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### 3. Trade & Commerce in Orissa during the British period

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During the early years of British rule in Orissa, the level of decline in trade and commerce was unprecedented. Earlier as a maritime state, Odia merchants had expanded their commerce to the islands of Java, Bali, and Sumatra, which are now a part of the Republic of Indonesia. Prior to the British occupation, Orissa exported rice, salt, exquisite calicoes, and a number of other products of cottage industries. Under British rule, however, the once-thriving maritime commerce through Balasore and Pipili port deteriorated over the course of several decades. The famous filigree works, bell-metal industries, stone, wood, and chalk carvings, horn works, and handloom industries progressively languished without patronage, resulting in mass unemployment among the artisans and becoming one of the most significant obstacles to the natural growth of trade.<sup>1</sup>

The invasion of Liverpool salt from the north and Ganjam salt from the south forced Orissa's salt trade out of business. The province's economy suffered greatly as a result of the elimination of the salt trade. However, towards the end of the nineteenth century, this depressing period in trade began to change. Road and rail transport both advanced. Orissa is traversed by the East Coast Railway line to Puri and the railway connecting Madras and Howrah. Similar to how the Jagannath Road was built, the National Highway connecting Calcutta and Bombay and Calcutta and Madras ran through Orissa. The introduction of motorcars, motor lorries, and trucks greatly boosted intrastate trade. These advancements in communication linked the several Oriya language regions and produced advantageous conditions for the growth of trade. They also exposed people to the urban cultures of Calcutta, Bombay, and Madras.

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### Trade centers of Orissa

The principal centres of internal trade were Puri, Khurda, Satyabadi, Pipili, Balakati, and Banpur in the district of Puri; Cuttack, Marshaghai, Jagatsinghpur, Kendrapara, and Jajpur; and Balasore, Bhadrak, and Chandbali in the district of Balasore.<sup>2</sup> Berhampur, Ganjam, Khallikote, Hinjilicut, Chhatrapur, Gopalpur, Paralakhemundi, Aska, Rsselkonda, Digapahandy, and Bellaguntha were the most important commercial hubs in the district of Ganjam.<sup>3</sup> Berhampur served not only as a significant viable centre of trade and commerce in southern Orissa, but also as a major trade gateway between the hills and the plains.<sup>4</sup> Jeypore, Rayagada, Nowarangapur, Gunpur, Koraput, and Kotpad were prominent commercial centres in the Koraput district.<sup>5</sup> Sambalpur, Jharsuguda, Baragarh, Brajaraj Nagar, Belpahar, Titlagarh, Bagdhi, and Dhutra were the most significant commercial centres in the Sambalpur district.<sup>6</sup>

### Mercantile Classes of Orissa

The local merchants conducted business on a very modest scale. The local mercantile classes consisted of Teli, Guria, and Tanti caste members, the majority of whom were petty traders as opposed to merchants. The most significant trade sectors were dominated by traders from upcountry. These commercial classes varied from district to district and region to region. The Balasore district was administered by Bengali, Marwari, Telegu, Bombay merchants, and Muhammadans. The commerce of the district of Sambalpur was dominated by Marwari, Nagpur, and Raipur merchants. Kumutis and Bengalis managed the commercial affairs of the Ganjam, Puri, and Koraput districts. The Muhammadan community was also involved in the commerce of Ganjam and Koraput district, particularly the trade of hides.<sup>7</sup>

The Haji Jamal Nur Muhammad firm of Bombay, which had a branch in Jaypore, handled more merchandise on the hide trade than any other location in South Orissa.<sup>8</sup> Outside traders from Nagpur, Raipur, Calcutta, Bombay, and other parts of India travelled from village to village, even penetrating the deepest recesses of the highlands, to exchange their wares for the produce of the land.<sup>9</sup> With the development of communications and the introduction of the railway, the prosperity of the merchant class has undoubtedly increased. Rice merchants are predominantly Muhammadans from Bombay, cloth merchants from Jaipur and Marwar, and hide traffickers from Afghanistan.<sup>10</sup> The average Oriya has little knowledge of commerce and commercial enterprise, his horizon being limited to trivial retail trade or usury, which requires minimal effort.

