Settlements and Administrative Units in DakṣiṇaKośala under the Śarabhapurīyas and Pāṇḍuvaṁśīs: An Epigraphic Study

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1.   Introduction

The Śarabhapurīyas and the early Pāṇḍuvaṁśīs established their rule over South or DakṣiṇaKośala (parts of northern Chhattisgarh and western Odisha) at least as early as the 6th century CE. The history of these dynasties is particularly based on the inscriptions issued by their rulers or by private individuals during the period of their rule. This study, based on the Śarabhapurīya and Pāṇḍuvaṁśī inscriptions delineates the typology of settlements, the pattern of their establishment, administrative-cum-territorial units and the structure of administration.

The available literary and archaeological sources indicate that the region of South Kośala played a significant role in the political and cultural history of early medieval India at least between 500 and 1300 CE. A period that witnessed gradual material growth and cultural transformation. The region comprises the modern districts of Durg, Bilaspur, Raipur and Raigarh in Chhattisgarh, and the Kalahandi-Bolangir-Sambalpur tract in Odisha.[1] Thus, western Odisha and parts of northern Chhattisgarh together represent an early cultural region/sub-region, which was forged historically and came to be popularly known as DakṣiṇaKośala.[2] The name was given to this region in order to distinguish it from Uttara or northern Kośala whose capital was Śrāvastī.[3] The region is well endowed in terms of physical geography: the Mekala range is spread in the region from west to east, while Mahanadi and its tributaries, as well as other rivers such as Son, Maniãrí, Arpã, Lilãgar, Śivanatha, etc., flow through it,[4] serving as arteries of communication and preparing a fertile alluvial basin. The trade route from Kauśāmbī to the

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[1]Bhairabi Prasad Sahu, 'Community, Caste and Regions: A Perspective from Early Orissa', *SocialScientist,* Vol. 14, June 2012, p. 6.

[2]Bhairabi Prasad Sahu, *TheChanging Gaze: Regions and the Constructions of Early India,* Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 2013, p. 162.

[3] K. D. Bajpai, 'New Light on the Early Pandava Dynasty of South Kośala', *Annals of the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute*, Vol. 58/59, Diamond Jubilee Volume (1977-78), p. 433.

[4]Ibid, p. 433.

Andhra coast cutting through the region provided the necessary cultural connectivity. Important towns like Bandhogarh, Kharod, Śarabhapura (later called Mallalapattana) and Śrīpura (modern Sirpur) were located on this route.[5]

DakṣiṇaKośala came into prominence for the first time during the rule of the Śarabhapurīyas and the early Pāṇḍuvaṁśīs at least as early as the fifth-sixth centuries CE. The history of these dynasties is particularly based on the inscriptions issued by their rulers or by private individuals during the period of their rule. However, the name Śarabhapurīya never appears in the inscriptions and has been given by historians to the dynasty that ruled over DakṣiṇaKośala from its centre Śarabhapura in the 6th-7th centuries CE. On the other hand, the name Pāṇḍuvaṁśī frequently appear in the inscriptions.

2. Inscriptions of the Śarabhapurīyas and the Pāṇḍuvaṁśīs: Characteristic Features

The inscriptions of the Śarabhapurīyas and the Pāṇḍuvaṁśīsan can be classified into two broad categories on the grounds of the difference in the bases on which they are incised, *viz.*, copper-plate charters and lithic records. The former belong, without a single exception, to the members of these dynasties or their feudatories, as the right of issuing copper-plate charters with the object of making or renewing land-grants was a royal prerogative.Most of the records of the second category belong to private persons.

There are 18 copper-plate records of the Śarabhapurīya dynasty reported to date and no lithic records. Of these, three belong to Narendra, four to Jayarāja, six to Sudevarāja, two to Pravararāja, one to an unnamed chief queen (*rājya-mahādevī*) and other members of the royal family, one to a feudatory Vyāghrarāja, and one to a certain Daṇḍacakra. As many as 16 records have been found at various places in the Chhattisgarh region, whereas only one has been reported from the adjoining Kalahandi district of Odisha.One third of all Śarabhapurīya copper-plate inscriptions, i.e., six out of 18 inscriptions, belongs to one ruler, Sudevarāja (571-80 CE).Thus, all these inscriptions can be broadly classified into pre- Sudevarāja, Sudevarāja, and post-Sudevarāja periods.

