

# PLACE NAMES IN SŪRYAVAMŚĪ INSCRIPTIONS A CASE STUDY ON ODISHA INSCRIPTIONS.

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## **Abstract**

The study of Place-names with a distinguished past plays an important role in linguistic, archaeological and historical research. As an interdisciplinary study of place-names, research takes into account historical folkloristic, linguistic, geographical and ethnological data. Place-names thus reflect not only physical characteristics of the place, but also characteristics of the people who live there; they may provide insights into cultural, linguistic, historical habits and spatial, environmental perception.

In the present work materials gather from the original sources like copper plates, stone inscriptions, temple wall inscriptions of the Suryavamsi dynasty of Odisha. I have given attention to find spots of the inscriptions, the actual meaning of names, identification of place names, classified the institutional places in different section ie desa, visaya etc. Further all place names have been analyze into different groups like place names after a person, event, customs, animals, flower, geography and many more.

## **Review of literature**

Study of place-names received considerable attention within India and abroad. In Europe, German historian Forstemann, Rygh in Norway, Noreen in Sweden, Skeat in England are regarded as the pioneers in this field. Toponymical Institutions have been formed either independently by scholars or by the government to foster research and standardize geographical names. "The English place-names Society" established over 90 years ago. The American place-names society, The German place names societies are contemporary in this field. There are over 80 volumes on place names covering of various regions of the above countries; many more countries also have made phenomenal progress in this field. Coming to India there are scholars like Alexandar Cunningham, B.C. Law, Nandolal Dey, H.D. Sankalia, D.C. Sircar, S.J. Mangalam who have done work in the foregoing subject. H.D. Sankalia and S.J. Mangalam were first scholars who worked on place-names mentioned in the inscriptions. Later on many more scholars like R.C. Hiremath, Sumati Muley, Malati Mahajan, S.K. Chatterji, A.K. Chaudhury, B.D. Chattopadhyaya, S.S. Ramachandra Murthy, K.V. Ramesh, M.D. Sampath, M.S. Pandey and others have traced the different cultural aspects of Bengal, Assam, Karnataka, Tamilnadu, Maharastra, Madhya Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh and Gujarat. Like foreign countries in India many place-names institution have been established like "Place-names society of Gujarat" at Baroda, "Place-names society of India" at Mysore, etc.

In Odisha context scholars like Malati Mahajan has written “Orissa from place-names in Inscription” (260 B.C. to 1200 A.D.). In the above book she tried to trace the special features of ancient Odisha- its toponymy, flora, fauna, nature of settlement, administrative geography, characteristics features, social, economy and religious aspects etc. After reading the works of Malati Mahajan I felt inspired to do my research for Ph.D on “inscriptional place-names of Orissa (A.D. 736-1568). The thesis has been submitted in Sambalpur University for award of degree. It is also a unique work in the field of foregoing subject. I have analysed all inscriptional place-names found during period mentioned. Further, all place-names have been interpreted by classifying in different group like flora, Fauna, geographical and physical feature, social, economy and religion place-name. In Odisha and Bargarh

**Keywords** - Suryavamsi, mandala,visaya,village, Odisha,Ganga,Gajapati,Kapilendradeva,

## Introduction

The political chaos had prevailed in Odisha in the middle of fourteen century A.D., due to the weakness and ineffectiveness of the later Ganga, which ended with the emergence of a powerful Odisha military leader, name Kapilendradeva. He overthrew <sup>1</sup> the last Ganga ruler Bhānudeva IV and founded a new dynasty known as Sūryavanśi (Solar dynasty). Kapilendradeva’s coronation took place in Kirttivāsa Kataka i.e. Bhubaneswara in 1434 A.D.<sup>2</sup> and an era started known as the ‘Kapilabda’ which find mention in Odia calendar. This Sūryavanśi dynasty ruled Odisha for a century and little more which produced three prominent rulers like Kapilendradeva, Puroṣottamdeva and Pratāparudradeva. Rest of the rulers of this dynasty were weak and minor. However the rulers of this dynasty traced their descent from the sun through the great hero Rama of epic fame. They also assumed the title of Gajapati in some of their record which indicates the overwhelming number of elephant possessed by them.