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### Articles of Export and Import

Since farming was the primary activity of the people of Orissa, agricultural goods including food crops like rice, barley, and mandia (ragi), fruits and vegetables, and cash crops like oil-seeds, coconut, coir, jute, sugarcane, etc. were the main commodities sold by the business class. The trading items among the forest products were wood, fuel, bamboo, tamarind, turmeric, honey, lac, kendu leaves, etc. The items that were exported and imported differed from one district and location to another. The primary export from all of Orissa's districts was rice.<sup>11</sup>

The main exports from the Cuttack district included rice, oil seeds, skins, jute, lumber, horns, and feathers as well as silver filigree work. In the field of filigree works, Cuttack town gained international recognition. Examples of these filigree pieces, which were primarily shipped from Cuttack market, were on display in the European exposition.<sup>12</sup> Rice, cotton, oilseeds, skins, jute, horns, feathers, tobacco, garlic, brass metal, salt, fish, dried fish, and other items were exported from the Balasore district. Remuna manufactured brass metal.<sup>13</sup> In addition to satisfying local demand, sea fish from Puri also meets the demands of neighbouring regions and districts. The home market for dried fish, or sukuwa, did well.

A few of the fish were shipped by rail to Calcutta while being packaged in ice. Due to the fact that manufacturing dry fish requires a significant amount of salt, new salt rules and levies impeded the growth of the dry fish trade.<sup>14</sup> In addition to exporting fish, Puri also sent coconut, betel nut, betel leaf, and tusser fabric to other locations within and outside of Orissa. Balakati and Kantilo produced large quantities of brass and bell metal kitchenware, degchis, and decorations that were shipped to various regions of Orissa, West Bengal, Bihar, Assam, and Madhya Pradesh.<sup>15</sup> The Ganjam district exported items, including salt, fresh and dried fish, agricultural goods, and products from the jungle.<sup>16</sup> The exportable goods varied from region to region and location to location.

The primary export from all of Orissa's districts was rice.<sup>17</sup> In every district of Orissa, imports were substantially lower than exports of products. The main imports from Calcutta included decorative items, kerosene oil, dishes, glassware, potatoes, lead, copper, zinc, gold and silver.<sup>18</sup> Salt, turmeric, chilli, sugar, and tobacco leaves from Ganjam; coconuts, coconut oil, and salted fish from Puri; and wheat, pulses, oil-seeds, cotton, and molasses from the central provinces were among the items imported from other areas.<sup>19</sup>

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### **Market Place for trade and commerce**

The majority of local commerce was conducted at the numerous hats or markets dispersed throughout the interior. These markets, despite their generally modest size, were conveniently located for the provision of local needs and for the collection of grain for export. Locally manufactured cotton clothes, imported cotton clothes, brass and bell metal utensils and ornaments, kerosene oil, provisions of all kinds, including paddy, rice, salt spices, molasses, dried fish, vegetables, fresh fish, castor, mustard oil, gramme, confectionary, rice, milk, chewing pan, earthenware pottery, blacksmiths ware, mats, brooms, fuel, cheap finery, hair oil, mirrors, combs, soap, etc were sold and purchased.<sup>20</sup>

At larger markets, special items, such as cattle, timber, charcoal, yam, tamarind, resin, drugs, medicines, ghee, and Oriya literature and pamphlets sold by missionaries, were frequently traded. In cold conditions, outsiders known as kabuli peddlers sold various types of warm clothing. The regular merchants conducted lucrative business and made a substantial profit. Certain markets or stalls in Orissa were devoted solely to the sale and procurement of animals and birds. These markets typically met once per week, and professional cattle dealers brought herds of cattle, primarily bullocks and heifers, for sale.<sup>21</sup>

