

**JANAKI BALLAV PATNAIK**

The March to a Modern Odisha

---

SOUMYA RANJAN PATNAIK

WASBIR HUSSAIN



# JANAKI BALLAV PATNAIK

The March to a Modern **Odisha**

SOUMYA RANJAN PATNAIK  
WASBIR HUSSAIN





4R ½, Unit-3, Kharavel Nagar,  
Bhubaneswar-751001  
Phone : 0674-2391939  
e-mail : aamaodisha@gmail.com  
website: www.aamaodisha.org.in

First Published 2013 (English Edition)  
Copyright © Aama Odisha 2013

The facts presented in this book are those of the different writers who  
have contributed for this compilation.

All rights reserved.

No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval  
system or transmitted in any form or by any means, mechanical,  
photocopying, recording, or otherwise, without the prior written  
permission of the publisher.

ISBN: 978-81-89436-63-6  
Cover Design: Geetali Baruah  
Cover Photo: Anupam Nath  
Layout: Binoy Baruah

Printed in India at  
Genesis Printers & Publishers Pvt. Ltd.  
Borbari, Guwahati 781036

*To the admirers and critics of  
Janaki Ballav Patnaik and all those  
who may like to know or understand  
contemporary Odisha.*



# c o n t e n t s

---

Publisher's Note	xiii
Some Words, Some Dreams <i>J.B. Patnaik</i>	1
Shri Jagannath Temple after Independence <i>Sarat Chandra Mahapatra</i>	16
20th Century's Last Nabakalebara : The Only Successful One in 400 years <i>Asit Mohanty</i>	29
The Official Language Jinx <i>Dr. Devi Prasanna Pattanayak</i>	46
Janaki Ballav Patnaik : The Essayist and Critic <i>Pathani Pattnaik</i>	56
Odia Literature and Janaki Ballav Patnaik <i>Barendra Krushna Dhal</i>	68
Janaki Ballav Patnaik & Publishing in Odia <i>Abhiram Mohapatra</i>	80
Janaki Ballav Patnaik's Nirbachita Prabandha Sankalana <i>Rabi Singh</i>	83

Revival of Professional Odia Theatre <i>Ananta Mahapatra</i>	89
The Odissi Research Centre <i>Kumkum Mohanty</i>	94
Contemporary Art in Odisha <i>Dr. Dinanath Pathi</i>	100
Kalinga Studio: Golden Era of Odia Films <i>Batakrushna Tripathy</i>	107
Patronage to Art <i>Govinda Tej</i>	116
Development of Agriculture and Role of the APICOL <i>Dr. Jogesh Chandra Rout</i>	121
Kalahandi: From Begging Bowl to Bread Basket <i>Bhupinder Singh</i>	132
Odisha Placed on National Dairy Map <i>Dr. Ramesh Chandra Panda</i>	140
Odisha & The Poultry Industry <i>Sudhansu Sekhar Das</i>	150
Planned Efforts Towards Irrigation <i>Er. Prabhat Mishra</i>	156
Fast Track Irrigation <i>Dr. Bishnu Prasad Das</i>	164
Irrigation in Kalahandi <i>Er. Bhaskar Chandra Nayak</i>	170
Strengthening the Mahanadi and Birupa Weirs after a Century <i>Er. Sushil Chandra Kar</i>	180
Odisha : The Pioneer in Power Sector Reforms <i>Er. B.C. Jena</i>	182



Towards Energy Security <i>Er. Jayadev Mishra</i>	199
The Golden Era of Industrialization <i>Sudhanshu Bhusan Mishra</i>	212
The Dream of the Eighties <i>Vivek Pattanayak</i>	220
Down Memory Lane <i>Binod Dash</i>	227
Hotel Industry Makes a Beginning <i>J.K. Mohanty</i>	233
A Dynamic Period of Growth and Development <i>Harishankar Singhania</i>	238
Indradyumna Incarnate <i>Prasad Harichandan</i>	240
Building Bridges <i>G.C. Mitra</i>	246
New Horizons in the Railway Sector <i>Romesh Roy</i>	251
Building of the Dhamra Port <i>Sidhartha Pradhan</i>	257
An Era of Development for Adivasis and Dalits <i>Sura Sethy</i>	272
State's Rich Culture Gets New Look <i>Dr. Sitakant Mahapatra</i>	279
Adivasi Culture and Janaki Ballav <i>Dr. Khageshwar Mohapatra</i>	285
Agriculture University, Engineering College & a Research ... <i>Dr. Baidyanath Mishra</i>	291

Patnaik & A Sanskrit University <i>Prof. Harekrushna Satpathy</i>	299
Spread of Education in Odisha <i>Dr. Bimalendu Mohanty</i>	313
Education in Odisha: The Forward Leap <i>Abani Kumar Baral</i>	319
Science, Technology and Environment <i>Dr. Sadananda Torasia</i>	326
The Xavier Institute of Management <i>Fr. Joseph</i>	338
Kalinga and Southeast Asia: The Foundation of a Research Institute <i>Prof. Hermann Kulke</i>	348
Odishan Institute of Maritime and Southeast Asian Studies <i>Dr. H.C. Das</i>	354
Odisha's Library Revolution <i>Prof. Pitambar Padhi</i>	369
Setting Up of the Satyananda Yoga Ashrama and Yoga Vidyalaya <i>Swami Swarupananda Saraswati</i>	383
Tibetan Hospital in Bhubaneswar <i>Dr. Nowang Dorje</i>	388
Greening Odisha <i>Saroj Pattnaik</i>	392
On the Road to Environment Protection <i>Prof. Radhamohan</i>	406
Ekamrakanan: An Island Paradise <i>Dr. Premanand Das</i>	414

Odisha on the Defence Map of India <i>Vice Admiral S. H. Sarma</i>	422
Ushering in a New & Vibrant Odisha <i>Basant Das</i>	426
Reminiscence of a Bureaucrat <i>Gian Chand</i>	430
Governance and Development in the Eighties <i>Nilmadhab Mohanty</i>	438
Janaki Babu: Leader of the House and Leader of the Opposition <i>Narasingha Mishra</i>	446
Janaki Babu: The Man and The Chief Minister <i>Srimoy Kar</i>	451
An Era of Inclusive Growth <i>Prasanna Kumar Mishra</i>	456
Women's Organizations and Empowerment of Women <i>Jayanti Patnaik</i>	464
A New Horizon for Newspapers and Journalists <i>Gopal Mishra</i>	471
Sports in Odisha: The Golden Period <i>Anadi Sabu</i>	478
Bhubaneswar: From Clerical Town to People's Capital <i>Nalinikanta Panda</i>	489
Kataka: Old Capital Acquires New Look <i>Annada Prasad Roy</i>	497
Kataka Ring Road: A Protective Embankment <i>B.C. Patnaik</i>	507

Tackling Slums with a Humane Face <i>Surendranath Swain</i>	514
A Period of Peace and Communal Amity <i>Prof. M.Q. Khan</i>	522
Odisha & Christianity <i>Rev. Prabhat Chandra Bag</i>	531
Sikhs in Odisha <i>Satpal Singh</i>	535
Janaki Babu: A Unique Personality <i>Mahapatra Nilamani Sabu</i>	538
A Friend Forever <i>Satyanand Champatiray</i>	544

## A N N E X U R E S

Janaki Ballav Patnaik: Assam's Reformist Governor <i>Wasbir Hussain</i>	551
Serving Nation My Life's Only Philosophy: J B Patnaik <i>An Interview with Wasbir Hussain</i>	561

## Publisher's Note

**T**he origin of this book can be traced to our initial request to Sri J. B. Patnaik to pen his autobiography. Instead of agreeing to our proposal, he suggested that the plans and developmental programmes initiated by him during his tenure as Chief Minister of Odisha be documented first. And he wanted the activities to be documented by all those personalities who were actively involved in their conception and implementation. This is how this volume consisting of 68 essays has come into being. Barring some childhood friends and well wishers, most of the contributors worked with J. B. Patnaik when he was the Chief Minister. Though not entirely unbiased, this volume is an objective record of the facts and developments leading to the emergence of a modern Odisha.

Sri J. B. Patnaik remained Chief Minister of Odisha for close to 14 years. The bane of Odisha was political instability.

Sri Patnaik brought political stability to Odisha for the first time after assuming office in 1980 and continued for two consecutive terms. Again, after a gap of five years, he returned to power. During these 14 years, he initiated many programmes for the all-round development of Odisha. His speeches during these years which reflected his vision of Odisha have been published as a volume titled “SWAPNA O SANKALPA”. The present volume, read with the above, would give readers a comparative picture of Odisha’s development ranging from the field of agriculture, industry, tourism, culture, etc.

Recorded history is comparatively weak in Odisha, more so contemporary history. No objective assessment has been made of these years of development. Such assessment was not possible since J. B. Patnaik continued to be actively involved in politics. Passage of time and distance has now given us an opportunity to do so. Whether these years can be termed as the golden years, future critics would debate. We are sure this volume would help those who are keen to understand contemporary Odisha.

## Some Words, Some Dreams

J. B. Patnaik ♦

I had always been a dreamer. Ever since I was a student, I was bent on doing something significant for my home state, Odisha, something that would make this ancient land stand out with honour and pride. As a young man, like most students, we were inspired by the fire of a non-violent struggle for Independence by Mahatma Gandhi, the statesmanship of Jawaharlal Nehru, and the philosophy and spiritualism of Swami Vivekananda. But, there were many others, within the confines of the then unseparated state of Bihar and Odisha, whom we idolized – people like Madhubabu and Pandit Gopabandhu. They inspired me to chase my dream with undiluted determination.

---

♦ Janaki Ballav Patnaik is a former three-time Chief Minister of Odisha, a writer of eminence, and recipient of Sahitya Akademi Award for Translation. At present, he is the Governor of Assam.

As a class XI student at the Khordha High School, our renowned Headmaster Bankanidhi Patnaik once asked each one of us what we wanted to be in life. When it was my turn to reply, I said, “newspaper editor”.

True enough, in 1949, after completing my Masters from Banaras Hindu University (BHU), I joined as an Assistant Editor with *The Eastern Times*, a local English daily in Bhubaneswar published under the banner of Prajatantra Prachara Samity. A few days after joining, I was made the Joint Editor, and subsequently, I took over as the editor of the newspaper. Thereafter, in 1952, I took over as the Editor of the *Prajatantra*, an Odia daily, even as I continued to remain Editor of *The Eastern Times*. To be the editor of two daily newspapers at such a young age was no mean achievement. Of course, it is also a fact that the then Chief Minister Dr. Harekrushna Mahatab offered opportunities to young men in organizations run or headed by him.

During my days as an Editor, I came in contact with many prominent politicians. The more illustrious of them included Mahatab Babu, Nabakrishna Choudhury, Malati Choudhury, Nityananda Kanungo, Biswanath Das, Nilakantha Das, Biren Mitra, Nilamani Routary, Sadasiva Tripathy, Biju Patnaik, Rajendra Narayan Singh Deo, Surendra Nath Dwivedi, and later on, of course, Srimati Nandini Satpathy.

Being a journalist, I came in direct contact with Pandit Nehru and Indira Gandhi, and the ideals that I had been cherishing since I was a student got all the more deeply embedded in me during my course of work as a newspaper editor. My vision expanded. I developed strong feelings against casteism, communalism, untouchability and exploitation of the poor by the rich zamindars and greedy capitalists. These feelings



got reflected on the pages of the newspapers. I took upon myself the duty of fighting for the interest of the country's poor and genuine interests of Odisha. In the papers that I edited, the plight of the people who suffered due to droughts and floods were highlighted and the absence of governmental help at these places were duly reported. In my editorials, I tried to be as fearless, unequivocal and critical as possible.

My job as the editor of two dailies for years gave me a great opportunity to know the various facets of Odisha. Moreover, I felt proud and honoured to be an Odia.

I accepted Gopabandhu's ideal:

*Jagata Salile Bharata Kamala  
Ta madhye keshara punya Nilachala*

Loosely translated, this means, "In the pond of the world, India is the Lotus. And, in that lotus, Odisha is the stamen." Promoting Odisha became my life's goal, my only concern. However, while leading Odisha in the post Independence days, Dr. Mahatab had said, "While the Country is marching ahead, Odisha is lagging behind. She therefore needs to race". There was a need for "a double march order". I fully supported his view. Before Dr. Mahatab could get his views translated to reality, he had to leave Odisha to take up his assignment at the Centre and thereafter he was appointed as Governor of the then Bombay. Later on, when he returned as the State's Chief Minister, there was so much political uncertainty in Odisha that he could not do much to get his dreams realized. And, for a while, the State continued to pass through a lot of uncertainty.

As I travelled far and wide within India and outside in my capacity as a newspaperman, I saw that there was progress and prosperity everywhere else while Odisha suffered due to the

long drawn period of deprivation. This had been a matter of immense concern to me.

In 1971, I became a Member of Parliament and joined the Council of Ministers in the ministry of Indira Gandhi. I worked with full sincerity in the various positions I held – as deputy minister, state minister and cabinet minister. And at every ministry, I worked for its success. I also dreamt of doing something for the State of Odisha, which I could do in my capacity as a minister at the Centre.

In his autobiography, Pandit Nilakantha Das has written an interesting story on Pandit Gopabandhu's Bhagavata Brata Parayana. According to the story, Nilakantha, Acharya Harihar, Krupasindhu and others were sitting in Gopabandhu's village house. It was evening and a funeral pyre could be seen burning nearby. In the faint glow of that burning pyre, they pledged to do all they could in order to see a better Odisha at the time of their death than what they saw during their childhood.

Between 1568 and 1947, four centuries of misery and dependence made the people of Odisha suffer like no other people in the country. Everyone knows that India was a colony under the British and Odisha was a colony within that colony. Odisha was not a separate province. It was an appendage to the more important states of the North and the South. I do not wish to give a detailed report of those times in the space of this short article. Even though it will be a repetition, I want to briefly mention here as to how Madhu Babu and Gopabandhu during their life time and Mahatab Babu during the post Independence days, thought and worked for the State's upliftment. This had its impact on a young generation.