Out of 17 inscriptions of the Pāṇḍuvaṁśī dynasty, there are 10 copper-plate charters and the rest are lithic records. Of the copper-plate charters, three belong to Tīvaradeva, one to NannaII and five to ŚivaguptaBālārjuna. One stray plate, though not containing the issuing king's name, can be attributed, with a fair degree of certitude to ŚivaguptaBālārjuna on account of its general features and date. All these records have been found in Chhattisgarh, Mallar in Bilaspur district yielding the largest number (3), followed by Bonda inRaigarh district (2). All

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[5]Ibid,p. 434.

other localities have yielded one grant each. Of the seven stone inscriptions, one belongs to the reigns of BhavadevaRaṇakesarin and Nanna I, and the rest to that of ŚivaguptaBālārjuna. All these records have been found in Chhattisgarh, Sirpur in Mahasamund district yielding the largest number (5), and Arang in Raipur district and Senkapat in Mahasamund district yielding one each. Almost 65 per cent of all inscriptions, i.e., 11 out of 17, belong to one ruler, ŚivaguptaBālārjuna.Thus, all these inscriptions can be broadly classified into pre-Bālārjuna and Bālārjuna periods.

3.   Settlements and Administrative Units

The inscriptions of the Śarabhapurīyas and the Pāṇḍuvaṁśīs not only mentionthe villages that were donated but also numerous other expressions, which help us a lot to define the physical geography of their Kingdom. A total of 72 settlements (including 38 in Śarabhapurīya inscriptions and 35 in Pāṇḍuvaṁśī inscriptions and excluding Sirpur, common to both sets) can be classified into 8 categories: such as *rāṣṭraāhāra*, *bhoga*, *bhukti*, *viṣaya*,*mārga*, donated village, and place of issue of grants (see tables).

Table 1: Administrative Units and Settlements of Śarabhapurīya

S no.	Category of Settlement	Pre-Sudevarāja	Sudevarāja	Post-Sudevarāja	Total
1	*Rāṣṭra*	Pūrva	Pūrva	Pūrva, Tuṇḍa	2
2	*viṣaya*	—	—	—	—
3	*Bhoga*	Nandapura, Cullāḍasīmā, Śabara	Dakari, Hakirī,	Śaṅkhacakrā	6
4	*Āhāra*	—	Kṣitimaṇḍa	—	1
5	*Bhukti*	Manṭarāja, Sāmparāja	Tosaḍḍa, Tuṇḍaraka	—	4
6	*Mārga*	—	—	—	—
7	place of issue of grant	Śarabhapura (6), Tilakeśvara	Śarabhapura (5), Śrīpura (2)	Śrīpura (2), Prasannapura	4
8	donated village	Śarkarāpadraka, Keśavaka, Torāmaka, Rājyagrāma,Kadambadrupallaka, Pamvā, Mokkeppikā,	Navannaka, Śāmbilaka, Khalapadraka, Śivaliṅgaka, Sunikā, Śrīsāhika, Cullaṇḍaraka,	Āṣāḍhaka, Mitragrāmaka, Kunturapadraka	17
9	Unclassified	Vaṭapadra, Antaranālaka, Nagarottarapaṭṭa	—	—	3
10	Unnamed	—	Pl. X	—	01