Thousands of people would gather at various fairs or melas to take part in the festivities, show their devotion to the gods, and make offerings to them. Therefore, these religious locations had hats or markets set up. At these yearly fairs or melas, a considerable amount of trade in grain, utensils, clothing, and other household items was conducted. These fairs were eagerly anticipated by the public as a means of purchasing specialised goods produced in far-off locations. These markets were conducted in the Sambalpur district's Nrusinghanath and Humma, the Balasore district's Remuna and Ardi, the Cuttack district's Dhabaleswar, Chandikhole, Jajpur Mid Olasuni, Puri, and old Bhubaneswar.<sup>22</sup>

The contractors were given access to the markets, and they were expected to pay every store owner between a half and a penny per day in fees. The selling of cattle and timber was the ancient market's area of expertise. These were very significant markets. "The Oriya market displays a lively sight from noon till nine o'clock at night", according to L.S.S. O'Malley's 1908 description of marketplaces. Each dealer placed their goods at the designated location. The drummer and flute player perform at each establishment in turn while being paid in pies or other little items that are being offered for sale. The sweeper also contributes in a similar way. As well as pressing the raiyots for their rent, the village

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postman who delivers mail also attends. Women are the majority of those entering with rice or fish to sell or buy for their families. The market's designated weigher, or dandidar, makes rounds to collect commissions on sales or to express a judgement on the going rates. The Gumastha of the zamindar or the Ijaradar who had obtained a lease of the market receives his fees from each business, sometimes in kind, sometimes in cash, and sometimes in the form of a set annual rent. A merchant can be seen trading his wares for items of household use as the moneychanger displayed heaps of little coins and cowries. People travelled 10 to 12 miles to visit the larger markets, where the average attendance was probably 700 to 800.<sup>23</sup>

L. S. S. O' Malley described the Puri district market as follows: "The major portion of the local trade, however, is carried on at numerous markets, which are often held twice a week in villages in the interior. Villagers sell their excess supplies of rice, grains, and other local produce at these marketplaces and buy cotton or piece goods, jewellery, metal utensils, spices, sweetmeats, tobacco, kerosene oil, and other items of a similar nature. The hat often consists of a collection of rickety stalls packed together in handy mango tops for which the stall operators and dealers of goods pay fees to the owner in cash or kind.

The number of locals attending in the larger hats frequently exceeds a thousand. At the major religious gatherings, such as the Jain Jatra held in March before the shrine of Mangala Thakurani in Kakatpur, the Chandrabhaga and Sun Festival in Konark, the Thakurani Festival in Satyabadi, and all the major Puri gatherings like the Rath Jatra, the Chandan Jatra, the Snan Jatra, etc., a significant amount of the local barter of the district is also conducted."<sup>24</sup>

The women made up most of the retail shopkeepers in the Sambalpur district. The wives and relatives of agricultural labourers and cultivators would frequently purchase small amounts of grain, husk it at home, and then sell it at the weekly village markets.<sup>25</sup>

At these markets, goods like as cereals, clothes, vegetables, sweets, firewood, salt, spices, tobacco, oil, trinkets, and animals were purchased and sold. Young and old women, almost exclusively, carried out the trading, with the exception of cattle. Local Brahmins, Cutchi Muhammadans, and Marwaris served as the wholesalers, purchasing grain and reselling it along with imported cotton thread, salt, tobacco, kerosene oil, and fabric. The Marwaris, who had taken control of the grain and cloth markets, were gradually gaining the faith of the Cutchi businessmen.<sup>26</sup>

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### **Weights and Measures**

Orissa did not adopt the metric system of weights and measures during the time period under consideration. The weights and measures used in Orissa vary depending on the location. The most popular weighting system was the seer. In all transactions involving rice, paddy, and other food grains, residents in rural areas used homemade money such as mana, tambi, and nauti. All of these measures differed from region to region not only in name but also in capacity.<sup>27</sup> The materials used to create these measures also differed from location to location. The standard seer was used to determine the liquid weights. In other places, adda, boda, sola, and adha were also in use. The measurements for gold and silver were bhari, tola, rati, and masa. The bisa, which varied from 20 to 27 palas in different sections of Orissa, was the unit used to measure vegetables, turmeric, fish, and brass utensils.<sup>28</sup> Trade between two districts or two states presented challenges for the dealers because weights and measures varied from place to place. There was therefore a lot of room for traders to defraud the populace.