The story of Mahabharat about statecraft is interesting. Bhisma Pitamaha, even as he lay on the bed of arrows, had advised Yudhishthira thus – the "Statecraft or politics or *Rajniti*

is the king among the other *neetis* because if statecraft or *Rajniti* is neglected, there will be lawlessness and chaos all around. There will be no peace in the society and practitioners of other *nitis*, *Arthaniti*, *Samajniti* and *Dharmaniti*, would be victims of lawlessness. Therefore, while thinking of the state and the people, one should think about a good political management of the state. Good and honorable people, therefore, should come to politics.

After years in journalism, I moved into active politics and had been at it for the last 42 years. I was a minister at the Centre from 1973 to 1977 and then a cabinet minister during the first half of 1980. From 1980 to 1989 and again from 1995 to 1999, I had the opportunity to serve my State as Chief Minister for three times. During this time, I enjoyed the full support and confidence of Mrs. Gandhi and Rajiv Gandhi. I invited Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao in 1995 to Bhubaneswar and made him promise at a public meeting that he would make Odisha the laboratory of India's development during his time. Unfortunately, Rao did not continue long in power.

As journalist and political worker, Central Minister and Chief Minister I have worked ceaselessly for the rapid progress of the State and prosperity of its people to the best of my capacity.

The people of Odisha are in no way less enterprising than the people of other states and Odisha also has an abundance of natural resources like fertile land, a long coastline and mineral resources like iron, chromite, and bauxite, besides 11 per cent of the country's water resources. Therefore, I knew, there was no reason why the State should not be able to get over poverty through optimum use of its resources and hold its head high. In

the past, Odisha as Kalinga was inscribed in golden letters in the annals of the country.

### **Odisha in the Defence Map of India**

When I took charge as the Defence Minister, Odisha figured nowhere in the Defence Map of India. Even in railways and air connectivity, and in tourism, Odisha was way behind other states. I have done my best to overcome this handicap. There was a time when Kalinga was famous for her maritime trade. The Naval Training Centre which was earlier in Vishakhapatnam was shifted to Chilika. The anti-missile defence training centre was established at Gopalpur on sea, after it was shifted from Deorali, Maharashtra, and the first cantonment, which was in demand for a long time, was established there. An ordnance factory came up at Titilagarh in Bolangir district. A naval Armament Depot was established near Koraput. In 1973, there were few Odia personnel serving in the Indian Army. But after strict implementation of recruitment rules by a specific order of the then Defence Minister Babu Jagjivan Ram, following my intervention as Deputy Minister, the State's share of allocation in the Army increased and more Odia youth had since been joining the Indian Army. It was observed that while in 1972 only two hundred young men were joining the Army annually, their number had increased now to more than 2,000 a year as a result of strict implementation of the recruitment policy.

### **Train and Air Connectivity**

As mentioned earlier, there was no direct railway connectivity between Bhubaneswar and New Delhi. Neither was

there any air service between the two cities. It was only in 1980, the *Neelachal Express* was introduced which directly connected Bhubaneswar to New Delhi, and the same year, direct daily flights were introduced between the two cities. The Jakhapara-Banshani railway track was laid to connect Keonjhar with the coastal areas for the development of Odisha's busiest mining belt. The project was completed by the year 2011. In order to strengthen the emotional bond between Western Odisha and the Coastal areas, the Talcher-Sambalpur Railway line was laid. The completion of the Rayagada-Koraput railway track saw the connection of this two important district headquarters. A new Railway Division was established at Sambalpur and a new Railway zone was created in the State known as the East Coast Railways.

### **Tourism Industry**

Odisha had not made any noteworthy development in the realms of tourism till the time I was sworn in as the Chief Minister of the State in 1980. While serving as a Minister at the Centre, I had worked for developing tourism as an industry. Later, as the Chief Minister, I declared hotel as industry. Thereafter, the Government of India declared tourism as an industry. Following this declaration, many new standard and star hotels camp up all over the State. Hotels of international standards, like The Oberoi, opened their branches in the State capital and today there is no district headquarters town where the tourist would not find a good place to stay. The establishment of Chandaka Elephant Sanctuary near Bhubaneswar became the first elephant sanctuary in the country. Bhitarkanika was

the first among many coastal regions to be declared as marine sanctuary or marine park. The cities of Puri, Konark and Bhubaneswar were linked as a Golden Triangle and the Puri-Konark marine drive, along with developed roads and tourist resorts, brought success to Tourism Development Programmes in the State.

### **A Developed Capital**

Bhubaneswar was earlier a small town of clerks and officers with a population of 100,000, faced with a scarcity of drinking water. But later on, after 1980, the very image of the city got transformed. Keeping in view the drinking water requirement of the city in the next 25 years, pipelines were laid between the city and the river Mahanadi at Naraj at a distance of thirty kilometers. Bhubaneswar became the hub of all activities in the field of industry, business and commerce. The Chandaka-Mancheswar Industrial Estate and the newly developed areas of Nayapalli and Chandrasekharpur extended the city limits. The setting up of the Indira Gandhi Park, the Mahatma Gandhi Park and the revival of the Forest Park gave a new facelift to the city. The Kalinga stadium, the first such sporting venue at Bhubaneswar, was constructed and a lake was created in the low lands of the city which was developed into a water sports park. Major arterial roads and lanes had since been expanded and illuminated. The Samanta Chandrasekhar Planetarium gave the State its first and only planetarium, and the N.K. Choudhury Centre for Development Studies was set up as a socio-economic research centre of the State. A public library was revived and named as Harekrushna Mahatab State Library. Then came the Kalinga Studio, the first and the only

film making centre in the State, the Odissi Research Centre, and for high quality management training, the XIMB. A National Institute of Physics, too, was established. The establishment of these institutions completely altered the picture of the city and took it several notches higher on the scale of development. The city was made beautiful by massive plantation programmes, establishment of a Plant Resource Centre and a Cactus Park among other prominent landmarks. Bhubaneswar had earlier been a small town with a rural look. All that got changed in our time.

### **Expansion of Kataka**

While Bhubaneswar got beautified and modernized as the new capital, Kataka, Odisha's old capital, did not lag behind. It had to be developed as a modern city. During the super flood of 1982, the stone embankment built to save the city almost gave in. Immediately after that, a strong ring bund was built to protect Kataka against floods. Kataka which was an island was linked with Barang on the south and the island of Vayalishi mouza on the north by construction of bridges on the rivers Kathjodi and Kuakhai. Sambalpur was the western city known for its ancient history and for the modern Hirakud Dam. It was to be protected against the ravages of flood and a ring road was built around it. There was a vast stretch of land near Bidanasi along the river Kathjodi which was prone to flooding every year. People had the least idea of the existence of such a vast stretch of land on the outskirts of Kataka. With insightful planning, the ring bund was extended to cover this area as a protected one and this helped Kataka's expansion. What was once a bare stretch of land was now transformed into a new, planned residential area to be known as New Bidanasi Kataka.

## **Agriculture given the status of Industry**

I have already mentioned that agriculture and industry in Odisha were lagging far behind other states. Launching of an ambitious policy in 1980 resulted in a welcome growth rate of agriculture. Odisha used to produce hardly a ton of rice per hectare, but in the decade following 1980, this figure had increased by 40 per cent and Odisha became a surplus state in food grain. Groundnut was produced at two tons per hectare which was the highest in the country in terms of productivity. The use of fertilizer per hectare had gone up from a meager 6 kg to 40 kg by 1997. Earlier, irrigational facilities covered only 19 per cent of the total agricultural land. But later, the coverage of irrigational facilities increased up to 28 per cent between 1980 and 1990 and a further five per cent during the period between 1995 and 2000. Thus from 19 per cent it reached 33 per cent of the irrigable land with canal irrigation and lift irrigation facilities increasing substantially.

According to the new agricultural policy, agriculture was treated at par with industry. Subsidies and facilities extended only to industrial entrepreneurs were now extended to the farmers. As establishment of IPICOL, the nodal body, served the interest of industries, APICOL was brought into force to serve the agriculture sector in the State and for every cold storage, as an example, the state government offered a subsidy of Rs. 20 lakh.

## **Generating more Electrical Energy**

It has always been energy that Agriculture and Industry in the State have been dependent upon. When the Congress government came to power in 1980, Odisha was generating



only 373 MW of power, with a measly 2 MW as surplus. So to increase power generation, many Hydel and Thermal power plants were launched. The OPGC (the Odisha Power Generation Corporation) was established. Simultaneously, the state government built the 820 MW Thermal Power Plant and the Central government started the 3000 MW Super Thermal Plant at Talcher. Following this, the electrical reforms programme was initiated. In place of the State Electricity Board, distribution and generation of power was left open to the private sector. Odisha became the first state in India in power reform. As a result, in the year 2000, Odisha became a State with surplus power production, thereby achieving a six-fold increase in power generation in a span of 20 years since 1980.

### **Industrial Revolution**

Since long, Odisha had no congenial atmosphere for industry and there was a dearth of local entrepreneurs. An attractive industrial policy was launched with a revolutionary slogan of “a thousand crores in thousand days and for a thousand industries”. Promises made therein were essentially kept. Among larger industries which came up were NALCO in Damanjodi and Angul, Paradip Phosphates in Paradip, Birla Tyres in Balasore and FACOR in Bhadrak. Thousands of small and medium industries came up in different parts of Odisha. Industrial estates like those built in Chandaka and Rasulgarh in Bhubaneswar came up in Jagatpur, Balasore, Kalunga, Jharsuguda and Bolangir. In each and every district of the State, new industries came up. The more important ones among them are spinning mills (8), sugar mills (5) and oil mills (2). Among other Industries are the Seva Paper Mills in Koraput and Mangalam Timbers in Nawarangapur. Other prominent

industries that came up within the period are NICCO Cables in Baripada, Powmax Steels in Titilagarh, Odisha Sponge in Keonjhar, Utkal Asbestos in Dhenkanal, Neelachal Ispat Nigam in Jajpur and Oswal Fertilizers in Paradip. An Oil Refinery in Paradip, a software technology park and the fortune tower in Bhubaneswar also enhanced the industrial and technological scenario of Odisha. Seventy-five per cent of the entrepreneurs who set up small and medium industries in the State were Odias. This is how a successful industrial climate was created with ample opportunities of industrialization for young people within the State. The Planning Committee of the Planning Commission of India and the Naba Krishna Choudhury Institute of Research and Development studies have observed in their joint report on development in Odisha that there has been a phenomenal development in the field of Industry and that the State has turned into a favourite destination for all investors.

The Report says: "Probably, the industrial policy resolution of 1980 was the most explicit in its objective to bring about rapid industrial development in the State. Launched on a grand scale, in an unprecedented populist style, the State Government announced to set up 'one thousand industries in one thousand days with an investment of one thousand crore of rupees'. It provided for a large number of subsidies, procedural relaxations and various concessions to the intending entrepreneurs. Furthermore, in 1986, offering a 'new deal', the State Government (with the same Congress party in power) announced one more industrial policy whereby thrust was placed on developing sophisticated industries, technology upgradation, modernizing existing units, developing functional industrial area, improving technical and managerial skill and boosting entrepreneurship in the State. Special concessions were offered to women entrepreneurs and technically qualified

SC and ST entrepreneurs. Eventually, there was a phenomenal growth in the number of industrial units.”

The report further says about years following 1995 during my third term as Chief Minister: “During the recent years, especially since the mid-nineties, much interest has been shown by private investors, both large Indian companies and transnational companies, in investing in Odisha. Incidentally, Odisha has emerged as one of the most preferred investment destinations in India.”

### **New Sports Schools**

Games like Football and Hockey were given their due attention and new schools were established to serve the purpose. Now, famous hockey and football players of Odisha, both male and female, are the products of these sports schools.

### **Use of Odia in Official Work**

All states in India have been formed on the basis of language. But, there are a few states where their mother tongue is not used in day-to-day official work. And Odisha was one such state. In 1954, when N.K. Choudhury was the Chief Minister, rules were framed to make Odia the official language of the State. However, it remained in paper. It was only in 1985 that an order was passed by which all official work, except those relating to the Apex Court, the Central Government, inter-state correspondence and MOU's, was to be carried out in Oida. The order was strictly enforced. Ancillary works like developing the Odia script, reforming the Odia type machine, training the stenographers and typists were all done. However, it is a matter of regret that Odia continued to be the official

language only till the time that the Congress was in power. It was discontinued during Biju Babu's time (1990-1995). It was revived when we returned to power in 1995. But after the year 2000, it once again ceased to be the official language. It may be said that whichever government comes to power it should have deep love for the mother tongue of the majority of the people of the state and that should reflect in its work. And it is essential, therefore, in a democracy that people should have a strong feeling for and awareness of due place being given to their own mother tongue.

### **Steps against furies of Floods, Drought & Cyclones**

All-round development of the State has been my dream. I have always worked towards creating new opportunities of development for young people of the State. But many dreams have remained unfulfilled due to dearth of funds within the State and at the Centre. Times have changed now. Because of a liberalized economic policy, there is no paucity of funds for investment. What was once not possible to do in years can, today, be done within a short space of time. The time has come when greater efforts should be made for addressing the basic problems of the State. It is my dream to make Odisha free from the ravages of floods and droughts. This is possible, by utilizing the major rivers of the State in a new Dynamic Storage System. Rivers can be controlled by construction of Barrage-cum-Dams. The old system of damming rivers is no solution. The new method of Dam-cum-Barrage is the only way in which no land, forest or human habitation will be submerged under water. Rehabilitation issues would not arise. Researches have been undertaken and the result is the new method of dynamic storage system. It was prepared towards the end of my third term as Chief Minister. It

could not be implemented due to time constraint. The present Chief Minister Sri Naveen Patnaik, without going into details of this problem, declared at a public meeting to please his partymen that he would reject such a plan. Dam-cum-Barrage projects are less expensive plans by which the waters of the major rivers of the State could be brought under control within a time limit of five years, and 30 lakh hectares of agricultural land could be irrigated. Such projects for all the major rivers of the State have already been prepared which are lying in a neglected corner of the State secretariat. Once implemented, it would have made Odisha the second-most agriculturally developed state, after Punjab. Had this new plan, the result of a great deal of extensive research, been implemented, Odisha would have contributed a surplus of 50 lakh tons of rice to the central pool. People from Odisha would not have to go to other states to work as bonded labourers.

