. Probably, the inscription can be traced to the 13th century CE. Likewise, the Nagari Copper Plate Inscription⁴¹ of Anangabhima III refers that when a *grama* was gifted to a brahmana, people from other occupation were also include in that. This grant also refers that the entire area was enclosed by other houses of merchants, goldsmiths conch shell dealers, potters, betel leave declare, oilman, fishermen and washer men. It also traced that the 13thc.CE Odishan Society (settlements) became developed into heterogeneous society in early medieval Odisha. Similarly, the Fragmentary Stone Inscription of the Siddhesvara Temple⁴² records the donation of a plot of land probably in favour of a potter (*Kumbhakara*) for the making provision for the supply of earthen ware and earthen lamps to the temple, by a subordinate king named Suvarnadhara who has been described as *Ranaka* and *Paramavaisnava*. Probably, the inscription can be traced to the 13th century CE.

CONCLUSION: To conclude, I would like to say that every institution, individual or organisations need support for its survival and development purpose. Similarly, temple as an institution was required proper maintenance and

financial support for their daily ritual functions. To upkeep those religious institutions, donation, gifts and endowments were granted in favour of respective gods and goddesses across the subcontinent in general and early medieval Odisha in particular. Temples evolved as the 'Brahmanical Religious Institutions' and survived throughout ages due to timely support to them. Patrons played key role in this domain to donate and run those temples properly. In this context, we see that royal persons donated the lion share of various gifts and endowments to those brahmanical religious shrines to support it for its survival. All the rights and powers were been enjoying by the kings and queens. All the tangible property was under their possession. So, royal persons and their relatives were contributed mostly to the gods and temples of Odisha. Grandeur shrines like Lingaraja, Jagannatha temple of Puri and the Sun Temple of Konark evolved as the result of royal patronage. Gardens, roads, water tanks were made to support the temples, devotees and temple staffs. Local markets were established to support both temple and pilgrims. Proper maintenances were carried out for the longevity of temple's life. Along with this, we have found evidences about the non royal donations to temples. Although there numbers are not widely mentioned in the donative inscriptions, still they contributed to support some of those temples. So, it is evident from the fact that early medieval Odisha witnessed the horizontal spread of brahmanical temples. Largely through royal patronage temple building activities continued throughout this period. The lion share of the donation was made by the kings and queens to support those temples. Inscriptional evidences have proved that those brahmanical temples had been lavishly donated and patronised by various patrons in Odisha during this period of study. Throughout the period of study, brahmanical religious institutions had been patronised properly with timely support to it through gifts and endowments, in terms of cash and kind, without which those temples could not be survived for a longer period of time.

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