### **Currency System**

The expansion of trade and business was directly related to the currency system. In 1808, the British government issued its own coins known as sicca rupees or silver rupees. This sicca rupee or silver rupee was subdivided into sixteen annas, and each anna was further subdivided into six paises. Paises were subdivided into pice as well. In accordance with this system, the British government issued eight anna, four anna, one anna, half an anna, and one paise coins. A uniform currency system introduced across India facilitated trade and commerce.<sup>29</sup>

### **External Trade**

Throughout the nineteenth century, Orissa's external trade was conducted via seaports. At the close of the 19th century, the decline of ports and the construction of railroads significantly reduced maritime trade. After the year 1900, railways had absorbed the majority of Orissa's foreign commerce.<sup>30</sup> Rice was exported in significant quantities primarily to Calcutta via the railways, but also to Tatanagar, Bombay, Karachi, Chhotnagpur, and Berar. Coal, oil-hemp, skins, and forest products such as timber, lac, kendu leaves, and mohula flowers were also transported by rail. Salt, sugar, kerosene oil, piece goods, cotton cloth, cotton yam and assorted cereals constituted the majority of imports. Calcutta was the source of kerosene oil, cotton textiles and yam, as well as the mills of Bombay and Nagpur. From

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1920 to 1924, the following Table No.I displays the total quantities of rice and other goods exported by rail from the Sambalpur district.<sup>31</sup>

**Table No. I**

Name of the Commodity	1920	1921	1922	1923	1924
1	2	3	4	5	6
	Mds.	Mds.	Mds.	Mds.	Mds.
Rice	844,912	920,636	818,790	10,13,103	1,227,379
Timber	229,224	236,529	184,202	289,285	300,542
Oil - Seeds	8,631	14,965	34,400	51,946	165,906
Hides	34,747	23,721	19,764	15,446	18,260

In some areas of the district of Ganjam, such as Ganjam, Humma, Surada, Nuapada, and Kalingapatnam, salt was produced by evaporation during warm weather. After satisfying local demand, it was exported in significant quantities to neighbouring provinces, such as the Central provinces via railroads.<sup>32</sup>

Due to its location on the principal national railway line between Howrah and Madras, Berhampur has become the most significant commercial hub in south Oissa. Existing terminals continued to facilitate export and import trade, albeit on a scale that was limited.

At the beginning of the twentieth century Balasore, Chandbali, False Point, and Puri were the only significant ports in Orissa. In 1905-1906, one hundred sixty-three vessels with a total tonnage of thirty-five thousand and five hundred entered the Balasore and Chandbali ports.

The Chandbali and Balasore trading locations were Calcutta, the coast ports from Bombay on the west to Arakan on the east, and foreign ports such as the Maldives, Ceylone, and occasionally Mauritius. After the introduction of railways, the Balasore port was no longer in demand.<sup>33</sup> The following Table No. 1 displays the seaborne trade of Orissa's ports from 1900 to 1909.<sup>34</sup>

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Table No. II

IMPORTANT PORTS TRADE TRANSACTION				
		False Point	Chandabali	Puri
Value of Imports in Rs.	1900-1901	191702	4269662	
	1901-1902	182843	3789196	
	1908-1909	120499	2798869	
	1909-1910	15849	2515246	
Value of Exports in Rs.	1900-1901	1799053	2426081	111967
	1901-1902	1886358	2039495	309956
	1908-1909	667291	3458611	55006
	1909-1910	2757369	3663696	384386
Total Trade in Rs.	1900-1901	1990755	6695743	111967
	1901-1902	2069201	5828691	309956
	1908-1909	787770	6257480	55006
	1909-1910	2773219	6078942	384386