There was again a scheme for taming the furies of cyclone. The long coast-line of the State would have come under a newly raised forest cover which would have kept cyclones and tsunamis at bay. The challenge of the 21<sup>st</sup> century is to make people happy and prosperous by solving their age-old problems with new ideas supported by modern science and technology.

I regret it did not happen. But good ideas do not die. The world is vast and time is limitless. Hopefully, someone sharing the same vision as I have today, would come and implement it for the benefit of the people of Odisha. As poet Bhavabhuti says:

उत्पत्स्यते मम कोऽपि समानधर्मी  
कालो ह्ययं निरवधिः विपुला च पृथ्वी ।

Someone sharing the same vision as me would someday appear, as time is limitless and vast is the planet earth.

## Shri Jagannath Temple After Independence

Sarat Chandra Mahapatra ♦

**I**<sup>st</sup> April 1936. Odisha emerged as a separate province. The merger of 26 princely states later in 1948 ushered in simultaneous and interweaving changes in the two most significant realms of Odisha's history—the Legislative Assembly and the Jagannath Temple Administration.

Earlier, the sessions of the Bihar-Odisha Legislative Assembly used to be held at Patna. After becoming a separate province, however, Odisha's first Legislative Assembly session was held at the Ravenshaw College hall in Kataka on 19 August 1937. And in that historic session which was addressed by Sir John Austin Hubback, the first Governor of Odisha, Mukund Prasad Dash and Nand Kishore Dash were unanimously elected as Speaker and Deputy Speaker respectively. The emergence of

---

♦ Sarat Chandra Mahapatra is former Administrator, Sri Jagannath Temple, Puri

Odisha as a separate State also raised the number of legislators from 60 to 91. Out of these 91 legislators, 31 were nominated from the *gadajats* (feudatory states). Before Independence, the Odisha Legislative Assembly had held 14 sessions. After the Constitution of India was adopted in 1950, the number of legislators further increased to 140. Then came the next historic event for Odisha—its first general election as a separate State. The election spanned over a long period—from 25 October 1951 to 2 February 1952. After the verdict, the first Assembly Session was held on 4 March 1952 in the Sardar Patel Hall at Bhubaneswar. It is essentially against this political background that the history of Odisha's administration needs to be studied. While there were political and democratic changes with Odisha becoming a separate State, marked changes also took place in the administration of the Jagannath Temple, an important seat of Hindu religious faith in India and abroad. The Temple has been maintaining its distinctive character throughout its history.

The Jagannath Temple was built by the Ganga emperor Chodaganga Dev in 1197. In 1230, his descendant Anangabhima Dev (III) had taken certain steps in matters of the fairs and festivals, rituals, and appointment of *sevakas* (servitors). All the Ganga rulers considered themselves *rautas* or representatives of the Lord, ruling the Kingdom on behalf of the Lord and continuing to offer their services. They named Lord Purusottam's empire as Utkal and introduced the annual calendar calculation in the name of the Lord.

The Suryavanshi kings who came after them continued to follow these traditions and according to one of these traditions, the Gajapati king swept and cleaned Lord Jagannath's Chariot at the time of the Rath Yatra. The king took up this task only to show his humble devotion to the Lord.

Odisha was ruled by independent Hindu kings till the time it was invaded by the Afghan Chief Kalapahad in 1568. He never intended to conquer and rule Odisha but had come only to plunder and destroy. However, after the last Hindu king was killed, the Afghans did eventually rule Odisha till 1590. Eventually, emperor Akbar's efficient general Raja Mansingh defeated the Afghans and brought Odisha under Moghul rule and this continued till 1751. During this period, the Srimandir was attacked several times, and, therefore, the idols of the deities had to be kept hidden. The Marathas came in after the Moghuls and remained in power till 1803. Being Hindus, they improved the condition of the Jagannath Temple. Later, the British took over Odisha as well as the administration of the Jagannath Temple. This continued till India's Independence in 1947. A special Act was passed in 1954 to manage the affairs of Srimandir. But the Gajapati Maharaja opposed this Act and so it could come into force only on 27 October 1960. By this Act, the Jagannath Temple Managing Committee was constituted and administrators took over the management from the Gajapati king.

This was a transitional phase in the history of Srimandir. The change-over from a monarchial to a democratic system of management of a huge institution like this Temple gave rise to certain administrative problems, one of which was related to the number of sevakas (servitors), which was more than a thousand. The servitors had accepted the control of the Gajapati king as he has been the hereditary Chairperson of the managing committee. But after the Act of 1954, all administrative authority was vested in the Chief Administrator, who usually belonged to the Indian Administrative Service. He was assisted by about three or four officers and several other employees.



This arrangement facilitated direct contact between the administration and the State Government. The Chief Minister being the head of the State had to play a pivotal role here. Since Independence, there had been many Chief Ministers and they all had come to witness the annual Rath Yatra and intervened in the administration of Srimandir when the situation so demanded. Such interventions were called for owing to a few technical problems related to coordination among different classes of *sevakas*, sharing of *bhog* (the offering to the Lord), control over visitors and financial difficulty.

Srimandir is a temple where a variety of rituals are performed daily and special rituals are performed on festival days. The efficiency of the administration is tested on such occasions when it is not just enough for the Government to merely provide necessary funds but also to shoulder many other responsibilities and the chief ministers who resolve crises and help ease difficult situations are the ones who are remembered. It is relevant here to point out that the Tirupati Temple administration has influenced the management of the Jagannath Temple to some extent. Many officers and servitors of Srimandir have been sent on visits to Tirupati to study its functioning. Chief Minister Janaki Ballav Patnaik gave a donation of Rs. 50 lakh towards the setting up of the Sri Jagannath Chair in Tirupati Sanskrit University during his tenure. This is how he had built a bridge connecting these two holy places. He had also established the Sri Jagannath Sanskrit University at Puri on the model of the one at Tirupati.

The *hundi* is another noteworthy feature which was introduced on 3 August 1983 on the southern side of Jagamohan in Srimandir, following the Tirupati model. Many objections were voiced against its introduction in those days. But since the then Chief Minister Patnaik had the rare quality of resolving

such dissention through discussions, he successfully managed to settle the unrest and the servitors came forward to cooperate with the project. The money collected from the *hundi* is used for providing services to Sri Jagannath. It was decided that a portion of the *hundi* money would also be kept aside for the benefit of the servitors. The *hundi* has now already gained acceptance and popularity among the devotees. A branch of a bank was also inaugurated by Chief Minister Patnaik on the outer precinct of Srimandir. Another important problem faced by Srimandir was that the Temple being very old, it posed certain hazards. Stone slabs used to fall off and water used to leak into the inner sanctum. Solving such problems was beyond the capability of the managing committee and it was essential for the committee to seek help from the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI).

And once again, Janaki Ballav Patnaik came to the rescue, drawing the attention of the Director General of ASI towards these problems. He had asked the ASI to look after the maintenance of Srimandir. The officers of the ASI had initially argued that it was not possible to scrape the lime plaster and repair the structure because Srimandir was a living or still functional Temple and the ASI usually does not take up maintenance of such structures. Patnaik, who was then a Minister at the Centre, countered the argument of the ASI by citing the example of Srikrishna Temple at Dwaraka, which was also a living temple.

An expert committee was constituted in 1973 with the Director General of ASI, Deshpande, as its Chairperson, to look into the matter. And taking into consideration the larger interest of the Temple, the committee declared in 1975 that Srimandir would be a centrally protected monument. However, here too there were many obstacles. There was a foot-thick coating over the outer body of the Temple and the ASI was not sure if some

artistic stone engravings were concealed within that coating. So they began experimenting on the walls of Lakshmi Temple, where they discovered beautiful stone work buried under thick coating. This encouraged them to carry out work on the main Jagannath Temple.

Janaki Ballav Patnaik was regularly reviewing the activities of the ASI. And when the inner sanctum was to be repaired because of the fall of a big stone slab, the then Chief Minister Biju Patnaik had suggested that a new temple be built with modern technology. No one approved this idea. There were a few servitors who were unwilling to dislodge Lord Jagannath from the Ratna Singhaasan (jewel throne). At that time, even though Janaki Ballav Patnaik was not in the State Government, he called all representatives of the sevakas to a meeting inside the Temple's precincts and convinced them to agree to removing the deities from the Ratna Singhaasan for repair purposes in the greater interest of the Temple and in their own interest. He reasoned that Lord Jagannath being at the core of Odisha's religion and culture, the Temple is like a big tree and its complex administrative system, various mutts, ashrams and devotees are like the branches and leaves of that tree. So when the roots become rotten and weak, the branches and leaves invariably lose their colour and strength. Because of such administrative acumen, good work, willingness to discharge his responsibility as a leader, erudition and scholastic achievements, Janaki Ballav Patnaik was popular among the intellectuals of the time. In the continuous passage of time, many chief ministers had come and gone and many more would come. But a person like Janaki Ballav Patnaik who had made some contribution to the administration of the Temple of Sri Jagannath would certainly be remembered.

In this context, there is need to appreciate the contributions made by Chief Minister Dr. Harekrushna Mahtab who is remembered for setting up a state-level library, the Odisha Sahitya Academy and other cultural institutions. Dr. Mahtab's other distinguished contribution is a scientific history of Odisha, titled *Odisha Itihas* which he had written in two volumes.

After Odisha got recognition as a separate province in 1936, Captain Krushna Chandra Gajapati Narayan Deo became the first Chief Minister (then known as prime minister) and remained so from 1 April to 19 August 1937. After him, Biswanath Das held the post from 19 August 1937 to 6 November 1939. Thereafter, Krushna Chandra Gajapati Narayan Deo once again became Chief Minister from 24 November 1941 to 30 June 1946. Dr. Mahtab became the Chief Minister on 21 April 1946 and continued in the post till 12 May 1950. Others who had remained chief ministers of Odisha and their period of chief ministership are detailed hereunder:

1. Nabakrushna Choudhury	12.05.1950—19.10.1956
2. Harekrushna Mahtab	19.10.1956—25.02.1961
3. Bijayanand Patnaik	26.06.1961—02.10.1963
4. Biren Mitra	02.10.1963—21.02.1965
5. Sadasiva Tripathy	21.02.1965—08.03.1967
6. Rajendra Narayan Singhdeo	08.03.1967—09.01.1971
7. Biswanath Das	03.04.1971—14.06.1972
8. Nandini Satpathy and again from	16.06.1972—03.03.1973 1974 to November 1976
9. Binayak Acharya	29.11.1976—30.04.1977
10. Nilamani Rautray	26.06.1977—17.02.1980
11. Janaki Ballav Patnaik	09.06.1980—10.03.1985
12. Janaki Ballav Patnaik	10.03.1985—07.12.1989

Janaki Ballav Patnaik returned to Odisha as Chief Minister for a third term in 1995 but in between his second and third terms, Biju Patnaik took over the post for one term. And after Janaki Ballav Patnaik completed his third term in 1999, Odisha got as its Chief Minister Navin Patnaik who now continues to remain in office for the third consecutive term.

Like all other states of the Indian Union, Odisha, too, was a monarchy and thus, its history bears tales of kings, queens and dynasties. So despite the changeover to democracy, because the heads of state who took over were generally cultured, impartial, and unostentatious individuals, they were all devoted to the cause of the Jagannath Temple. Only during the rule of Nandini Satpathy there was a revolutionary measure adopted to abolish certain rights of temples, monasteries and such institutions. This action had a disturbing impact on the traditional functioning of endowment-related matters of the Jagannath Temple.

For example, the *Viman* carriers, torch bearers and gardeners of Srimandir were given land which they were to use only as tenants. Though free of charge, they are to render certain services to the Temple. They were not allowed to donate, exchange, mortgage or transfer such land. All along, these tenants had enjoyed this status but when they were granted full ownership rights, they started selling their land without any hindrance.

Once during a particular Rath Yatra, the idol of Lord Jagannath was stuck on the inclined ramp that led to the Chariot. The incident occurred when Srimati Satpathy was the Chief Minister. She offered *Chadeinada tada* to the Lord requesting him to climb the ramp. However, the Lord did not move an inch. Then the Gajapati Maharaja was requested to intervene.

So the first servitor Gajapati Divyasingh Dev went barefooted to Mahaprabhu and earnestly prayed to the Lord to climb up to the Chariot. Only then did the Lord board the Chariot.

On another occasion in 1977, during a Nabakalebara of Lord Jagannath, the Chariot did not move because of serious mismanagement. Janaki Ballav Patnaik, then out of power and a simple devotee, walked the distance between Mausī Ma Mandir and the king's palace, folded his hands in submission and prayed to the Lord that he might be granted the privilege of managing the next Nabakalebara of the Lord. Sri Jagannath heard his prayers and subsequently, the Chariot moved and after nineteen years there was another Nabakalebara in 1996, during Janaki Ballav Patnaik's second year in his third term as Chief Minister.

Lord Jagannath always listened to the sincere entreaties of a *bhakta*. The Nabakalebara of 1996 was performed smoothly. The Chief Minister himself, along with devotees, had pulled the Chariot from Srimandir to Gundicha Ghar, where the three Chariots reached before sunset. A new stretch of road was laid on a war footing to facilitate the journey to Puri from southern and western districts so that pilgrims and visitors from the South and from a large outlying area of Puri did not face any difficulties. This new road was named Nua Jagannath Sadaka.

I do not weigh the performance of chief ministers on the basis of their caste. Nevertheless, the caste system is connected with the services of Srimandir. There are 16 pillars in *muktimandap*, where only Brahmins from 16 sasanas (Brahmin settlements) could formally sit. Similarly, there was arrangement for 16 Karana or Kayastha devotees in Srimandir. Deula Karana, Kotha Karana, Baitha Karana and Panjia Karana are still serving the Lord. In this context, it may be mentioned here that the Karana

or Kayastha community was performing 25 kinds of services according to the *madalapanji*.