Table 2: Administrative Units and Settlements of Pāṇḍuvaṁśī

Sr. no.	Category of settlement	Pre-Bālārjuna	Bālārjuna		Total

1	*Rāṣṭra*	—	—	—
2	*viṣaya*	Aṣṭadvāra	Kośīranandapura, Lāyoḍḍaka	3
3	*Bhoga*	—	Taraḍaṁśaka, Oṇi (2)	2
4	*Āhāra*	—	—	—
5	*Bhukti*	Piharāja, Peṇṭhāma	—	2
6	*Mārga*	Sundarikā	—	1
7	place of issue of grant	Śrīpura (4)	Śrīpura (5)	1
8	donated village	Bondaka, Avadika, Pimparipadraka, Meṅkiḍḍaka, Kontiṇīka,	Vaṭapadaka, Śarkarāpāṭaka, Vaidyapadraka, Kailāśapura, Śuskasirillikā, Toḍaṅkaṇa, Madhuveḍha, Nālīpadra, Kurapadra, Nāgapadra,Vargullaka, Gudaśarkaraka, Kodasimā, Viyānaka, Śrīparṇikā, Lāṭa	21
9	Unclassified	Bilvapadraka[6]	PattanaKhadiraparda-tala[7], Taraḍaṁśaka[8], Kosalānagara[9]	5

Note:

- *The number in brackets denotes the no. of inscriptions where the name appears.*
- *Unclassified denotes settlements that do not fall under any of the first six categories.*

In the majority of Śarabhapurīya inscriptions, Śarabhapura is the place of the issue of charters, though it is absent in the post-Sudevarāja charters. This suggests that for most part of the Śarabhapurīyarule, Śarabhapura maintained its status as the hereditary capital. The location of the city is still not clear. However, as the earliest records of the dynasty have been reported from Raipur District of Chhattisgarh, the possibility of its ultimately being located in the Raipur area are high, but at a considerable distance from Sirpur, cannot be ruled out.[10]Sudevarāja'sDhamatari and Kauvatal plates of the third and seventh years respectively were given from Śrīpura and the rest of the grants from the hereditary capital Śarabhapura. It seems, therefore, that he founded the town of Śrīpura and made it something like his second capital sometime in or prior to the third year of his reign. Śarabhapura, of course continued to be the main capital because his latest inscription, the Raipur plates, was issued from Śarabhapura. The following king Pravararāja issued both of his charters from Śrīpura, which indicates that the capital was finally shifted to Śrīpura during his reign. Śrīpura continued to enjoy the status of the

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[6] Mentioned in the Baloda Plates of Tīvaradeva (Pl. IV) as the place where the free feeding house (*sattra*) is located; the *sattra*was to be maintained by the grant of Meṅkiḍḍaka village.

[7]Mentioned in the Lodhia Plates of ŚivaguptaBālārjuna (Pl.VIII) as the place where the temple of IśānesvaraŚiva was located; the temple was to be maintained by the grant of Vaidyapadraka village.

[8] Mentioned in the Mallar Plates of ŚivaguptaBālārjuna (Pl. IX) as the place where a small monastery (*vihārikā*) was located; the resident monks were to be maintained by the grant of Kailāśapura village. It is not clear whether this Kailāśapura refers to the *bhoga* wherein the village was located, or to a place of the same name as the *bhoga*itself.

[9]Mentioned in the Mallar Plates of ŚivaguptaBālārjuna (Pl. X) as the place where Śivanandin, the builder of the temple of Kapāleśvara (Śiva) and Bhaṭṭāraka (probably Sūrya), resided; the temple was to be maintained by the grant of Śuskasirillikā village.

[10]Ajay MitraSastri, Inscriptions of the Śarabhapurīyas, Pāṇḍuvaṁśins and Somavaṁśins, Part I, p.95.

dynastic capital of thePāṇḍuvaṁśīs as all the known copper-plate charters of Tīvaradeva and his successor Nanna II were issued from Śrīpura. The discovery of a number of records of ŚivaguptaBālārjuna's reign at Śrīpura may be justifiably taken to indicate that the Pāṇḍuvaṁśī capital continued to be located at this town till the very end of the dynasty. During the Śarabhapura period, apart from Śarabhapura and Śrīpura, two other places, Tilakeśvara and Prasannapura served as sites for the issue of two charters as well. On the basis of the sufixes*pura*, *paṭṭa*and *nagara*,only three settlements, viz. Śarabhapura, Śrīpura and Prasannapura in the Śarabhapurīya inscriptions and three, viz. Śrīpura, Kosalānagara and Nagarottarapaṭṭain the Pāṇḍuvaṁśīinscrptions can be identified as urban settlements. Interestingly, one donated rural settlement, viz. Kailāśapuramentioned in the Pāṇḍuvaṁśī inscription carries the suffix *pura*.