The primary import was salt from Madras, which was brought in large quantities, and the principal export was rice, which was sent out in enormous quantities during favourable seasons. Numerous merchants from Balasore travelled to the princely states of Nilgiri and Mayurbhanj to purchase the harvests on the field after purchasing a substantial amount of grain from the Garjats. At Chandbali, too, it was customary for exporters to dispatch agents throughout the villages to purchase commodities before they were harvested by making advances to the farmers.<sup>35</sup>

Merchants who maintained ties with the Muhammadan traders who dominated the sugar industry on Mauritius transported rice to Ceylone and Mauritius and obtained sugar from the latter island. With these exceptions, import and export trade was conducted primarily with Calcutta and Madras.



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After 1910, there was a sharp fall in sea-borne trade. It was only present at the Chandbali and Puri ports in the northern part of Orissa. As a result of the decline in marine commerce in Orissa, there was an increased demand for strong ports in the region. These ports needed to provide a secure haven for seagoing boats, as well as the ability to load and unload cargo. In 1913, Madhusudan Das gave the following proposals in the Imperial Legislative Council: "Orissa exports a large quantity of rice. A good of it is exported to Ceylone, and a large portion also to Mauritius. Mauritius sends sugar in return to Orissa. At present all these things which are used for import and export have to come to Calcutta, and they have to be rebooked either by steamer to Chandbali or by railway to different parts of the province. There is a large export trade in hides. These hides are exported to Europe and to foreign countries. At present they go by Chandbali to Calcutta or by railway to Calcutta, and they are reshipped by sea-going vessels to foreign countries.....The route to Calcutta, besides being circuitous, is expensive on two grounds: (1) because the Hughli river being what it is there is the cost of the pilot; (2) sailing vessels cannot come, so they have to be towed by steamers, and that means additional expenditure. If there were a port near Dhamra or somewhere in the neighborhood of it, where vessels could safely anchor, and load and unload, there would be a great saving."<sup>36</sup>

Madhusudan Das further urged that the railway lines with the Chandbali port should be opened to facilitate the sea- borne trade. He said, "Chandbali exported things to the value of about 34 lakhs, and imported about 29 lakhs, and the passenger traffic was about 80,000. Of course it should be taken into consideration that Chandbali is not connected by railway or any other means of communication, not even by decent roads, with the interior of the country; and therefore my resolution is that, if a railway line be constructed connecting Bhadrak with Chandbali or any other place where a suitable site could be had for use as a port, the country will be opened up, commerce will benefit and the public will be benefited by it."<sup>37</sup>

In all practical respects, False Point's port did not exist. In stormy conditions, steamers were unable to approach False Point. It was impossible for these steamships to discharge and load their cargo, so they had to anchor at a considerable distance. In 1921, it was proposed that False Point's port be expanded in order to accommodate ocean-going vessels. It was stated that this, along with enhanced railway communication, would greatly contribute to the growth of North Orissa's commercial and industrial sectors.<sup>38</sup>