Shista or Sisu Karans are regarded the best. We find them in the royal households of Ganjam and Paralakhemundi. Probably the Deula, Tadau and Kostha Karanas, mentioned in *madalapanji*, belong to this Shista Karana class.

The Shista Karanas used to become superintendents, judges, presidents, captains, soldiers, examiners, ayurvedic doctors and poets. Because of their professional skills, they used to work as almanac writers, book copyists, teachers, traders, gate keepers and farmers. Shista Karanas are known as the chroniclers of the State. They used to do five kinds of work, namely chitau or chithipatra (accounts of income and expenses), lepa (store keeping), menta (categorization) sarvarashi panji (calculation of taxes and revenue) and chakada (measurement of land) etc.

In the Utkal province (Odisha), it is a matter of pride that a person dedicated to Purusottam Sri Jagannath should become the head of the state. This aspect makes Utkal stand out among the other states of India. Here in Utkal, Gajapati Maharaja is the first servant of Lord Jagannath. He serves the Lord as His *dasa* or slave. Although monarchy has been abolished with the advent of democracy, the Gajapati Raja of Utkal remains the only person who is respected as the living representative of Lord Jagannath. On the other hand, the chief minister of this state is also a servant of Lord Jagannath. And as such, an attitude to serve and work for is reflected in the personality of Janaki Ballav Patnaik. He is a devout servant of Lord Jagannath. All sevakas of Srimandir, especially the diatas, long for him even now.

Not only as a devotee but also as an efficient administrator, Janaki Ballav Patnaik had solved some of the key problems of Srimandir. Among all these, the main problem was financial. Chief Ministers usually do not have any direct

responsibility in performing the rituals connected with Sri Jagannath. However, their presence at the time of Rath Yatra has a marked influence on the servitors. Janaki Ballav Patnaik used to sit near the lion statue on the right side of the way that leads to Anand Bazar from Baisi Pahacha (the 22 steps leading to the Temple) before Pahandi on each Rath Yatra day. He used to remain there and observe the rites till the chariots were pulled. This simple gesture made the servitors love and respect him as a devout Chief Minister.

Contrary to such enthusiasm, there were many shortcomings in 1977 when the Janata Party formed the Government in Odisha and Nilamani Rautray was the Chief Minister. During the Rath Yatra, six wheels of Balabhadra's Chariot were broken and the Chariot could not roll for two days. It was only on the third day that the Chariot moved. The government had to even appoint an enquiry commission to look into the causes and suggest remedial measures.

There was better awareness regarding the rights of servitors after the Record of Rights had been compiled. The doors of Chief Minister Janaki Ballav Patnaik were always open for the sevakas of the Jagannath Temple. Even for resolving petty disputes they would approach him and he would willingly solve the problems. He was a true friend of the sevakas. Even today, the servitors of Srimandir recall that he had never harmed their interest during his three terms as Chief Minister. Janaki Ballav Patnaik has even been compared with king Dushmant. The great poet Kalidas describes the character of Dushmant as a lover par excellence, an ideal king and a menace to the wicked. He also describes Dushmant as one who settled disputes among his subjects through negotiation and was their true friend. And the quote went as:



*Niyamayasi Bimargaprashtitanartadandah  
Prashamayasi Bibadam Kalpase Rakshanaya  
Atanushu Bibhabeshu Ngyatayah Santu Nama  
Twayitu Parisamaptam Bandhukrutyam Prajanam*

The history of Srimandir is still hazy. Many stone engravings were found from Markandeswar temple, Pataleswar temple and Nrusingha temple. These engravings had been studied earlier but because scientific methods were not adopted, copies of these engravings had not been made. Thus the study remained incomplete and inconclusive.

Janaki Ballav Patnaik wanted these sorted out because it was necessary to unveil the past in regard to the construction of the main temple and also of the smaller ones. The famous historian, scholar and epigraphist of Odisha, Padmashri Dr. Satyanarayan Rajguru, was considered the right person to do this job. During that time, Dr. Rajguru was residing at Paralakhemundi and Patnaik personally requested him to take on the assignment as the Chief Director of this research project.

Sri Jagannath Sanskrit University had been set up by then, and Major Batakrushna Mohanty was appointed the Vice Chancellor. In keeping with Patnaik's request, Major Mohanty brought Padmashri Rajguru from Paralakhemundi to Puri. Dr. Rajguru was thus appointed as the Chief Director of Jagannath Culture Project which was attached to Sri Jagannath Sanskrit University and arrangements for Dr. Rajguru's stay at Puri were made by the University. When work on the project began and the limestone coating over Srimandir and other temples was scraped, many new stone inscriptions were discovered. Dr. Rajguru studied the stumpages of these inscriptions and wrote two volumes of a book named *Inscriptions of Puri Temple and*

*Origin of Purusottam Jagannath.* The volumes were written in English and were published by the Sanskrit University.

It is needless to say that this publication had revealed many new documentary evidences of the origin of Jagannath. Dr. Rajguru had remarked with gratitude in many of his articles and statements that Patnaik was the main source of inspiration behind this endeavour. Patnaik used to visit Puri frequently during Dr. Rajguru's assignment and discuss facts gathered from the research. He always enquired about Dr. Rajguru's health and comfort and the progress of work assigned to him.

Dr. Harekrushna Mahtab and Janaki Ballav Patnaik are the two Chief Ministers who will stay alive in the memory of the Odia people for the work they have done towards the all-round development of the State.

\* \* \*

### 3

## 20<sup>th</sup> Century's Last Nabakalebara The Only Successful One in 400 Years

Asit Mohanty ♦

**T**he ritual of Nabakalebara festival can be well compared to that of the Kumbh Mela at Prayag. The Bhagavad Gita talks of Lord Krishna's discourse to Arjuna where he speaks about the immortality of the soul. He had said that the soul is everlasting while the body is transient and that the soul leaves the old or diseased body to enter into a new body just as old clothes are replaced by new ones. In this context, the famous sloka of the Bhagavad Gita goes as follows:

*Basansi jirnani jatha bihaya,  
Nabani gruhanati naraa aparani.  
Tatha sharirani bihaya jirna  
Nyanyani sanjati nabani dehi.*

---

♦ Asit Mohanty is a writer and translator, and a recipient of the Sahitya Akademi Award for Translation. At present, he is the editor of *Paurusha*, a monthly journal.

And Sri Jagannath manifests Himself exactly in the manner of Krishna's discourse to Arjuna, making Himself as unique as He is venerated. For nowhere else in India is there a tradition of an image changing its physical body at intervals. Though Sri Jagannath is Parambrahma, He has manifested Himself in the form of 'daru' (wood) in the Purushottam Khetra to perform His 'lila' as a human being. Hence, Sri Jagannath, Balabhadra, Subhadra and Sudarshan—the four images in the Jagannath Temple in Puri—renounce their old bodies at intervals to take on new bodies. This change of bodies is referred to as Nabakalebara. The Bhagavad Gita tells us that every living being on this earth gradually attains youth, becomes old and finally dies. He is reborn in the world with a new body. The Nabakalebara of Sri Jagannath establishes this great truth.

It cannot be said for sure when exactly the tradition of Nabakalebara began in Purushottam Khetra or Puri. But the tomes dealing with the principles of construction of images tell us about the lives of images built with jewel, metal, wood and clay. According to these tomes, images built with jewel have a life of ten thousand years, metal images have a life of one thousand years, wooden images have a life ranging between twelve and eighteen years and clay images have a life of only one year. Accordingly, the Nabakalebara of the wooden images worshipped in Puri usually takes place almost after every nineteen years.

The Puranas tell us that Sri Jagannath was being initially worshipped as Nilamadhava, an image carved out of rock in Nilakandara. Later, He was worshipped as an image made of wood. According to the stories chronicled in the *Skanda Purana* and the *Brahma Purana*, Indradymna had built the images with wood that had drifted from the western seas to

lodge on the eastern shores. Biswakarma, the celestial carpenter, had built the images as per the orders received in a dream from Lord Krishna.

According to the *Madalapanji*, Raktabahu had attacked Puri during the reign of Shovana Dev of the Bhoumakara dynasty. So during that time, the priests had carried away the image of Sri Jagannath to Sonepur and hid it there by burying it underground. King Jajati Keshari I of the Somavansh dynasty had brought Sri Jagannath back from Sonepur after 144 years and built the new idol according to classical principles. He had placed the Brahma inside the image of Jagannath and placed Him in a new temple which was 38 feet high. Thus, it may be concluded that the first Nabakalebara of Sri Jagannath had been performed in the tenth century.

Another ten centuries or a thousand years have since passed by but unfortunately, the years in which the Nabakalebara had been performed during these ten centuries have gone unchronicled. Padmashri Satyanarayan Rajguru, the celebrated scholar on Sri Jagannath, has written about a Nabakalebara being performed in the year 1370. He has also written that the first Nabakalebara of Sri Jagannath had been performed in the Srimandir (Jagannath Temple) in the year 1308. However, according to verifiable records, the first Nabakalebara had been performed in 1574. The second Nabakalebara of the sixteenth century had been performed in 1593. But in the seventeenth century, five Nabakalebaras had been performed, in the years 1608, 1627, 1646, 1665 and 1684. The first Nabakalebara of the next century was held in 1711 and thereafter, four more were held at intervals of nineteen years. Once again in the nineteenth century, five Nabakalebaras were held, each after a gap of 19 years from the previous one. Thus, these had been performed in the years 1809, 1828, 1855, 1874 and 1893. But

in the last century, i.e., the twentieth century, the Nabakalebara had been performed six times, in the years 1912, 1931, 1950, 1969, 1977 and 1996.

And out of the Nabakalebaras performed in the twentieth century, the one held in 1996 was the last of the century. And it was this last Nabakalebara that had been the most well-organized. No other Nabakalebara so far had been carried out to such perfection.

Historical records show that many a time, the Nabakalebara had not been performed because of financial difficulties. They also reveal that the pilgrims and devotees had to put up with a lot of hardship at times because of administrative bottlenecks in conducting the ritual. Ramachandra Dev, the son of Mukunda Dev II was the Gajapati of Puri and the caretaker of the Jagannath Temple at the time of the Nabakalebara held in the year 1828, though by that time, he had already lost the kingdom of Khurda. This led to much financial constraint. So H. H. Alo, the then Collector, had requested Commissioner Pockenham through a letter to sanction funds for the Nabakalebara. Accordingly, though Pockenham had sanctioned Rs.5,500, the money was not sufficient to conduct the ritual. It was only after Nimak Mahal of Balasore donated three hundred gold coins that the ritual was somehow completed. Two lakh people had gathered at Puri during the time of the Nabakalebara in 1855. However, the police had not been able to manage the crowd and maintain law and order. As a result, three men and four women had died in the stampede that took place near the Singhadwara (Lions' Gate). The next Nabakalebara was held in 1874. Considering the fact that during that time Gajapati Dibyasingh Dev was just a minor under the guardianship of Maharani Suryamani Patamahadei and also keeping in view the mishaps of the last Nabakalebara, the District Magistrate had

constituted a high power committee in 1874 and the conducting of the Nabakalebara had been entrusted to this committee.

In 1893, when the time for the next Nabakalebara arrived, Maharani Suryamani Padamahadei was not willing to perform it giving reasons that it involved 'a great deal of trouble and a lot of money'. As a result, only a partial Nabakalebara had taken place that year wherein only the clothes of the images had been changed and the wooden frames had been left untouched. The authorities had cancelled the ritual of Nava Youvana Darshan fearing that there could be a law and order problem because of the huge crowd. However, the authorities had not been able to control the devotees. They remained rooted at the four doors of the Temple, as a result of which the daily rituals of the deities could not be performed. It was morning by the time the rituals could be completed. The Badasinghara Bhog could not be offered to the deities either. The priests had carried the mahaprasad outside across the walls in pots tied to ropes. Most of the pots containing the mahaprasad broke in the process and the pilgrims were put to much inconvenience. The Vaishnavites and the Naga ascetics had snatched away the mahaprasad when it was somehow being carried outside in loads. Even the Chariots were not ready by the Srigundicha Day (the day on which the Rath Yatra is held). By the time the Chariots were ready and the deities were placed on them, it was already midnight. The Chariots were drawn on the day after the Srigundicha Day. Though the Rath Yatra was scheduled to be held on the fifteenth of the month, the Chariots had not yet reached the Gundicha Temple till the nineteenth. Balabhadra's Chariot reached on the twentieth while that of Sri Jagannath reached only on the twenty first of the month.

The next Nabakalebara which had taken place in 1912 was the first of the twentieth century. Though the Chariots of

Balabhadra and Subhadra reached the Gundicha Temple on the day of the Rath Yatra, the Chariot of Sri Jagannath reached only the day after. In the following Nabakalebara of 1931, there was a lot of confusion and disorder. In this connection, the newspaper *Utkal Dipika* had noted: *The Chariots did not move at all on the Srigundicha Day this year. It was already evening by the time the deities moved out of the Temple (Pahandi Bije—a ritual of carrying the lords down the 22 steps inside the Temple, leading to the Lion's Gate). People had waited since morning on an empty stomach to see the Pahandi Bije and thus they suffered a great deal. Moreover, the police acted ruthlessly in order to maintain law and order.*

The atrocities of the police had increased further during the Nabakalebara held in 1950. There was a confrontation between the sadhus and the police during the Rath Yatra that year. The police beat up the sadhus mercilessly and this led to the sadhus from outside the State to leave Odisha immediately. The *Utkal Dipika* records that about 18,000 sadhus from four communities had come to the Rath Yatra held in 1893 but since the confrontation between the sadhus and police in the Rath Yatra of 1950 following the Nabakalebara that same year, very few sadhus come to see the subsequent Nabakalebaras. But the mismanagement witnessed in the next Nabakalebara in 1977 had crossed all limits. The Rath Yatra of the Nabakalebara was held on 18 July. 'Pahandi Bije' was scheduled to be held at 9 a.m. and the ceremonial sweeping of the Chariot (Chhera Panhara) by the Gajapati Maharaja of Puri was expected to be completed by 2 p.m. However, 'Pahandi Bije' got started only at 2 p.m. that day and was completed at 5 p.m. And 'Chhera Panhara' was done at 6.30 p.m. As a result, Balabhadra's Chariot was pulled only a few feet just for the sake of observing the rituals. Lakhs of devotees returned disappointed and hungry. As if this was not



enough, six wheels of Balabhadra's Chariot broke after it had been pulled for a short distance the next day. It was eleven in the night by the time the wheels were put back in shape. In the process, lakhs of devotees returned disheartened after waiting for two days to pull the Chariots. The matter had caused much anguish among the general public. The Government had been indicted for all this mismanagement. The newspapers and magazines had severely condemned the Government for not being able to conduct the Rath Yatra smoothly and for paying scant attention to the safety and comforts of the pilgrims. It had been alleged that the indifference and lack of sincerity which the Government had displayed was inexcusable.