In contrast to the suffixes denoting urban settlements, suffixes denoting varieties of rural settlements are numerous, for instance *padra*, *padraka*, *pāṭaka*, *padaka*, *grāma*, *grāmaka*, etc. Among these, there are only two with the suffix *grāma*and *grāmaka*, viz. Rājyagrāma and Mitragrāmaka, one with the suffix *pāṭaka*, while most bear the suffix *padraka* (5) or its variants*padra*(1) and *padaka*(1). Clearly, a great majority of settlements mentioned in the Śarabhapurīya and Pāṇḍuvaṁśīinscriptions fall under the category of rural settlements, indicating agrarian growth. However, the evidence of collective grants to several groups of Brāhmaṇas and the frequency of the occurrence of *padra*s or *padraka*s, not*grāma*s (fully settled villages), combined with scant references to urban settlements, suggest an early stage in the spread of plough agriculture and evolution of rural settlements in many parts of the region.[11] Nevertheless, that agrarian growth was steady is suggested by a marginal increase in the number of donated villages from 17 in theŚarabhapurīya to 21 in the Pāṇḍuvaṁśī period.

Of the varieties of settlements, several were unambiguously named after local flora, such as Kadambadrupallaka derived from kadamba/*NaucleaCadamba*, Pimparipadraka from pimpari/Ficus*Infectoria*, Vaṭapadaka and Vaṭapadra from vaṭa or banyan/*FicusIndica*, and Bilvapadraka from bilva or bel/wood-apple. They allude to the rich, thick vegetation in their surroundings.[12]Names such asŚarkarāpadrakaGudaśarkaraka indicate that these villages specialized in the production of sugar, while Vaidyapadraka could have been inhabited by *vaidya*s (physicians).

The expression *śabarabhogika* meaning 'resident of Śabara*bhoga* or a Śabara who was a *bhogika* in a Pāṇḍuvaṁśī inscription indicates not only that certain areas had tribal population,

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[11]Bhairabi Prasad Sahu, *TheChanging Gaze: Regions and the Constructions of Early India,* Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 2013, p. 91.
[12]Ibid, p. 90.

but also that the concentration was significant enough for some areas to be designated as territorial divisions after the resident tribe or have an official from among the residents. This is also perhaps suggested by a preponderance of non-Sanskritic names of settlements. However, such names more plausibly allude to a situation in which BrahamnicalSanskritic culture had not sufficiently penetrated the region to change the local place names.

Only one settlement, viz. Sundarikā-mārga, mentioned in a Pāṇḍuvaṁśī inscription, was located on a route and thus derivedits name (*mārga*), while no such settlement appears in the preceding Śarabhapurīya inscriptions. This suggests that settlements were yet to evolve as well-recognized nodal points of communication or parts of an established network of commercial interactions.

The territory was divided into a number of *rāṣṭras*, they were also called *rājya*s. In the records of contemporary *samanta* families, whose kingdom was comparatively smaller, the *rāṣṭra*s were named after the direction in which they were situated. The territory under Śarabhapurīyaswas divided, for administrative purposes into two *rāṣṭras*, eastern and western. The Uttara*rāṣṭra*or Northern Division is mentioned in the Bamhanī plates of the Pāṇḍuvamsi king Bharatabala, and the Pūrva*rāṣṭra*or Eastern Division is named in the Arang plates of Mahā-Jayarāja[13] and the Raipur plates of Mahā-Sudevarāja. Besides, a third*rāṣṭra*, viz. Tuṇḍa is mentioned once in the Thakurdiya Plates of Pravararāja, and may have come up in the post-Sudevarāja period. Interestingly, *rāṣṭra*finds no mention in the Pāṇḍuvaṁśī inscriptions.