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The government examined the viability of developing False Point as a port for Orissa in 1924, but the location was deemed unsuitable, and the small harbour there was closed at the end of June 1924. A proposal to establish a port with smaller dimensions elsewhere along the coast of Orissa was rejected.<sup>39</sup> Exports of rice and black-gram to Negapatnam, Badagara, Ponnani, Cochin, Calicut, Colombo, and Rangoon comprised the entirety of coastal and international trade in Puri.<sup>40</sup> In 1921, rice, gramme, and gingly seeds worth Rs. 9,35,955 were exported from the ports of Puri to Madras and other Malabar coast ports. Moplah Rising accounted for the majority of the demand.<sup>41</sup> In 1926, Puri port exported 30,594 bags of rice to Cochin, Ponnani, and Madras, 1,237 bags of paddy to Cochin, and 126 bags of horsegram (Kulthi) to Madras for a total value of Rs. 4,10,236. In 1925, the port exported 38,867 bags of rice and 7,355 bags of paddy to Cochin and Calicut for a total value of Rs.5,81,152.<sup>42</sup> However, imports from the Puri port nearly ceased to exist after 1930. In 1937-38, the port of Puri saw a significant decline in revenue as only one ship visited.<sup>43</sup> Up until the conclusion of the period under review, Chandbali served as the principal port of North Orissa for maritime trade. Even the Chandbali port was deteriorating as the river near the harbour became silted. It was only utilised by tiny steamships operating between the port and Calcutta. In the seaborne commerce between Chandbali and Calcutta, coal, hardware, cotton goods, kerosene oil, gasoline, coconut oil, mustard oil, tobacco leaves, vegetables, gunny bags, matches, spices and cotton twists were the principal imports. The leading export items were paddy, rice, dried seafood, and ghee. In an effort to increase the revenue of the port at Chandbali, the government enacted the Orissa Port Regulation of 1937 on 1 August 1938, which imposed duties on imports and exports through this port.

The Bengal and Orissa Steamship Company and the Chandbali Steamer Service Company maintained a regular service between Chandbali and Calcutta for transporting cargo and commuters. In the years 1937, 1938, and 1939, 139, 107, and 116 vessels entered and cleared Chandbali, respectively.<sup>44</sup> The majority of the maritime commerce of southern Orissa was handled by Gopalpur port. However, the value of imports and exports decreased as a result of competition from railway companies that offered discounted rates for transporting products by rail.<sup>45</sup> The leading imports from Gopalpur were nickel, silver, coconut oil, hard-spelter, beetle-nuts, fruits, vegetables, seasonings, candies, wheat flour, country medicines, and roofing tiles. Essential oils, printed Oriya books, cotton piece goods, dried leaves, rice, paddy, and oil-seeds were the leading exports. Due to the decreased import of dutiable

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coconut oil from Ceylone ports and the increased acquisition of non-dutiable coconut oil from Cochin at a reduced rate, customs revenue at Gopalpur decreased significantly during 1938-39.<sup>46</sup>

At Gopalpur, the British India Steam Navigation and co., Ltd., the Scindhia Steam Navigation and co., Ltd., and the Asiatic Steam Navigation and co., Ltd., carried on coastal trade. The vessels of the first two companies provided regular cargo and passenger services to Rangoon. In 1937, 121 steamers entered and departed Gopalpur port, followed by 119 in 1938 and 120 in 1939.<sup>47</sup> Revisions were made to the existing regulations governing the administration of ports in order to bring the Gopalpur port's boatmen under government control.

As a consequence of the revision, the harassment and extortion to which passengers were subjected were significantly reduced, and the hiring of boats was also regulated. Imports and exports were restricted to the coasting commerce between Calcutta and Chandbali and Madras and Gopalpur by 1934. The data presented in the following Table No. II demonstrates that Orissa's participation in marine trade had a significant fall.

**Table No. III**

		1934-35	1935-36	1936-37	1937-38	1938-39
		Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.
Chandbali	Imports	8,45,909	9,98,495	13,86,870	9,51,748	8,60,905
	Exports	3,87,168	11,51,052	12,40,515	7,15,248	13,11,697
Puri	Imports	-----	-----	-----	10,000	-----
	Exports	26,914	58,135	5,80,758	...	6,21,971
Gopalpur	Imports	7,25,634	8,05,717	4,94,287	4,81,629	2,53,037
	Exports	41,367	8,83,042	3,62,680	2,35,770	1,60,770