It was only obvious that such apathy of the Government would be raised in the Legislative Assembly. A great deal of pandemonium was witnessed when the matter was discussed there. Members of the Opposition as well as the Treasury Benches demanded judicial and administrative probe into the matter. Eventually, the Government had to bow down to the pressure and a one-man commission constituting Justice Balakrushna Patra, retired Judge of Orissa High Court, was appointed as per the provisions of the Commission of Enquiries Act of 1957. The Commission had taken evidence of 69 persons and come out with a 829 page report. The conflicts between the priests and the administrators as well as other kinds of mismanagement were clear from the report.

Evidently, what turned out to be the major reason leading to all the mismanagement was that the *babutas* or wooden planks made from the wood of the Baula tree, which were needed as support at the back to bind the images with layers of clothes before they started on their journey, had not arrived on time. As a result, the images could not be made ready for the journey and the 'Pahandi Bije' was delayed in the process. Again,

the jewels worn by the deities on the foreheads are removed before the journey and replaced with imitation accessories made of cork. These are brought from three different places for the three deities. However, only one music band had been engaged to escort the materials from the three different places. This too took a great deal of time which in turn delayed the ceremonial sweeping of the Chariots. The enquiry also revealed a ridiculous event that had taken place at that time. Someone had telephoned the office of the Jagannath Temple just before the Chhhera Panhara that the Gajapati Maharaja would not come to perform the ritual if he was not paid one lakh rupees. So when the Collector of Puri asked him about it, the Maharaja refuted the charge vehemently and immediately set forth to perform the ritual. But it was already dark by the time the ritual was completed and it was not possible to draw the Chariots. The Chariot of Balabhadra had been drawn only a few paces, just for the sake of the customary ritual.

## II

Keeping in view all the drawbacks of the earlier Nabakalebaras, Chief Minister Janaki Ballav Patnaik had taken every precaution from the very beginning to make the Nabakalebara and the Rath Yatra of 1996 a resounding success. He had initiated preparations in this direction immediately after taking charge as the Chief Minister for the third time in 1995. The first meeting of the high level Review Committee set up for this purpose had been held on 14 October 1995 in the Conference Hall of the District Magistrate of Puri. The Chief Minister had presided over the meeting and said, *About 20 to 25 lakh people are likely to assemble at Puri as the Nabakalebara would take place after 19 long years. The priests have to ensure from now onwards that nothing goes wrong at the time. All*

*kinds of precautions must be taken to avoid a repetition of the mismanagement that had taken place during the Nabakalebara of 1977.*

The Chief Minister had referred to the 1977 fiasco because of a personal experience. As in the previous years, in 1977 too he had attended the Rath Yatra. He was very enthusiastic about it as it was a Nabakalebara Rath Yatra. However, he waited with his family in a shop near the Gundicha Temple for four hours from afternoon till evening but the Chariots were nowhere in sight. The cars remained unmoved at the Temple gate. His wish to see Lord Jagannath on the Chariot was not fulfilled. He reminisced about it later and said, *I went walking till the Gajapati's palace to find out what had gone wrong. It was not possible to proceed any further because the place was so heavily crowded with people that there was no space left at all. I prayed the Lord from afar and said, 'Lord, this kind of mismanagement will not take place if I am ever given an opportunity to handle things.'*

This incident had occurred at a time when Janaki Babu did not hold any official position. After he had served as a Central Minister for four years, the Congress had lost the election and so he was no longer in any official post. It would seem Sri Jagannath perhaps had listened to his prayers that day because he became the Chief Minister in 1980 and remained so for nine-and-a-half years, till 1989. He became the Chief Minister again for the third term in 1995. Coincidentally, the last Nabakalebara of the century was held in 1996, during his third term as the Chief Minister.

Janaki Ballav Patnaik had talked about the promise made to Sri Jagannath to the first high level committee in no uncertain terms. He had said, *There should be no repetition of the mismanagement that had taken place during the Nabakalebara of 1977.*

The first meeting for the Nabakalebara of 1996 had been held on 5 August 1995, almost a year ahead of the Rath Yatra. Presided over by the Gajapati Maharaja, a detailed discussion regarding the Nabakalebara was held in this meeting of the Temple Administration Committee. Another meeting of the district level officers had been held on 21 August as per the direction of the State Government. The District Magistrate of Puri had presided over that meeting. Twenty three such meetings had been held between 5 August 1995 and 26 May 1996. The Chief Minister himself had presided over the meeting held on 14 October 1995 at Puri and later at the State Secretariat on 25 May 1996. Besides these, several Review Committees had met in phases under the Chairmanship of the District Magistrate of Puri, the Revenue Divisional Commissioner, the Chief Secretary, etc. to remove all kinds of bottlenecks to ensure the smooth conducting of the Nabakalebara.

One of the main reasons for the delay in the Pahandi Bije in the Rath Yatra of 1977 was that the bahutas (planks made from wood of the Baula tree) had not reached on time. Hence this time round, the Chief Minister had emphasized right from the beginning that steps were to be taken for the procurement of all necessary materials at the right time. A meeting of the priests had been convened by the Jagannath Temple Administration on 8 September 1995. And the District Magistrate of Puri had presided over the meeting. Similarly, two meetings had been held on 7 September and 25 December with the representatives of the Daitapatis, who were special priests. A detailed discussion about the preparations was held during these two meetings. Extended discussions had also taken place in the meetings of the Administration Committee held on 8 August, 28 October and 26 December.

Wood is one of the major items needed for the Rath Yatra and a total of 862 pieces of wood of different types and sizes are needed for the purpose every year. However, in the case of the Nabakalebara Rath Yatra, the horses, charioteers, brake wood, barricades of the Chariots and side deities (Parsva Devata) are newly built. So a further 128 pieces of Neem wood and 23 pieces of Sal wood are needed for the purpose. Emphasis had been placed in the review meetings to ensure that all the wood arrived at the right time. As a result, 879 pieces of wood had already arrived by the time the second Coordination Committee met on 21 May 1996. Only nine pieces of Phasi wood were yet to arrive. The authorities also made sure that no untoward event would take place because of inferior quality of wood. The wood pieces had been carefully examined and 20 pieces of unsuitable wood had been replaced. The Divisional Forest Officers (DFOs) of Nayagarh, Khurda and Boudh had been requested to provide the 128 pieces of Neem wood that were needed. However, they had expressed their inability to do so. Hence, the DFOs of Athgarh, Sambalpur and Sundargarh were requested to arrange for the same. But the DFO of Athgarh alone had intimated that he would be able to provide only five pieces. The rest 123 pieces had been collected from private individuals.

The ropes to pull the Chariots and the cloth to cover them were other essential requirements. The Kerala State Coir Board had been requested to supply 12 new ropes even though there were 15 ropes in stock. This had been undertaken as a precautionary measure. In view of the possibilities of a mammoth gathering at the time of the Rath Yatra, steps had been taken to ensure that there would be no problem when the Chariots were pulled. Similarly, the Odisha Textile Mills had been requested in advance to supply quality cloth to cover the Chariots.

Other essential items required at the time of the Nabakalebara include sandalwood, musk, resin and silk cloth. For the first time, the Forest Department of the Government of Karnataka had been requested to supply three kilograms of sandalwood of the best quality. The Chief Conservator of Forests of the Government of Karnataka had given written assurance that he would take necessary steps to supply good quality sandalwood at a reasonable price.

Ordinarily, there were uncertainties regarding the availability of musk at the time of the Nabakalebara. About 1100 grams of musk is required for the purpose. Obtained from the musk deer, musk is a fragrant substance which also acts as an insecticide and prevents moss. Hence, musk is used to colour and decorate the deities. More musk is needed at the time of Nabakalebara as new images are made at the time. Traditionally, the royal family of Nepal has had a close association with the Jagannath Temple. Therefore, the King of Nepal had the privilege to offer a special puja in the Puri Temple. The King also provided the musk needed by the Jagannath Temple over the years. Hence, a letter had been written to the King of Nepal to provide the excess musk needed at the time of the Nabakalebara. However, the King of Nepal had banned the hunting of the musk deer as it was an endangered species. As a result, the King informed that it would not be possible on his part to provide the musk. But the priests from Nepal who were residing in Puri had some musk with them. They had been gifted the musk by pilgrims from Nepal. The musk needed for the Nabakalebara had thus been collected partly from them and partly from the open market. Similarly, the Tribal Development Cooperative Corporation had been asked to supply ten quintals of resin needed for the Nabakalebara. The Odisha State Tussar and Silk Cooperative Society had been asked to supply eight

quintals of Basungi Silk cloth. In this manner, steps had been taken much in advance to collect all the necessary items. It had been ensured that there would be no problem in conducting the Nabakalebara and the Rath Yatra in a smooth manner.

The comfort of the pilgrims was also taken into consideration. At the first high level Review Committee meeting held on 15 October 1995, the Chief Minister had clearly stated, *All the concerned departments must initiate all necessary steps now itself to ensure the smooth conducting of the Nabakalebara and the Rath Yatra in view of the fact that 20 - 25 lakh people are likely to assemble at Puri at the time.* Detailed discussion had taken place in the meeting regarding the construction of temporary houses for more than one lakh people, uninterrupted power supply to the town of Puri, improvement of roads, health and sanitation, supply of drinking water, law and order situation, traffic control, provision of essential commodities, etc. The Chief Minister himself monitored the decisions taken at this meeting and ensured that they were carried out. Karunakara Patnaik was the Collector of Puri at that time but later he was succeeded by Suresh Chandra Mohapatra. The Chief Minister held meetings at regular intervals and reviewed the progress. He conducted a final review of all these in the State Level Preparatory Meeting held at the State Secretariat on 25 May 1996.

The State Government had taken a timely decision for the Nabakalebara and constructed a six kilometre long road connecting Balighat square on the Puri-Konark road to National Highway No.3 via Gopalpur and Harekrushnapur. This new road was named the *1996 Nabakalebara Road*. The Public Works Department of Puri had constructed this road with financial help from the State Government. Thousands of vehicles were diverted to this road as a result of which traffic control had been a lot easier during the Nabakalebara Rath Yatra.

The construction of the New Jagannath Sadak was another important step. It was an alternative road to Puri from Sarankul in Nayagarh. Passing via Sarankul and Ranpur, the road met National Highway No.5 at Jankia. It also connected the Rameswar Square to the Bhubaneswar-Puri road via Bira Pratappur. About a hundred kilometres in length, this road was named the New Jagannath Sadak. The distance between Berhampur and Puri was reduced by about 40 kilometres as a result of the construction of this road. Besides, the road was also extensively used by the people of Kanasa, Satyabadi and Puri Sadar areas. Along with this, several roads were repaired and some new roads were constructed to link the hinterland to the town of Puri. Old roads were also widened. As a result, Puri became well connected with the surrounding areas. This process was also the foundation for the construction of the Greater Puri in the days to come.

The Chief Minister had also paid special attention to the flawless construction of the Chariots as well as to the strict adherence to all the rituals connected with the Nabakalebara and the Rath Yatra. Considering that six wheels of Lord Balabhadra's Chariot had broken during the previous Nabakalebara, steps had been taken to construct the wheels of the Chariots as strong as possible. Wider brakes had also been provided for the Chariots. It had been noticed that there were problems in pulling the Chariot of Lord Balabhadra as it swerved to the left at a place called Luga-patti where there was a steep slope on the road. The wheels of the Chariot had in fact broken at that point when efforts were made to straighten the Chariot with the help of ropes. The Chariot had swerved in yet another place on the road. Those two spots on the road had been repaired to prevent such mishaps from occurring again. As a result, such incidents had not taken place during the Rath Yatra of 1996.



The Chief Minister was aware of the fact that a proper coordination between the Temple Administration and the priests was highly essential for the smooth conducting of the Rath Yatra. All kinds of problems had arisen in the previous Nabakalebara because of a lack of coordination between the two. However, Chief Minister Janaki Ballav Patnaik was in direct contact with the representatives of the priests to monitor everything. Even as everything was being monitored, a conflict arose as to who would don the mantle of Biswabasu before the Banajaga Yatra on the tenth day of the bright lunar fortnight of Chaitra for the collection of wood for construction of the images (darus). One of the parties had filed a case in this regard in the Puri Munsif Court seeking the intervention of the court in the matter. However the conflict was resolved by holding a meeting of the representatives of the Daitapatis and Suddha Suaras with the Temple authorities and so the matter was dismissed by the Court. Extensive arrangements were also made by the government for the safekeeping of the trees which would provide the darus and also for the comforts of the priests accompanying the darus from their places of origin to Puri.

Even so, a conflict had arisen at this time with regard to the transportation of Lord Balabhadra's daru which had been identified in Ramakrushnapur near Japakuda in Salipur. The conflict arose between the inhabitants of Rameswarpur and Mohanapur villages. Both the parties demanded that the cart carrying the daru should pass through their village. In the process, the cart had to stop en route. So according to the direction of the Chief Minister, the District Magistrate of Kataka Digambar Mohanty had drawn lots to solve the problem. As a result, the cart had bypassed both the warring villages and was taken via Bodamundai.