The *rāṣṭra*s were next divided into *viṣaya*swhich, in turn, were subdivided into*āhāras*and *bhogas* or *bhuktis*. A mutilated KharodLakṣmaṇa temple inscription of Indrabala, grandfather of Pāṇḍuvaṁśī ruler Tīvararājais credited with the foundation of a town named Indrapura after his own name which is spoken of as the headquarter of a district (*viṣaya*). Pāṇḍuvaṁśī inscriptions mention 3 *viṣaya*s, while Śarabhapurīya charters mention none. On the other hand, a Śarabhapurīya charter mentions only one *āhāra*, viz. Kṣitimaṇḍa—a unit that does not appear in the Pāṇḍuvaṁśī inscriptions. Śarabhapurīya charters mention 6 *bhogas*and 4 *bhuktis*, while Pāṇḍuvaṁśī inscriptions mention 2 names of each unit.

Mārga, which is generally translated as a way, seems to have denoted a territorial division. The records of the Śarabhapurīya kings, which refer to territorial divisions (e.g. *vaiṣayika*, *bhogiya*, etc.) contain the expression *sundarikā-mārgiya* derived from Sundarikā-mārga. This shows that like *viṣaya* and *bhoga*, *mārga* also meant a territorial division. The *mārga*must have been important from administrative division to be named after it. Hence,

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[13] *CII*, Vol. III, p. 193

barring a few instances of omission of names of certain units, there is generally a broad continuity in the administrative organization of the two states.

4. Administration and Officers

The administration organised by the Śarabhapurīyas and the Pānduvamsins in South Kośala seems to have been efficient and accessible to all corners and the people. The administration was carried on with the help of a large number of officials, civil and military headed by the king, but few of them find a mention in the inscriptions. We shall soon return to them. The country was governed righteously and religiously and people were free to practice their religions. The continued policy of religious tolerance of all kings could get special mention in this regard. The contemporary rulers either worshipped Viṣṇu or Śiva but they equally patronized the followers of other faiths. The inscription and archaeological record bears testimony to the existence of Buddhism in Central India down to about the middle of the eighth century CEand it proves that the Brāhmaṇas were by no means hostile to that creed.[14] For example Śivagupta, though a devout Śaiva, donated a village in favour of a Buddhist establishment and a private benefactor provided for a free feeding house for the Buddhist monks.[15]

The Śarabhapurīya kings did not assume high titles like *raṇakesarin, viruda-* or*apriya-vaiśika*(one disdainful of prostitutes), *cintādurga,*[16]*mahāśiva, parama-vaiṣṇava,*[17]*nṛpati,*[18]*avanibhṛtāmadhīśvara,*[19]*parama-māheśvara,*[20] etc., like the kings of the dynasty of the Pāṇḍuvaṁśīs, but were content with the title of *Mahārāja*. The title *Mahārāja*of the Śarabhapurīyas as contrasted with *paramabhaṭṭāraka-pāda*mentioned in connection with their supposed association with the Gupta Emperors indicates the inferior political status of the former and subordination to the Guptas. For example Narendra'sKurud plates show that he continued to acknowledge the supremacy of the Imperial Guptas like his father Śarabha till at least the twenty-fourth year of his reign. It is interesting to note that these plates refer to his overlord in a respectful manner as *paramabhaṭṭāraka-pāda* while he himself is given the comparatively simpler title *Mahārāja* and the grant was renewed by him not for the increase of his own merit but that of his overlord. Prasannamātra's son Jayarāja was the first member of the Śarabhapurīya dynasty to assume the title of *mahat,* which shows his independent status after

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[14]F. Kielhorn, 'Nagpur Buddhist Inscription of BhavadevaRanakesarin', *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland,* Oct. 1905, pp. 617-33.
[15]See Pāṇḍuvaṁśīs Inscription No. XII.
[16] These titles were assumed by Bhavadeva (Pāṇḍuvaṁśīs Dynasty) in his inscriptionsNo.I(Arang Stone Inscription of BhavadevaRaṇakesarin and Nannarāja)
[17]See Ajay MitraSastri, 'A Note on the Aḍhabhāra Plates of Mahā-Nannarāja', *JOI,*Vol. XXIV,pp. 67-69.
[18]See Pāṇḍuvaṁśīs Inscription No. XI.
[19]See Pāṇḍuvaṁśīs Inscription No. XI.
[20]See Pāṇḍuvaṁśīs Inscription No. XII