During Sūryavanśi rule in 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries A.D. Odisha reached the zenith of its glory in the field of politic, literature and religion. Politically the Sūryavanśi rulers followed aggressive imperialism and conquered the Vijayanagara Empire, the Bahamany Sultan, and the Sultan of Bengal and built up a far flung empire stretching from the river Hoogly in the north to the river Kaveri in the South. In the field of literature Odia became the official language of the Gajapati many works were composed by scholars, such as Sarala Das who composed *Mahābharata* in Odia language, which is a great work in Odia literature. Besides this the activities of Pañcha Sākhā, contribution of other scholar and philosopher and activities of Śrīchaitanyā enriched the period of Sūryavanśi. In the present paper I have made an attempt to identified and analyse the place names reflected in the inscriptions of Suryavansi dynasty of Odisha with in the Odishan geography.

## Inscriptions

The contemporary literary works and inscriptions are the main sources which throw immense light on the political, geographical, and other activities of Sūryavanśi dynasty. Sanskrit literary works like the *Parasūrāma Vijaya*, *Ābhināvā Venisamhāram*, *Saraśvaṭi Vilasam*, *Jagannātha Vallabhā*, *Prabodha Chandrodaya* etc., Odia work like the *Mādalāpanjī*, *Sāralā Mahābharāta*, *Chaitanyā Bhāgavata*, *Jagannāth Charitamṛita* etc. Bengali literary works like the *Chaitanyā Charitamṛita*, *Chaitanyā mangala* etc. Telugu works like *Manūcharitam*, *Krishnarāsa Vijayamū*, and Persian works like the *Tarikh-i-Ferishta*, *Tabaqat-i-Akbari* are literaries sources of Sūryavanśi rule in Odisha. Apart from these there are inscriptional sources located in Andhara Pradesh, which do not come under the review. It may be mentioned that we are restricted within the inscriptional place names of Odisha. Some inscriptions both copper plate and stone wall inscriptions have been found in Odisha which will be studied in the present chapter. These are given below.

**Table-1**

<u>S. N.</u>	<u>District</u>	<u>Find Spot</u>	<u>Inscriptions</u>
1	Balasore	Garhpada	C.P. Three
2	Bhadrak	Sthāneswar Śiva Temple at Mañjuri, Bhandāripokhari P.S.	Temple wall inscription - One
3	Ganjam	Trisilia Khallikote	C.P. One C.P. One
4	Cuttack	In a Śiva temple at Jhankada	Temple wall inscription - One
5	Khurdha	Lingarāj temple wall inscription Bhanoagarh Śiva temple	Temple wall inscription - Three Bhnoagarh Śiva temple - One
6	Puri	Jagannāth temple inscriptions	Jagannāth temple wall - Thirteen

The above mentioned table shows that, a few inscriptions viz three copper plates and twenty one temple inscriptions are located in Balasore, Bhadrak, Ganjam, Cuttack, Khurdha and Puri district of modern Odisha. It may be noted that large number of Sūryavanśi inscriptions found from Śimhachalam, Śrī Sailam, Śrikakulam and Velicheria of Andhra Pradesh province all have been mentioned in R.Subramanyam book.

## Chronology

The Mādalāpanjī the temple chronicles of Puri, the Sanskrit drama "*Gaṅgāvamsanucharitam* and an era Kapilabdha (which has been stated by Kapilendradeva) have been main sources which help us to fix the chronology of Sūryavanśi dynasty. These earlier *Mādalāpanjī* sources aver that the last Ganga ruler

Bhānudeva IV, being childless, adopted Kapilendradeva who was originally a cowherd boy as his heir. The version of Mādalāpanjī does not appear to be correct and it does not provide any support for the fixation of dynasty chronology.

According to the Sanskrit drama *Gaṅgāvansanuchāritam* written by Vāsudeva Rath, a court poet of a descendant of Bhānudeva IV, speak Kapilendradeva was minister of Ganga empire and usurped the latter's throne, when the later was away from the capital but it not provide help for fixation of time. However Kapilendradeva the reigning king celebrated his coronation at Kirttivāsa Kataka i.e. Bhubaneswara and he stated an era which is known as Kapilabda have been mentioned in all Odia calendar dated 1435 A.D. majority of scholars accepted this date as the beginning of Sūryavanśi dynasty. After the date of coronation of Kapilendradeva i.e. 1435 three important rulers i.e. Kapilendradeva, Puroṣottamdeva, Pratāparudradeva ruled Odisha about one century (1435 to 1538 A.D.) According to Mādalāpanjī Pratāparudradeva had two minor sons who ruled for less than two<sup>3</sup> years and were murdered one by one by Govinda Vidyadhara in about 1540 A.D. and founded his own Bhoi dynasty in Odisha. Then the Sūryavanśi Empire came to an end.