Another conflict arose with regard to the sale of mahaprasad by the Supakaras (cooks) on the day of the Nava Youvana Darshan. Parimanik Darshan (having a special darshan of the deities on payment of a nominal fee) was scheduled from 2.30 a.m. till 5.30 a.m. on 16 July. There was no break between the day of the Nava Youvana Darshan and the day of the Rath Yatra. Hence, the Nava Youvan Darshan was cancelled as it could have delayed the Rath Yatra. It was also decided not to sell mahaprasad inside the Temple premises in order to avoid a problem of law and order. Provision was instead made to sell mahaprasad outside the Temple premises. It was also decided not to allow pilgrims to enter the temple premises on 16 July which made the Mahasupakara unhappy. The Supakaras demanded that they be allowed to sell mahaprasad on a commercial basis in Ananda Bazar (the place where mahaprasad is sold inside the temple premises). This was not permitted as it was apprehended that it could create problems. The Chief Minister had called a meeting of the representatives of the priests in his residence on 7 July to solve this problem. In order to create more enthusiasm among the priests on the day of the Rath Yatra, the Chief Minister had himself directed that all priests should be provided with Berhampuri pattos (silk dhotis) in place of ordinary dhotis.

The Chief Minister had made it clear from the very beginning that money was not going to be a constraint for the smooth conducting of the Nabakalebara. The district administration had made an estimate that a sum of Rs.43,05,94,000 would be spent for the occasion. It was reviewed minutely and the estimate was first scaled down to Rs.20 crore and it was finally decided that a sum of Rs.15 crore would be spent. This amount was considered to be sufficient to take care of all the expenses connected with the Nabakalebara and the Rath Yatra. All the expenses incurred by the Temple

authorities for the Nabakalebara had also been reimbursed by the State Government. The Chief Minister had sanctioned a sum of Rs.1.1 crore for the purpose. Apart from this, a sum of Rs.40 crore had been sanctioned in favour of the different Government Departments. As a result, there were no deviations from the time-schedule prepared by the Temple Administration Committee at a meeting held under the Chairmanship of the Gajapati Maharaja on 29 June 1996. All the rituals connected with the Nabakalebara had been completed as per the time schedule without any interruption. A record crowd of 12 lakh people had assembled that day in Puri to witness the Nabakalebara Rath Yatra. Chief Minister Janaki Ballav Patnaik himself was present among the devotees and he had joined them in pulling the Nandighosha, the Chariot of Sri Jagannath, from the Lions' Gate to the Gundicha Temple. All the Chariots had reached the Gundicha Temple before sunset. This was something that had never happened earlier. The pilgrims had been extremely satisfied that everything had gone according to schedule.

And thus, the last Nabakalebara of the century concluded with pomp and ceremony because of the blessings of Lord Jagannath and the untiring efforts of the Chief Minister, the Council of Ministers, heads of the different departments and their subordinates, the District Magistrate, the temple administration and the priests.

\* \* \*

## The Official Language Jinx

Dr. Devi Prasanna Pattanayak♦

**I**t is well within the rights of the majority community in a state to demand that the language they speak should be the language for communication by that state's administration. So, for Odisha, the home of the majority Odias in the State, the official language shouldn't have been anything other than Odia. But, that was not the case! Its neighbours, the Bengali and Hindi speakers, had begun agitating against the use of Odia for educational and administrative purposes in the Odisha Division before Odisha became a State. The language issue in Odisha actually had three phases:

- Phase one was a conspiracy of Bengali officials in collusion with British officers to use Bengali in place

---

♦ Dr. Devi Prasanna Pattanayak is an eminent Linguist and former Director, Central Institute of Indian Languages, Mysore

of Odia as the language in courts and in the field of education in Odisha.

- The second phase was an attempt to use Hindi in place of Odia as the official language for administration and education in Odia speaking districts adjacent to the Hindi speaking provinces.

In both these cases, an effort was made to use Bengali and Devanagari scripts in text books.

- The third was an attempt to introduce Telugu in Ganjam and include the district in the Madras Presidency.

As such, lack of Odia text books raised a daunting problem. The then Inspector of Schools therefore had suggested the use of Bengali in place of Odia as the medium of instruction. In 1848, Mr. Boring, who was then the Collector of Kataka, wrote to the Commissioner in favour of Bengali. He mentioned that whatever might be the status of Odia in the past, it was now, a dialect of Bangla. These two languages differ only in pronunciation and script. So as a general principle, it was his view that Odia should not be used as a separate language in any of the British-administered States<sup>1</sup>.

Although the Commissioner opposed this view, some officials who favoured an alternative suggested the use of Hindustani (a mix of Urdu and Hindi) as an option in offices and schools. The Education Department took advantage of the situation and in 1864-65, ordered that Bengali be used in schools across the Odisha Division.

Boring had his three-pronged agenda:

- (a) Bengali in place of Odia should be the State language for administrative convenience,
- (b) Odia is a dialect of Bengali and as such,

---

1 Document of the Board of Revenue dated 27 June 1849

(c) Odia should be written in Bengali script.

Meanwhile, the then Deputy Inspector of Schools Umacharan Haldar had come on transfer to Odisha because of some earlier misconduct. He wrote an article in the *Cuttack Star* supporting the view that Bengali script should be used to write Odia. Then in 1870, Kantichandra Bhattacharya, a Bengali teacher of Baleswar, contributed to the debate by writing that Odia was not a separate language.

However, on 15 January 1895, the Chief Commissioner of the Central Province announced that the official language in Sambalpur would be Hindi in place of Odia. So Hindi became the medium of instruction there. Many non-Hindi government officials and school teachers were compelled to learn Hindi for fear of being removed from service if they did not learn that language. Thereafter, officials still speaking Odia lost their jobs and Hindi speaking officials and teachers were 'imported' from the Central Provinces. These developments brought about the closure of 82 Odia primary schools.

Such differences in language led the British to occupy Odisha in sections. Consequently, Odisha was kept under three administrative divisions. The Plains of Odisha were governed by the Bengal Presidency, the Western Parts by the Central Provinces and the Southern Parts by the Madras Presidency. Because of its predominance in Ganjam, Telugu was made the language of courts and schools there. The Telugu influence was so strong that in its Madras session in 1903, the All India Congress Committee adopted a resolution against the separation of Ganjam and Vizag Agency areas from Andhra. Thus, in April 1904, the Governor of Madras and officiating Viceroy Amphill passed an order by which Ganjam and Vizag Agency areas were not to be separated from Madras on administrative grounds.

Gradually, anti-Odia machinations became so widespread from 1860 to 1903 that possible obliteration of Odia language, culture and identity came to be the dominant theme of discourse in the area and the dominant fear among the Odias. In such an environment, many grass-root level leaders like Gouri Shanker Ray, Fakir Mohan Senapati, Dharanidhar Mishra, Gangadhar Meher, Harihar Mardraj Deo and Nilamani Vidyaratna got together under the leadership of Madhusudan Das to struggle for the unification of Odia-speaking tracts, formation of a separate Odisha Province and resurrection of the Odia identity. Along with these leading personalities, many poets, writers, pleaders and intellectuals had also joined the struggle. It may be noted here that a large number of leading Telugu, Bengali and Hindi speaking residents of these areas had also rendered support and participated in this movement.

However, it is indeed strange that the Odias themselves are responsible for the negligence of the Odia language since the formation of the Odisha Province. Despite legal provisions, Odia is yet to be administered as the official language of Odisha. It is not yet the language of administration and courts. It is yet to become a compulsory language for education. In Odisha today, it is possible to earn a graduate degree without having any knowledge of Odia. A large number of newspapers and magazines come out in Odia, but with a circulation of less than a thousand copies. Only three or four newspapers circulate beyond two or three lakh copies. Today, most of the advertisements are in English. Wedding and funeral invitations are printed in English. Odissi songs are just not available in the market. On certain rare occasions, however, some Odia songs are played, but they are mostly fast modern tracks. If this is the scenario, how will the Odia culture survive? Someone once asked me, "Who, other than you old brats, is interested in

keeping this culture alive? The past is hovering around you like a ghost.”

These days, it is rare to hear even a single Odia sentence without a fair sprinkling of English words. The educated young people too have forgotten how to speak in Odia. Our own language does not find any place in our courses of studies. To do their file notings in Odia, Government employees have to read and understand the language. Education, therefore, is closely linked to administration. If our children do not learn Odia, how can they make use of Odia later on in administrative matters? One who does not know Odia will certainly oppose its use. It is not that attempts have not been made to make Odia the official language of the State. There have definitely been such attempts. And the Odia Official Language Act (1954) speaks of such an attempt. Efforts were made to enforce it once on 15 October 1954 and again on 1 April 1985.

When Nabakrushna Choudhury was the Chief Minister in 1954, he had introduced the Official Language Bill and had also got it passed despite opposition from officers. He had made his budget speech in Odia and had got an English-Odia Administrative Glossary published. However, Naba Babu kept himself away from power politics since 1956 and with his departure, the effort for Odia as the official language also perished and his directives were never carried out.

Although the Congress Party had a majority in the Odisha Legislative Assembly Election in 1937, they did not form the government. As a result, a non-Congress Government was formed under the leadership of the Maharaja of Parlakhemundi. It was during this time that Brajasundar Das, M.L.A., had proposed that Odia be made the official language of the State. But this proposal was not given any importance.



Janaki Ballav Patnaik, however, took a bold decision to use Odia at the Government level when he became the Chief Minister in 1980. During that time, Sudhansu Mohan Patnaik became the first ever Odia to take over as the Chief Secretary of the State. Till then, between 1956 and 1980, twelve non-Odia I.A.S. officers had functioned as Chief Secretaries of Odisha. An official notification was also released during that period to use Odia in all the government departments from 1 April 1985. Moreover, a three-member committee was formed to modify the Odia script. Constituting of Chief Minister Janaki Ballav Patnaik, Manmohan Choudhury and Binode Kanungo, the committee recommended some modifications of the layout of the key-board in typewriters which had keys in Odia. And the Remington Company was asked to supply a thousand such machines with the new key-board. Steno-typists were given special training and incentives were also given to them in the form of extra allowances. If a file was not written in Odia, it was not supposed to reach the Chief Minister, who always refused to sign any file that was written in English. Based on this, *The Daily Samaj*, on 14 November 1987, carried a news item in which it mentioned that the Chief Secretary, on the advice of the Chief Minister, had warned the government employees that if files are not submitted in Odia, they would not be looked into and would instead be returned to the senders. Janaki Babu was very firm in implementing this decision. This practice continued till 1990.

A journalist, editor, writer, translator and politician all rolled into one, Janaki Ballav Patnaik was the Chief Minister of Odisha from 9 June 1980 to 12 December 1989 and again from 15 March 1995 to 17 March 1999. So it came as no surprise that such a person would be working towards the preservation of the Odia language and culture. He firmly believed that it

was essential to make Odia the official language to serve the objectives of the administration. As a consequence, the revised Orissa Official Language Act, 1954 came into being. It was clearly stated therein that Odia would be used for all official purposes. However, when Biju Patnaik became the Chief Minister of Odisha for the second term in 1990, everything relating to the use of Odia as the official language was turned upside down. Biju Babu no doubt loved Odisha a lot but the same cannot be said of his attitude towards the Odia language. All the non-Odia officers had their way during his chief ministership. These officers succeeded in re-introducing English for administrative purposes, despite legal provisions to the contrary.

A comparative assessment of the use of Odia in official matters was carried out in 1994. It was discovered that between 1985 and 1990, because of strong measures adopted by the Government, 45 per cent work of the Odisha Secretariat was carried out in Odia language. But between 1990 and 1994, Odia was rarely used.

Janaki Babu returned as Chief Minister in 1995 and once again, attempts were made to enforce Odia as the official language. Emphasis was laid on its use in the Collectorates and the State Secretariat. Officers were warned that in the event of not writing notes in Odia, their confidential reports would have adverse remarks. If repeatedly practiced, stringent action would be taken against the erring officers. As a result, beginning with the Chief Minister, all other Ministers and officers did their file work in Odia. The Chief Minister and the members of his Council of Ministers made it a point to speak in Odia in the State Assembly. So throughout the fourteen years during which Janaki Ballav Patnaik remained the Chief Minister, they spoke in Odia in the Assembly.

Following a change of Government in Odisha in the year 2000, a person who never spoke Odia became the Chief Minister. This was exactly the moment the officers were waiting for. Odia was once again dislodged and English was reintroduced.

Bureaucracy, too, plays an important role in the use of language in administration. In the bureaucratic set-up of a multi-lingual nation like India, there would invariably be people speaking different languages. But it is never desirable that they would work against the language, culture and interest of the states in which they are required to serve.

In the 1970s, I had set up a language laboratory and appointed language teachers at Mussorie to train young entrants into the I.A.S. Once they got their postings in their respective states, I had arranged to teach them the languages of those particular states. Of course, using the state language for administration calls for strong political will and determination. I was requested by the Chief Minister of Karnataka to provide training in the use of Kannada for official purpose and I had chosen 600 mid-level officers who received the training. The first ever language university was founded in Tamil Nadu. I, along with Ram Reddy, had gone there to accord formal approval. These states have marched ahead because of a combination of people's involvement and political will.

Then there is this legal provision that non-Odia officers posted in Odisha must have knowledge of Odia at par at least with the Minor or Middle English School level. But the facts as to how many of the non-Odia officers satisfy this provision and who is there to assess their efficiency remains to be monitored. Of the total population of Odisha, 25 per cent are adivasis. So how many officers actually have knowledge of adivasi languages? How many officers working in different dialect zones have working knowledge of those dialects? We have

created a democratic system in which there is a vast rift between the administrators and the citizens.

Not to talk of administrators, there are Ministers as well who do not know the language of their states and they even look down upon the state language as one spoken by the common man. There is no other state except Odisha where the language, culture and identity of the State are treated in this manner. An American gentleman had once said, *God alone knows how this State is running!*

If he had any knowledge of Odisha, he would have instead said that Lord Jagannath alone knows!

During the second term of Navin Babu's Chief Ministership, the Minister for Higher Education made an announcement that Odia would be removed from the course of studies at the graduate level. This caused a great controversy which led to a rift in the BJD-BJP coalition. BJP leader Vishwabhusan Harichandan spoke against this decision of the Government. And eventually, Navin Patnaik had to withdraw the decision and announced that Odia would continue to be a part of the courses. But the attitude that nevertheless was shown towards one's own language is clearly adverse to the interest of the State, its culture and identity.