throwing the yoke of the Guptas. This practice became so popular for reflecting sovereign status that it was adhered to not only by all his successors but also by the Pāṇḍuvaṁśīs, and the Somavaṁśīs i.e., this practice was prevalent in the Chhattisgarh region and the adjoining area of Odisha for over six centuries. It is interesting to note that the Śarabhapurīyas generally assumed a single name to which they prefixed the word *mahat*[21] but the Pāṇḍuvaṁśīs appear to have assumed two names, one of which was personal and the other was assumed at the time of coronation, and it was to the latter name that the word *mahat* was added.[22]

Interestingly, the Pāṇḍuvaṁśī king Candragupta appended the word *gupta* to the royal name, which is known to have become popular hereafter. Most of the later members of this dynasty as well as the later Somakula bore *gupta*-ending names. They did not claim any divine origin, but believed that they owed their royal fortune to the grace of their *iṣṭa-devatā,* which is clear by the titles like *parama-vaiṣṇava* and *parama-māheśvara*. It also indicates that they believed their royal fortune was due to the grace of the worshipped God.

A study of land grant charters clearly reveals that the Śarabhapurīyas and Pāṇḍuvaṁśīs established an administrative apparatus headed by the king. It is more or less similar to the administrative structure of the Guptas, as the Śarabhapurīyas were the subordinates of the Guptas and the Pāṇḍuvaṁśīs were the *samantas* or chiefs under the Śarabhapurīyas. For example the Pāṇḍuvaṁśī king Indrabala is generally identified with the *Mahāsāmanta*Indrabalarāja, who according to the Dhamatari and Kauvātāl plates, occupied the office of *sarvādhikārādhikṛta* under the Śarabhapurīya chief Sudevarāja. The collapsing of more than one important office in the same person, is an indicator of an early state, a state in the making; where the different elements were not yet formally laid down.[23]

The Śarabhapurīyas had officialslike*dūtaka*(executor or conveyor), *amātya, bhogapati* (district officer)*,sarvādhikārādhikṛta*(chief minister)*, grāmakūṭa, gaṇḍakanāyaka, devavarika* and certainly there were also somesoldiers. The grants mention that the donated area was freefrom the interference of *chātas* (irregular soldiers) and *bhaṭas*(regular soldiers). Theywere regular and irregular soldiers respectively.[24]The office of the *sarvādhikārādhikṛta*possibly meant the post of Chief Minister. TheBonda plates of ŚivaguptaBālārjuna mention the term*pradhāna* (village headman) which was sometimes seen as an official designation denoting as administrator[25], but it seems to refer to the village headman in the Bardula plates of Śivagupta.

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[21]The only known exception is provided by Durgaraja who was also known as Manamatra.

[22]In the case of the next three ruling chiefs of the dynasty the names known to us appear to have been coronation names.

[23]Bhairabi Prasad Sahu, *TheChanging Gaze: Regions and the Constructions of Early India,* Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 2013, p. 165.

[24] *IA*, Vol. VII, p. 250.

[25]P. V. Kane, *History of Dharmasastras*, Vol. III, Bhandarkar Oriental Research, 1973, p. 992

This view finds support from its use (*sa-pradhānān*) as an adjective of *prativāsinaḥ*, 'inhabitants'. Other officers like *samāhartṛ* were generally in its plural form it may actually means well to do local notables in the countryside entrusted with the duty of collecting revenue from various sources mentioned in the copper-plate charters in connection with land-grants. The *sannidhātṛ*, frequently mentioned along with the *samāhartṛ* has been variously taken to refer to an official in charge of the receipt of various articles into the royal treasury or the superintendent of the construction of the royal treasury, store-houses etc.[26] Some revenue term like *bhoga* (Periodical offerings), *bhāga* (share of the produce), *dhānya* (grains), *meya* (share of the agricultural produce), *hiranya* (case money) and *pratyāya* (all taxes).