### Kingdom

Kapilendradeva the first ruler of Gajapati dynasty led a successful coup against the last Ganga ruler Bhānudeva IV and ascended the throne of Odisha in A.D. 1434 from this day the ruler of Gajapati followed the policy of territorial expansion and imperialism. The inscriptions of Gajapati are mainly located in coastal region, especially in the modern district of Balasore, Bhadrak, Ganjam, Cuttack, Khurdha, Puri, of Odisha, Śrikakulam, Visakapatnam of Andhra Pradesh, Kapilendradeva and his son and grandson Purosottam and Pratāparudradeva ruled from 1434 A.D. to 1541-42 A.D. Some inscriptions<sup>4</sup> referred to the conquest of Sūryavanśi Gajapati King Kapilendradeva he acquired the territories of Teliṅgana, Koṇḍaviḍu, Udayagiri, Chandragiri and his kingdom extended from the river Hoogly in the north to Srirangam in south. Then he assumed the title *Gajapātī Goudeśwara Navākiti Karnātaka Kalabargeśwara*". The capital of Sūryavanśi was Kirttivāsa-Kataka i.e. Bhubaneswara. After the death of Pratāparudradeva, Govindavidyadhara the treacherous minister usurped the throne of Odisha in A.D. 1541-42. He was succeeded by Chakrāprātap in 1549 and was murdered by his son Narasinha Jena in 1557. But soon he was also assassinated in a coup by Mukunda Harichandan, the Governor of Kataka. Then a chaotic civil war took place between Mukundadeva and prince Raghuram for the throne of Odisha and at last Mukundadeva came out victorious in 1559 A.D. In his reign Odisha was conquered by the Turk-Afagan in 1568 and later by the Mughal army under Mansing the general of Akbar.

### Historical geography

The inscriptions of Sūryavanśi found in Odisha and Andhrapardesh provide valuable geographical material for the period. A Survey of the geographical evidences from the inscriptions shows that the

Gajapati confined their main activities in the coastal plains of Odisha. Their copper plate grants and temple inscriptions are mainly found in the coastal region of Odisha. The inscriptions like Penugoṇḍa<sup>5</sup>, Jagannāth temple inscriptions<sup>6</sup>, Kandavidu plate of Gaṇadeva<sup>7</sup>, Velligalani plate of Kapilendradeva<sup>8</sup>, and two inscriptions of Hambira and Raghūdeva<sup>9</sup> have been mentioned the political victories of Kapilendradeva and it also speak about geographical extension of Sūryavanśi. Apart from this title “*Gajapātī Goudeśwara Navākīti Karnātaka Kalabargeśwara*” also an authentic factor which indicates historical geography of Sūryavanśi of Odisha. It seems that the Sūryavanśi territories extended from the river Hoogly in the north to Sriranga in the south.

### Political headquarters

Probably Kirttīvāsa Kataka i.e. Bhubaneswara was the political head quarter of Sūryavanśi Gajapati.

### Territorial division

There is no sufficient data available in the inscriptions to study the territorial division of Gajapati Empire. A few inscriptions of our period of study have mentioned some villages, *viṣayas* and cities of Suryavansi dynasty. Of these the Jagannāth temple inscriptions of Purusottamadeva<sup>10</sup> refer to three villages Mādhoṭīla, Kamalapura and Gopapura and two *viṣayas* Anatarodhā and Vācāda. Apart from this other inscriptions like Jagannāth temple inscriptions<sup>11</sup> Axe-head inscriptions<sup>12</sup> an Odia inscriptions<sup>13</sup>, Bhantragarh Śiva temple inscriptions<sup>14</sup> of Purosottam have mentioned the place names Purosottam city, Kunḍi, Pakṣikhanda, last but not the least Sthāneśvara temple inscriptions<sup>15</sup> of same king refer the place name Santarāgaḍiā. The Gopīnāthpura inscriptions of the time of Kapilendradeva inform us a place known as Gopīnāthpura śāsana.

However according to secondary sources we came to know that, the Gajapati rulers who succeeded to the throne of Orissa after the Ganga dynasty, continued with the same administrative organisation which was already in existence with some minor changes.