In an effort to expand the province of Orissa's commercial infrastructure, a proposition to build a port in Balasore was initiated.<sup>48</sup> In addition, the marine survey of the middle reaches of the Burabalong River has been completed. However, this did not occur in the future.<sup>49</sup> By the end of British rule in India, Orissa's maritime trade had ceased to exist. The utter deficiency of Orissa's ports, coupled with

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the construction of railroads, entirely paralysed the state's maritime commerce. By 1947, maritime commerce had practically ceased to exist.<sup>50</sup>

### **Trade and commerce in the Feudatory States of Orissa**

In the feudal states of Orissa, the lack of good roads and railroads was the greatest hindrance to the expansion of domestic and foreign commerce. During the period under review, commerce flourished substantially due to the improvement of communication. Mayurbhanj, Kalahandi, Patna, Talcher, and Gangapur had benefited greatly from the railroads' contribution to their commerce. The inauguration of the Mayurbhanj State Light Railway in 1904 provided an almost unprecedented boost to Mayurbhanj's commerce. The Baripada bazaar and the railway station were filled with gunny sacks, agricultural, and forest products as Baripada became an important commercial hub.<sup>51</sup>

The introduction of railways resulted in a large influx of merchants who penetrated hilly regions to trade agricultural and forest products. Rice, paddy, oil-seeds, pea, gramme, pulses, hide, hom, jute, timber, lac, tasar, cocoons, honey, and molasses were the primary exports. Cotton piece goods, cotton twist, seasonings, salt, dried fish, sugar, kerosene and iron were among the items imported. Certainly, there were commercial hubs in the feudal states, but their number was extremely limited. In addition to Cuttack, Balasore, Puri, and Sambalpur also played a minor role in the export and import trade.<sup>52</sup>

In every state, regular weekly or biweekly markets (Hat) were conducted in various locations. In the marketplaces, products were purchased and sold using either cash or barter. The sale of salt, cloth, and dried fish, among other everyday necessities of a pastoral population. Frequently, they were exchanged for cereals.<sup>53</sup> It was reported that the Hat at Garh Tota in the state of Talcher was the largest in the world. Twice per week, it drew buyers from Bonai, Bamra, Keonjhar, Rairakhol, Dhenkanal, Hindol, Pal Lahara, and Sambalpur, as well as men from other states.<sup>54</sup> However, there was no central market of considerable significance; however, Kantilo in Khandapara, Anandapur in Keonjhar, Bhuban, and Dhenkanal garh were significant markets.<sup>55</sup>

There were also a number of festivals, with the most notable being Kapilas in Dhenkanal, Deogaon in Keonjhar, and Dhabaleswar in Athgarh. However, these locales did not garner much commerce, as they were visited primarily for religious purposes.<sup>56</sup> Foreign merchants and the inhabitants of coastal Orissa dominated the import and export trade in the feudal states. In various regions of the state of Orissa, there were also minor trading communities. People were generally disinterested in commerce

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and trade. They preferred to remain at home and sell their surplus produce to Bengali, Marwari, Telugu, and Bombay merchants who came to them.<sup>57</sup> Moreover, the majority of the populace was impoverished. They lacked sufficient capital to invest in commerce. A significant portion of the population of the Feudatory States consisted of tribal peoples who viewed commerce as a demeaning occupation.<sup>58</sup> There was no distinct category of merchants or merchants among them. In feudal states, therefore, a negligible number of locals participated in commerce.

Thus, a few commercial enterprises existed in colonial orissa. They lacked the financial resources to engage in direct commerce. There were a significant number of Oriya traders. The majority of the import and export business was controlled by foreigners. In addition, a number of English enterprises and corporations maintained their agencies in Cuttack, Puri, and Chandbali, among other locations, in order to protect their commercial interests. The vast majority of the benefits of the province's trade and commerce, both internal and external, went directly into the pockets of outsiders and foreign monopoly merchants, while the province's inhabitants received little benefit.

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