The Amgora plates of Jayarāja mentioned that the *dūtaka* of the grant is the executor or the conveyor of the royal order in respect of the grant to the concerned officers who then drew up the charter and delivered it to the donee/donees. The mention of the secretariat (*adhikaraṇa*) itself functioning as the *dūtaka* of a grant is of rare occurrence in the Kurud plates of Narendra. Among the subordinate officers *karaṇa* or *karaṇika* in the original has been taken to mean a clerk, a scribe or an accountant. *Karaṇika-Brāhmaṇa* would denote a *karaṇika* belonging to the Brāhmaṇa community.

The officer Haḍappagrāha mentioned in the Mallar plates of Jayarāja is evidently the same as Hadappaggāhamatya (Sanskrit Hṛtapragrahāmātya) mentioned in the Kanukollu plates of the Śālankāyana king Nandivarman and was evidently in charge of stolen goods.[27] It reminds one of the officer (*yukta*) in charge of *pranaṣṭ-ādhigata-dravya* mentioned in the *Manusmṛti* and *Cauroddharaṇika* referred to in some later inscriptions.[28] Bhattacharya and Sivappa think that the adjective Śabarabhogika used for Rudrasvāmin in the Mallar plates may indicate either that Rudrasvāmin hailed from an administrative division (*bhoga*) named after the Śabaras or that he was a representative of the Śabaras. They propose to identify Śabarabhoga with Seorinarayan or Śavarinārāyaṇa.[29] But it seems that the expression should be taken to mean that Rudrasvāmin acted as a priest of the Śabaras.

5. Agrarian Expansion

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[26] U. N. Ghosal (*Contributions to the History of the Hindu Revenue System,* 52), compares him to the *Qānungo* of the Mughal period.

[27] *EI*, xxxi, 6, text line 40, fn.9.

[28] N. G. Majumdar, *Inscriptions of Bengal,* Vol. III, The Varendra Research Society, Bengal, p. 184.

[29] *EI*, Vol. XXXIV, p. 29

The Śarabhapurīya and the Pāṇḍuvaṁśī periods were characterised asmuch by state formation as the step-wise formation of agrarian regions. B. D. Chattopadhyaya refers that it was the result of the simultaneousoperation of multiple interrelated processes of change, involvingagrarian expansion and peasantisation of the tribes, caste formation,cultic integration and the gradual extension of state society.[30]The striking feature of these kingdoms of this area was acculturation of tribes which were gradually brought into the dominant Brahmanical society and transformed mostly into peasants and other occupational castes.[31]DakṣiṇaKośala, in course of thesecond half of the first millennium CE, registers the presence of *kutumbins*,*prativāsins*(ordinary residents), *pradhāna-prativāsins* (rich residents),*jana-padan*, *suvarṇakāra* (goldsmith), *vaṇik* (trader), *mālākāra* (garland maker), *sūtradhāra*,*gauda* (cowherd), *kāyastha*, *vaidya*, *vindhani* (engraver), *kāla-deśin* (astrologer), and *janapramukha* (important persons).[32]The large-scaleconstruction of temples and *vihāras*, and the issue of several copper-plate charters would have brought in other functional groups too. The chiefs had to persuade tribals to become settled agriculturists so that production would increase; because a tribal economy based on shifting cultivation cannot sustain an emerging kingdom . In Odisha and Chhattisgarh the formation of a regional agrarian base was secured during the Somavaṁśī -later EasternGaṅga times , though the processes leading to it began much earlierat the local and supralocal levels during the Śarabhapurīyas and the Pāṇḍuvaṁśīs. It provided the basis for the gradualunfolding of the personality of the region.