In an unstarred question raised in the Odisha Assembly on 10 December 2001 (No. 452), Prasad Kumar Harichandan wanted to know from the Chief Minister whether any date had been fixed to implement the provisions of the Orissa Official Language Act of 1954. He also wanted to know the date on which any such notification might come out. While replying to this question Navin Patnaik, the Chief Minister, admitted that no such notification had come out and the matter was still under consideration.

Ironically, when the Chief Minister did reply in the Assembly on 5 April 2003 that in accordance with the Orissa Official Language Act of 1954, the State Government had issued a notification on 1 April 1985 regarding the use of Odia for official work, he replied in English! But certain matters relating to the Odisha High Court and other subjects provided in the Attached Schedule have been excluded from the purview of the said Act. This notification, with some changes, has been implemented in all offices for the benefit of the general public.

In that same reply, it was also stated that according to clause 2 (3) of the Orissa Official Language Act, the State Government would decide on a date for its implementation. The Chief Minister had said, *The state government shall take a decision on fixing a date, for which approval of the Central Government has already been received.*

Now, this very reply of the Chief Minister was self contradictory. If the Act is already being implemented then how does the question of fixing a date for the implementation of the same Act arise? A decision had already been taken earlier. So what other decision needs to be taken? What has the Central Government to do in it?

Well, this is an example of a Chief Minister who does not know the language of his State, who never speaks in Odia and if he ever speaks in broken Odia, it raised more humour than earnestness among the audience!

\* \* \*

## Janaki Ballav Patnaik The Essayist and Critic

Pathani Pattnaik ♦

Janaki Ballav Patnaik's track record in the realm of Indian politics is indeed impressive. What is also noteworthy is his contribution in the field of Odia literature. He is admired as much as a writer as he is as a politician. Most readers of Odia literature are well-acquainted with his poems, concise renderings of the *Mahabharata* and the *Ramayana* in simple prose, and translations of the renowned Sanskrit poet Vartrihari's works. His translated works also include the Sanskrit Bhagavad and novels of Bankim Chandra. While most writers usually concentrate on stories, poems, novels and plays, Patnaik is one of those very few who write prose and criticism. Despite leading an active political life, he has produced a substantial body of

---

♦ Prof. Pathani Pattnaik is a well-known critic and essayist, former president, Odisha Sahitya Akademi and recipient of Sahitya Akademi Award

prose and criticism which is marked with feeling, knowledge and original thought.

### Janaki Ballav the Essayist

Janaki Ballav Patnaik's collection of essays, *Swapna O' Sankalpa*, is a novel attempt in Odia prose. This collection contains 21 essays which deal with various problems of the State. An analysis of these essays reveals certain dominant themes—Odisha down the ages, great sons of India, worthy sons of the soil, environment, politics, art and culture.

In the context of 'Odisha down the ages', one comes across essays like 'Lord Jagannath and Odisha', 'History and Odisha', 'Konark Temple: the pride and glory of Odisha', 'The uniqueness of the Odia race', 'Odisha: a petal of the lotus that is India', 'Abhinav Baranasi Kataka, Bhubaneswar' and 'Jawaharlal Nehru'.

Under the category of 'Great Sons of India', he had written memorable essays like 'The Buddha: the exponent of democracy and world peace', 'Sri Ram Krishna and Vivekananda: Leaders of spiritual and national consciousness', 'Sri Chaitanya in Odisha: Incarnation of a great man', and 'Jawaharlal Nehru: the architect of modern India'.

His other essays are on subjects like 'Adikavi Sarala Das: The first Odia poet', 'Surendra Sai: The indomitable flame', 'Pathani Samanta: The first scientist of Odisha', 'Madhubabu's dream of an industrially prosperous Odisha', 'Bhubanananda and Bichitrananda: The twin flowers on a single stem', 'Utkal Keshari Mahatab: A memoir', and 'Jolouka Baba: the embodiment of spiritualism'.

Some of his essays relating to the environment include *Parivesa O' Ame* (Environment and Us) and *Parivesa O' Jibajantu* (Environment and Animals).

However, most of the essays deal with the art, history and culture of Odisha, beauty and Indian poetics, Indian leaders, literature and politics, achievements of the century, the challenges of literature, language and the future of our literature, footprints of history, the role of literature in the changing society, Jayadev and Sanskrit literature, motherland and nationalism, national integration and harmony, the immortal poet Vartrihari, Lord Jagannath, and the Bhagavad.

### **The Core of the Essays**

Experiments are always welcome in literature but in the name of experiment, absurdity is not welcome. It is not proper to create a kind of literature which is not true to any cause, which is singularly unintelligible, which even the author himself cannot explain. One should not indulge in that kind of literature which has no goal, no idealism, no truth or no intelligence. In this context, Janaki Ballav Patnaik's essay 'The Challenges of Literature' is a welcome experiment that throws relevant light on the glorious past of Odisha. In it, he has discussed about the epic poet Sarala Das, the Age of Five Friends, the Age of Radhanath, the Satyavadi Age and modernity in Odia literature. In course of the discussion, he has quoted from the scriptures, which has made the reading profoundly engrossing. "No great work is possible without immense self confidence and deep patriotism", says Patnaik. Today, much experimentation is going on in the international level in the fields of poetry, stories and plays. Fabian society was followed by The Bloomsbury Group in the U.K., of which Samuel Beckett, Virginia Wolf, T. S Eliot, E. M. Foster, Roger Fry, Lord Keynes and James Joyce became exponents. Without doubt, experiment is the true calling of literature.



Let me talk a bit about the essay 'The Future of our Language and Literature'. This essay discusses the popularity of literature, the development of script, the preparation of grammar and lexicon and the attempt to make Odia the official language. The author, however, warns, "These days, at different meetings and gatherings, speeches are made in English. But the speaker and the audience are all Odias. The people of Odisha should realize that this is an insult to the Odia race and language."

There has been a continuing controversy since the nineteenth century regarding the place of birth and work of the Sanskrit poet Jayadev. Though he hailed from Utkal, Jayadev is popular all over the country. Patnaik's essay 'Jayadev and Sanskrit' highlights the author's new point of view in this regard. What is the use of claiming Jayadev as a poet from Utkal? Instead, there should be discussions on his work. Jayadev says in *The Gitagovind*, "It is not that this poem deals with the love of Radha and Krishna alone. Rather, one can get from it what one wishes to have and the *rasa* one wants to discuss about." The author says, "The language and culture of the Odia race are very ancient. Every race is proud of its language and literature, song and dance, and art and culture. The uniqueness of a race cannot be established with its material beauty alone. Jayadev's *Gitagovind* is a symbol of resemblance between ancient art, music and sculpture of Odisha, which have been manifest down the ages in the carvings on rocks, prints on clothes and in the Odissi songs."

Take for example the other essay 'Motherland and Nationalism'. It is a matter of extreme regret that our country, rich in mythology and history, was never politically a single country. All the states were divided and at war over supremacy.

Nonetheless, India is known as a single cultural entity. Though India did become independent after a long subjugation,

it was left divided on the basis of religion. But the major part of India that remained and retained its old name should continue to remain united as a plural society. In his analysis of the post-independence India, the author says, “National integration and communal harmony has three special aspects. These are political unity, economic development and emotional integrity. If only we work sincerely in these three fields can we achieve national integration and harmony.”

It is essential that there should be emotional unity among different races, different religions and different communities in the country. Remembering the great sons of India who have worked towards national integration, the author comments, “Those wise and great sons who loved our country, Bharat, have brought about an emotional unity among its people”. The word ‘Bharat’ that he used here was mentioned for the first time by Vyasadev in the Bhagavad wherein he says that those who are born in India are indeed blessed. Conceived as a nation, the term ‘Bharat’ appears again in the Vayu Purana, where it is said, *Tadvarsam Bharatam nama, Bharati Jatra santantih*. In English, it would mean “the Country in which Bharatiyas live is called Bharat”.

Towards the end of his life, Gautama Buddha had said, *Chitram Jambudwipam Manoramam jibitam manushyanam*. Loosely translated, it meant “This Jambu Dwipa is a beautiful country, and enchanting is the life of its people”. The Buddha had considered India as a single beautiful island.

The role of literature and that of writers change with the passage of time. As an author, Janaki Ballav Patnaik believes that a writer should be conscious of the role he plays. This subject has been treated well in the essay ‘The Role of Literature in Changing Times’ where Patnaik defines the role of an author as: “The writer is primarily invested with the role of improving the cultural standard of the people. His special responsibility is

to safeguard his country, race and language from many corrupt influences at work. There have been challenges in this field down the ages. What is that challenge today? It is to get proper recognition and respect in the international sphere and that is the destiny of Odia language and culture.” In this role as viewed by Patnaik, there is no scope of one’s own taste. While creating literature, the writer adopts a role for himself in the interest of his race. That is why the argument of this essay is: “Literature is never without direction. That literature which does not have social commitment and does not emulate values that are eternal in it is not at all worthy of being referred to as literature. In depicting social life, a writer should try to see the struggle and expectation of the voiceless majority of the society. Best examples of such literature are the ones that ushered the French Revolution, the Russian Revolution and the struggle for India’s Independence. The greatest challenge for a writer of our times, therefore, is to give due recognition to the inner feelings and aspirations of the voiceless in the society.”

### **Janaki Ballav the Literary Critic**

After India attained Independence, most of the literary criticism was done keeping in view the University syllabi. In the process, literature existing outside the syllabus is grossly neglected. In this backdrop, Janaki Ballav Patnaik’s literary criticism is an exception. He is also recognized as an established translator. Aside from experiencing the flavour of the original through its successful rendering, which in essence is a transcreation, the reader is also treated to the life and times of the original author through the translator’s excellent introduction to the book. Patnaik’s introductions to the books he has translated demand an in-depth analysis.

Noted Sanskrit poet Vartrihari's *Niti Sataka* was translated by Patnaik in 1955. Originally published by the Dash Brothers, the work soon sold out and later, the Vidyapuri Publishing house brought out a new edition of this classic.

On the translation of *Niti Sataka*, the translator says, "Vartrihari's *Niti Sataka* could be said to be the quintessence of all the *Niti Sashtras* of ancient India, just as what the *Geeta* is to all the *Upanishads*. The hundred slokas that constitute the *Niti Sataka* is marked by a unique style and expression, various rhymes and deft arrangement of words. It is such a thoughtful and soothing reading that one feels like coming back to it again and again. Some western pundits are of the opinion that what one gains in life by reading these three *Satakas*, especially the *Niti Sataka* of Vartrihari, can never be gained by reading even a thousand other books."

Commenting on the poet, Patnaik says that his religion cannot be ascertained from his poetry. The Chinese traveller I-tsing states that Vartrihari was a Buddhist. The poet has mentioned that he left the royal palace to settle in a monastery. However, forsaking all worldly comforts is not something confined to the Buddhists alone. The recommendation of *Sanyasa Dharma* features in Hinduism as well. Yet again, Vartrihari sings in praise of Lord Shiva and then of the *Brahmopasana*. It is therefore difficult to figure out whether he was a Buddhist, a Brahmin or a Shaivite. It would probably be proper not to straight jacket him to belong to any particular faith.

The translator's review of *Vairagya-Satakam* is immensely useful. In his words, this *Samsara* is full of fear—fear of amassing wealth, fear of losing wealth, fear of losing prestige, fear of enemies, fear of old age and fear of death. And in this *Sataka*, the author has established fearlessness as the greatest quality of

a human being. Fearlessness has been given the highest place among all qualities in *The Bhagavad Geeta*. In the sixteenth chapter of *The Geeta*, Lord Sri Krishna described the armies of positive and negative qualities in a human being which are arranged in his mind like in the battle field of Kurukshetra. Fearlessness, he says, is the captain of the army of good qualities. On the strength of fearlessness, one can meet any challenge howsoever overwhelming. One can do it if one cultivates a mind that is detached.

Introducing the *Sringar Sataka* Patnaik says, “Profundity of thought, lyrical rhythm, apt choice of words, striking imageries and a unique way of expression characterizes this poem of Vartrihari. ‘Sringar’ is not merely a description of physical intimacy of man and woman. At a stage, it brings abhorrence for the ephemeral and yearning for the spiritual through real detachment.”

There are several Odia translations of Bankim Chandra’s novels. But Janaki Ballav’s translation has something special about it. The translator has made an interesting historical review of every novel. The author begins his introduction with a discussion on the renaissance in Bengal. It was this renaissance which made Bankim Chandra proud of his language, a pride which was reflected in his novels. According to the author, “Michael Madhusudan Dutta, Bankim Chandra Chatterjee and Kaviguru Rabindranath Tagore are the three outstanding personalities who gave birth to modern Bengali language and literature. Fully aware of the western influence, they brought out the best that was in our traditional values. Rabindranath Tagore, Vivekananda and Sri Aurobindo appeared in the second half of the nineteenth century. Bengal soon became a pioneering State in the development of education, literature, science, religion and politics in the country.’

Bankim Chandra, the author says, excelled not just as a novelist but also as a poet, essayist and critic. Innovative power, love of nature and a terrific sense of story-telling are the major characteristics of this Bengali writer. Moreover, with his knack for vivid description and a skillful art of characterization, he was able to portray love, jealousy, violence, ill-will, ambition, idealism, suffering and sacrifice with great intensity. All these qualities taken together made him the first novelist in Bengal and in India. After him, Rabindranath Tagore and Sarat Chandra met the challenges of modernity and opened new vistas. Then on, of course, many writers have enriched Bengali literature but none of them have surpassed Bankim Chandra in his power of description, choice of words and story-telling. It is not surprising, therefore, that Bankim Chandra has been called the Emperor of Bengali literature. By no means were his writing skills any less than those of Rabindranath Tagore.

Another substantial contribution of Janaki Ballav Patnaik to the field of literature was the abridging of Valmiki's *Ramayana*, titled *Valmiki-krita Ramayana*. The introduction to this book offers a wonderful analysis of *The Ramayana* which covers the period of *The Ramayana*, its characters and events, its influence on literature and its relevance within and outside the country. The author has dispelled whatever superstitions people sought to associate with *The Ramayana*. He has also made a comparative study of different versions of *The Ramayana*.