They divided their kingdom into *Daṇḍapāṭas*. In the Gajapati inscriptions the Kalinga region is mentioned as Kalinga Dandapātas. Along with term *Daṇḍapāṭas* the Gajapati also used the old terms such as *rajya*, *sthala*, and *sima* which were prevalent under the Reddis and *Rayas* in Andhra territories.

So the kingdom is divided into many *Daṇḍapāṭas*, it's divided into many *viṣaya* and *viṣaya* divided into several villages which is the lowest political unit of Gajapati empire.

### Viṣaya

*Viṣaya* was very important political unit at the time of Sūryavanśi dynasty. Only two *viṣaya* have been found in the inscriptions of Gajapati. The Jagannāth temple inscription of Purusottamdeva refers to *viṣayas* viz Antarodhā and Vācāda-*viṣaya* which probably situated in Odisha region of Gajapati kingdom. The name of *viṣayas* and its constituent village are mentioned below.

**Table-2****Name of viṣaya and attached villages**

<b>S. N.</b>	<b>Name of the viṣaya</b>	<b>khaṇḍa</b>	<b>Villages</b>
1	Antarodhā	--	Mādhōtila, Kamalapur
2	Vācāda	--	Gopapura

**Khaṇḍa**

We never come across the name of *khand* in the inscriptions Gajapati of Odisha.

**Villages**

As we have pointed out earlier that, the Gajapati inscriptions do not provide sufficient data to study the place names of their kingdom. A few villages have been found in their inscriptions under our period of review. The *viṣayas* were composed of a number of villages. They were treated as the lowest political as well as economic units. The following villages towns are found in the inscriptions of Gajapati, they are:- Purusottama city, Purusottam śāsana, Kunti village, Gopīnāthpura śāsana, Pakti-khanda, Pundariksa Gopa, Mādhōtila, Kamalapura, Gopapura, Sāntaragaḍia, Kataka, Athagada.

**Table-3**

<b>Name of the viṣaya</b>	<b>Name of the khaṇḍa</b>	<b>Number of villages</b>
Antarodhā	--	02
Vācāda	--	01
Unknown	--	07

**Identification of place names**

Due to lack of inscripational place names in Odisha of Sūryavanśi Gajapati the present topic is differently study. Here I have try to equated all place names of dynasty. A few *viṣaya* and villages were found in the temple wall inscriptions that have been discussed. The Gajapati dynasty was a prominent dynasty not only in history of Odisha but also all over India. Its name and fame had spread from river Hoogly in the north to Sriranga in the South as they conquered these territorial areas. But unfortunately they have not engraved place names in their inscriptions. So due to lack of data we are unable to study their administrative place names in systematic manner.

**1. Antarodhā-viṣaya and villages Mādhōṭila, Kamalapura and city Puroṣottampura.**

The Jagannāth temple inscriptions of King Purusottamadeva mentioned the villages Mādhōtila and Kamalapura in the Antarodhā -visaya. The gift villages Mādhōtila may be identified with present Madhipur in Nimapada P.S. of Puri district. The *viṣaya* or its chief locality has been identified with Antarodhā

pargana<sup>16</sup> under Nimapada P.S. of the Puri district. Other city Purusottamapura repeatedly occurs in the Gajapati inscriptions popularly known as Puri the holy city of Odisha. Other village is yet to be identified.

## 2. Vācāda-viṣaya and village Gopapura.

The same Jagannāth temple inscriptions of the same king reflected the above *viṣaya* and donated village for offering *bhoga* to the deity. The gift village has been located in present Gop<sup>17</sup> under Nimapada P.S. of Puri district. The chief political head quarter *viṣaya* Vācāda has not been traced out satisfactorily.

## 3. Village Kundi.

The reigning King Puruṣottamdeva engraved an Odia inscription during his 7 years of rule which informs us about the village Kundi. It has been identified with present same Kundi<sup>18</sup> situated about 1 ½ miles from Trisilia to Bhadrak district.

## 4. Village Puruṣottamapura-śāsana.

The Axe-head copper plate inscription of Gajapati King Purusottamadeva mentioned the only place name Purusottamapur-śāsana. It has been named probably after King Purusottamdeva. But it has not been identified satisfactorily.

## 5. Sāntaragaḍia village.

The Sthāneśvara Śiva temple inscriptions of King Purusottamadeva inform us about the village Sāntaragaḍia. It has not been traced out.