From the distribution of the land-grants it emerges that the large tracks of land was available for agriculture. The area around the Mahanadi valley and its tributaries were being opened up for agriculture. The absence of detailed boundary specifications in the land grants suggests low density of settlements and the availability of land for clearance and settlement. Even the Senkapat record while mentioning the boundaries does not refer to other settlements or neighbouring plots. The continued presence of *padara, padraka*and *pataka*ending rural settlements even under the Pāṇḍuvaṁśīs, and not necessarily full-fledged villages in almost all cases may suggest a society in its early stages of growth.[33]

The Śarabhapurīya kings adopted a policy of the expansion of agriculture through the grant of tanks. Not only the contemporary rulers but also the subordinates donated and

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[30]B. D. Chattopadhyaya, *The Making of Early Medieval India*, New Delhi, 1994, Introduction.
[31]B. P. Sahu, 'Social Morphology and Physiology of Early Medieval Orissa', *Proceeding of the Indian History Congress*, 1983, pp. 133-34; and 'Ancient Orissa-The Dynamics of Internal Transformation of Tribal Society', *Proceeding of the Indian History Congress*, 1984, pp. 148-60.
[32]Bhairabi Prasad Sahu, 'Community, Caste and Regions: A Perspective from Early Orissa', *SocialScientist,* Vol. 14, June 2012, p. 13.
[33]Bhairabi Prasad Sahu, *TheChanging Gaze: Regions and the Constructions of Early India,* Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 2013, p. 168.

constructed wells and tanks for irrigation with the approval of the monarch. For example the Raipur plate of Sudevarāja refers to Śrīvāpikā as an irrigation well while we can take it to be a step well on the basis of the common connotation of the word *vāpī* or *vāpikā*. It may have of course served irrigational purposes. The reference to eastern tank indicates that there must have been more than one tank in the donated village. It appears that Savitṛsvāmin, who was something like a local notable, made a gift to the village from his own landholding with the approval of the ruling Śarabhapurīya monarch.

There is evidence for land grants in tribal areas, jungles or hilly tracts and also the grant of uncultivated land, implying that such grants were made to open up virgin soil for agriculture and cultivation. If we leave the grants to temples and Buddhist monasteries, then all the copper-plate charters of the Śarabhapurīyas and the Pāṇḍuvaṃśīs are grants to either a single Brāhmaṇa or a group of Brāhmaṇas. The Arang plates of Sudevarāja record the gift of a village named Sivalingaka to eight Brāhmaṇas. The Bonda plates of Tīvaradeva records a grant to 25 Brāhmaṇas. The Bardula plates of Mahāśivagupta record the gift of a village named Vatapaḍaka to a dozen Brāhmaṇas. Five villages are of the object of a grant to twelve Brāhmaṇas in the Sirpur stone inscription the time of Mahāśivagupta. Such grants may have been prompted by the desire of the donors to extend and strengthen Brāhmaṇical influence in and around the donated area and in the process to integrate these areas with the mainstream of peasant economic activity. Consequently, this could ensure the extension and consolidation of their power and influences over these stretches.[34] The spread of Brāhmaṇical culture, the mushrooming of rural settlements, plough cultivation on and extensive scale, the expansion and better utilisation of various forms of irrigational facilities and the proliferation products and produce were related developments. Together, they contributed towards agrarian expansion.[35]

6. Territorial Integration and Expansion

The Śarabhapurīyas and the Pāṇḍuvaṃśīs of Chhattisgarh provide good examples of state formation and the extension of statesociety at the local and trans-local levels which isindicated by the increasing number of land-grants. The pace of tribal state formation and maturation in different parts of the macro-region has been extremely uneven spatially depended on the physical aspect of the resource base like fertility of soil and available agricultural land.[36] The states that these two dynasties had built in the fertile alluvial DakṣiṇaKośala basin was materially much

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[34]BhairabiPrasandSahu, 'Aspects of Rural Economy in Early Medieval Orissa', *Social Scientist*, Vol. 21, Jan-Feb. 1993, p. 54.
[35]Ibid, p. 59.
[36]Suranjit K. Saha, 'Early State Formation in Tribal Areas of East-Central India', *EPW,* Vol. 31, No.13, March 1996, p. 833.

more advanced than any of the states that the Nalas were able to build in their highland bases of power.[37] This is clearly shown by the splendid temples that the two ruling houses had built all over DakṣiṇaKośala, as well as the even larger number of land grants they made to the Brāhmaṇas. In comparison, the Nalas had built no temples and were known to have made only a small number of land grants to the Brāhmaṇas.

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[37]Ibid, p. 830.