## 6. Place Gopīnāthpura śāsana.

The Gopinathpur inscription<sup>19</sup> of the time of reigning King Kapilendradeva reflected the village Gopīnāthpura-śāsana within the Gajapati kingdom. The village has been identified with the present Gopīnāthpura in Padampur pargana of Puri district.

## 7. Village Pakṣikhaṇḍa.

The Bhanragarh Śiva temple inscription of the time of Gajapati King Purosottamadeva mentions the above village. It is not identified.

## 8. Puruṣottama city and village Puṇḍarikṣa Gopa.

One of the Jagannāth temple wall inscriptions of *Gajapātī Goudeśwara, Navākoti Karnātaka Kalabargaśwar*, mentioned the city Purosottam and village Pundarikṣa Gopa. Of these former is well known as Puri town of Odisha differently known as Śankhakshetra, Puridhāma, Purusottama kshetra etc and the later has been located in the present locality of Gop under Nimapada P.S. in the Puri district.

## 9. Place Athagaḍa.

The Madhukeśvara temple inscriptions of King Kapilendradeva mentioned the place names Athagada. It may be identified with present Athagada locality of modern Odisha.

## 10. Place Kaṭaka.

A copper plate charter of Gangādeva of the time of Kapilendradeva has mentioned the place name Kataka. The place may be identified with present town Cuttack of Odisha.

### Place names analysis

#### Place name suffixes

A few place names have been found in the inscriptions of Gajapati dynasty. Of these the suffixes place names like *-pura*, *-gaḍa*, *-śāsana*, *-khaṇḍa*, villages have been occurred frequently and these are discussed in early chapters.

#### Prefix denoting flora

##### *Kamal*

The prefix *kamala* has occurred in the Jagannāth temple wall inscription of reigning King Purusottamdeva with the place name Kamalapura. The prefix words *kamala* denoting lotus flower. Perhaps because of plenty lotus flower in the region the place was named so.

##### *madho*

The same Jagannāth temple wall inscription of same king mentioned the prefix *madho* with the place name Mādhotila. Interestingly the place has two segments. Of these first denoting abundant mahua trees and the second denoting about oil.

##### *sāntara*

The prefix *sāntara* has been reflected in the Thanesvara Śiva temple wall inscription of King Purusottamadeva with the place name Sāntaragada. The prefix Sāntara is an Odia word which means fruits Orange. Probably the place was named after fruits orange (Sāntara).

#### Prefix denoting society

##### *puruṣottama*

This prefix frequently occurs in the inscriptions of Gajapati dynasty with the place names Purusottamapura, Purosottam Khetra, Purusottama śāsana etc. These place names have been named after reigning King Purusottamadeva. It may be mentioned here that Purusottamapura is the others name of holy city Puri which is famous all over the world.



***gopinath***

The prefix word gopinath has occurred in the Gopinathpur inscription of the time of King Kapileśvaradeva with the place name Gopīnāthpura śāsana. The place was named after a Brāhmana general Gopinath who was a General of King Kapileśvara.

**Prefix denoting fauna*****gopa***

The Jagannāth temple inscription of King Purusottamadeva engraved the prefix gopa with the place name Gopapura. The word has two components Gopa + Pura of these former denoting cowherds and second denoting a big habitation. Thus the place is speaking about cowherd habitation.

**Prefix denoting geographical physical feature*****antarodhā***

The Jagannāth temple wall inscription of King Purusottamadeva mentioned the place name Antarodhā. The prefix denotes region with limits. The place was named so because its extension is checked by the sea.

***kaṭaka***

The copper plate charter of Ganadeva of the time of Kapilendradeva has mentioned the place name Kataka. The prefix *kaṭaka* means royal capital, an army camp, Rajadhani.

**Prefix denoting economics*****atha***

The Madhukesvara temple inscription of Kapilendradeva of Andhra Pradesh state of Gajapati king mentioned the prefix *atha* with the place name Athagada. The word has two segments *atha* and *gaḍa*. Of these *atha* denotes numerical eight and *gada* denotes 'Durga'. Thus the place name is named after "eight dūrḡa, or fort .

**Unidentified place names**

We do not know the meaning of these place names which are given below.

Vācāda, Kundi, Paksi-khanda, Pundarika gopa.

**Conclusion**

Thus in the conclusion it can be said that the place names reveals the socio cultural aspect of ancient, medieval and modern human civilization and the present paper speaking on the early medieval Odisha socio cultural factors .

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