The introduction to the abridged *Valmiki-krita Ramayana* shows how scholarly and analytical the author actually is. For example, the author says that according to the German scholar Winternitz, *The Ramayana* is a wealth for the entire Indian nation. There is hardly any such classic literary work in the world which has influenced the thought and literature of a country for centuries together as has *The Ramayana*. *The*

*Ramayana* can be said to be an Epic not just of India but of the whole of Asia. Modeled after Valmiki's *Ramayana*, different versions of the *Ramayana* were created in countries like Sri Lanka, Indonesia, Myanmar, Malaysia, Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos, Thailand and Mongolia. *Nanrushi kurute kavyam* means that in order to write a *Ramayana*, one has to be a yogi, a rishi. As such, authored by the poet Jogeshwar which means Great Yogi, *The Ramayana* in Indonesia is known as *Ramayana Kalbin*. Likewise, the Malaya *Ramayana* is named *Hekiyat Seri Ram* and the Burmese is named *Ram Vathu* while the Thai *Ramayana* is known as *Ramkien*. The people of the South East Asian countries like Indonesia, Thailand and Cambodia have openly acknowledged their debt to *The Ramayana*. The sculptures of these countries reflect the thematic representation of *The Ramayana*. Scenes from the *Ramayana* are carved on the temple walls of *Prajanana Lord Shiva* in Indonesia and *Angkor Vat* in Cambodia, on the walls of the *Bata-phra* in Thailand and the *Temple of the Emerald Buddha* in Bangkok. Even today, *The Ramayana* is represented in the dramas, ballets, *Ravanachhaya*, *Leela*, etc. in these countries. Many South East Asian countries have adopted Buddhism or Islam but *The Ramayana* continues to form the basis of their culture.

In rendering *The Mahabharata* of Vyasa into Odia, Janaki Ballav was helped by his wife Jayanti Patnaik. The version has a scholarly introduction and the author has named it *The Mahabharat Samhita*. It is an entirely collected or compiled work. Rabindranath Tagore had said that "the knowledge, the wisdom, the history that lay scattered all over the country will be forgotten and lost unless they are collected and preserved. So there was an awakening in our country to collect those precious gems and knit them together so that they could be of use for future generations. It is the history not just of any individual

but of the entire nation. *The Mahabharata* is a golden treasury of wisdom. Here, there is both fact and fiction. Many events that were getting faint in the public memory were enlivened and enriched with the input of imagination.”

Janaki Ballav has made an in-depth analysis of the Sanskrit *Bhagavad* which he has translated into elegant Odia prose. In his introduction to the work he says, *Vidyavatam Bhagavate Pariksha*, which means “The Bhagavad is the true test of the learned pundits”. The Bhagavad is said to be the best of all the eighteen Puranas. The famous western scholar Wilson says, “The Bhagavad is a great work of celebrity in India and exercises a more direct and powerful influence upon the opinions and feelings of the people than perhaps any other Purana.” (*A Critical Study of the Bhagabata Puran*, Dr. T. S. Rukmani.)

On the creation of *The Bhagavad*, the author says, “*The Bhagavad* has dealt with all kinds of behaviour and code of conduct like what is virtue and what is vice, what is good and what is bad.” It is said, *Aachara Prabhavo Dharma, Dharmasya Prabhurachyutah*. The concept of good conduct is explained in detail in *The Bhagavad* and the example of good conduct is Achyuta the God Himself. Achyuta is the one who does not deviate from the right path He has Himself taught.

The author has done a great service to the reader by presenting them with an exhaustive study of spirituality and philosophy of life which run through every chapter of *The Bhagavad*. While writing introductions to his works of translation, the author has played the role of a literary critic. He is an excellent essayist. He has been writing for his own monthly journal *Pourusha* since 1967. The style of his prose is simple yet striking, lively and not pedagogic. They are comparative studies and are rich in knowledge. By the very nature of journalistic approach, they are influential. His attempt is truly praiseworthy



since there is a dearth of prose-writing in Odia literature. In spite of being clogged in the mire of politics, Janaki Ballav has greatly enriched Odia prose through his rendering of serious themes in simple but elegant prose with a style that has made him a popular writer.

\* \* \*

## Odia Literature & Janaki Ballav Patnaik

Barendra Krushna Dhal ♦

**I**n linguistic India, Odia is among one of the ancient languages. Like other languages, Odia language, too, has been subject to transformation and growth over a long period of time. And yet, it has been able to carve out a niche for itself among the modern Indian languages. However, it is difficult for the Odia language or literature, as several other languages or literature, to sustain itself without Government patronage. Selfless efforts are needed for the sustenance and consolidation of language and literature.

It is a matter of concern and regret that the Odia language is now being threatened from several quarters. Odia is no longer the language used for State administration for the past ten years (2000-2009) and the language is certainly not being patronized

---

♦ Barendra Krushna Dhal is a well-known Journalist and Columnist and recipient of Sahitya Akademi Award for Translation

by the State. Some MLAs of the ruling party, who had learnt the Odia alphabets in primary schools located in extremely backward places, have turned into sycophants of their leaders and now have gone to the extent of claiming English as their mother tongue. This indeed is an eyebrow-raising situation.

Janaki Ballav Patnaik's name comes to the forefront on any discussion on the Odia language. He would be remembered for the work he has done when he was the Chief Minister between 1980 and 1989 and again from 1995 to 1999 to enrich the language and its spread. Efforts were made in 1980 to hold a Festival of Literature. Patnaik had assumed the post of Chief Minister for the first time in June 1980 and that same year the first Festival of Literature was held in the Bhanja Kalamandap. The Festival, which began with the inaugural lamp being lit by Chief Minister Patnaik, was graced by Dr. Harekrushna Mahtab, and Jnanpith Awardee Gopinath Mohanty, along with numerous litterateurs from all over the State. Patnaik had spent two hours in the midst of about 200 litterateurs. In his address, he said the Festival of Literature should not remain confined to Bhubaneswar but should be held in outlying areas of the State as well. He had pointed out that the Odia language was faced with pressure from different sides—by Telugu in the south, Hindi in the west and Bengali in the north. This had to be countered. Hence, Odia literature, he said, has to be popularized in the border areas.

Patnaik said that Odia literature had come to a standstill after the Uddiya Era or Abhimanyu. The conspirators made an attempt to destroy the language during that time. They did not even hesitate in saying that Odia was not a separate and distinct language. At this time, Radhanath, Madhusudan, Fakirmohan and Gangadhar, the four doyens of Odia literature, infused new life into Odia literature to prove its legacy and distinctiveness.

Patnaik went on to say that literature could not be created in the absence of self-confidence of a race or community and a deep sense of patriotism and now the time for such self confidence and patriotism had arrived. Litterateurs had to join hands to save Odia literature. There was a necessity to bring the Odia-speaking people living in the outlying areas to the mainstream of literature.

After the conclusion of the Festival of Literature in 1980, a few of us sat down to consider the venue of the Festival of Literature the next year. There was a controversy at that time after the conference on Telugu literature that was held at Koraput. A few litterateurs from Koraput came to me for a discussion. I discussed the matter with Satakadi Hota, Sudhanshu Routray, Phani Mohanty, Krushnaprasad Mishra and a few others after which we sought an appointment with the Chief Minister. Janaki Babu called for us the next day. And all of us went to meet him, including Ramanath Panda from Koraput. Janaki Babu was happy to know that the festival would be held at Koraput. The three-day festival got underway on 25 December 1981 at Sunabeda with great splendor. More than 500 litterateurs from all over the State had attended the festival which turned out to be a huge success. Accommodation, food and other arrangements were superb. Needless to say, Janaki Ballav Patnaik lent his full cooperation to the arrangements and inaugurated the first full-fledged Festival of Literature. Eminent litterateurs Surendra Mohanty and Radhamohan Gadnaik graced the occasion.

In his address at the festival, Janaki Babu said that over the ages, litterateurs had shown the path for others to follow. They had always shown the path to society as well as to administration. Hence, their position was above everyone else. To make the script come true, Bhagavan Ramachandra descended upon the

earth only after Adikavi Valmiki had composed the *Ramayana*. Similarly, litterateurs get a scent of any revolution or change in the society much ahead of such events actually taking place. The best litterateurs of an era were characterized by a huge amount of self-confidence and they initiated revolutions in the society. A lot of literature was created out of this self-confidence. God gives life to a litterateur but after his birth, the litterateur himself achieves the glory of a creator. He or she becomes the master of the world created by Him. Even God himself had no control over His world.

In this context, Patnaik quoted a sloka of poet Bhartruhari:

*Ambojini vana nivas vilasameb  
Ha sasya hanti nitaran kupito vidhata  
Natwasya dugdha jalabbeda bidhou pratisthan  
Vaidagdhya kirtimahabartu mayang samarthab*

To put it simply, it means that if God gets angry He can burn the lotus cluster in which the swan lives but He cannot destroy the swan's natural talent of separating milk from water. In a similar vein, litterateurs have never been subservient to God.

The only reason I quote from this lecture by Patnaik is that he is probably among a handful of litterateurs of Odisha who can deliver a speech for more than an hour in chaste Odia. He does not use any English word during such addresses.

Patnaik had inaugurated and addressed the Festivals of Literature held in later years at Rourkela, Balasore, Balangir, Paralakhemundi, Keonjhar, Sambalpur, Baripada and Khadiala. He had also inaugurated the Festival of Literature held in 1989 at the Soochana Bhavan at Bhubaneswar And on all these occasions, thousands of people gathered to listen to him.

I have no hesitation in saying that one of the chief attractions of these Festivals of Literature organized by the Lekhaka Sammukhya was Janaki Babu. People just wanted to listen to his address. These festivals attracted many litterateurs and several others waited expectantly for the festival each year. An amusing event took place at the Sunabeda Festival. Delegates were arriving at Sunabeda by bus from all over the State. All the buses had arrived by 1.30 in the morning of 24 December. I was staying in one of the rooms in the first floor of the guest house of the Mig Factory and at 2 in the morning as I was about to go to sleep, someone knocked on my door. The caller said that he was from the reception. He informed me that about a dozen litterateurs had sent for me and that they were waiting at the bus stand. They had not disclosed their names but they were from Bhubaneswar and Berhampur. I was feeling extremely sleepy and I wondered whether I should go or not. However, I got dressed and left for the bus stand in a car provided by the reception.

At the bus stand a strange scene greeted me. There was a bonfire in the middle of the bus stand, its flames leaping high. With unsteady feet a group of half-naked persons were dancing around it to the tune of *Cheti chaturi chahinla nishi nase* —that immortal song of Upendra Bhanja. I enjoyed this primal representation of literature for a while. I was in the car and from there I saw that most of the people were in their shorts. But when I recognized each of them I burst out laughing. Eight eminent litterateurs, Dr. Soubhagya Mishra, Dr. Phani Mohanty, Dr. Haraprasad Parichha Patnaik, Harihar Mishra (the poet), Prof. Harihar Dash of Berhampur University (the story writer), Prof. Prafulla Mohanty, Prabhat Mohapatra and Dash Benhur had gathered there by that bonfire, dancing away

merrily. All of them were educationists, each one a pathfinder in Odia literature and established in his own field.

They looked towards me when they heard me laughing. I had to get down from the car and when he saw me, Soubhagya shouted, 'The culprit is here!' Hara came up to me and said, "Bari Bhai, did you call us here to make us sleep on stacks of straw? We will show those stacks of straw to Janaki Babu when he arrives tomorrow." I answered, "Why are you talking nonsense? Do you think star hotel facilities are available here for 500 people?" What happened was that straw had been spread in a hundred new houses constructed by the Mig Factory. This had then been covered with tarpaulins and mattresses had been placed on them. This arrangement was made because of extreme cold. However, after that little entertainment was over, I took everyone to the guest house where two double bedded rooms were still vacant and in those two rooms I put all of them together. Such was the charm of that Festival of Literature.

Soon after, I went off to sleep but someone again knocked on my door at 6.30 in the morning. I opened the door in an irritated mood only to find Mitrabhanu, son of Surendra Mohanty, standing outside. He said that his father had sent for me. Surendra Mohanty himself was sitting on the beautifully manicured lawn. Dew drops were glistening on the grass and the first rays of the sun made the surrounding captivating. Radhamohan Gadnaik, Chintamani Behera, Soubhagya Mishra, Srinibas Udgata, Binod Nayak were all there, sitting with Surendra Mohanty.

In fact, Janaki Babu had requested Surendra Babu on our behalf to come to Sunabeda for the Festival. Prior to leaving for Sunabeda, Surendra Babu had told me that he was going there only because of Janaki Babu but I was supposed to take care of him once he landed there. I had reassured him about the

arrangements. It was difficult for him to travel from Kataka to Sunabeda by car but he had travelled the distance as he could not say no to Janaki Babu.

When I saw so many stars of Odia literature congregating at one place I went out to the lawn covering myself with a shawl. I wished everyone and told Surendra Babu, “Sir, I was aroused from a nice sleep.” Surendra Babu said, “Barendra, you’ve been sleeping throughout the night and dreaming of the success of the Festival of Literature. I haven’t been able to sleep for a moment. I haven’t had a drop of water to drink since I arrived. How do I go to the Inaugural Ceremony? Has Janaki Babu arrived?” I could only reply that I would make some arrangement for refreshments right away, which I did and Mitrabhanu looked after the details.

Janaki Babu, too, had arrived and the Festival of Literature at Sunabeda was a huge success. The next festival was held at Rourkela. More than 500 litterateurs gathered at the Civic Centre. The third festival was held at Balasore. Every successive festival was organized on a larger scale and was attended by more people. Two eminent novelists of Bengal attended the festival at Balasore thus making it more impressive. They were Bimal Mitra and Shankar. Bimal Mitra was the chief guest at the first session along with Janaki Babu while Shankar was the chief guest of the evening session. After lunch, some of us were sitting with Bimal Mitra. Manorama Mohapatra, the editor of *The Samaj*, Bibhuti Patnaik, Raj Kishore Ray, Ramachandra Mishra the playwright, and Achyutananda Pati were there besides me. Bimal Mitra then conceded that he had no idea that our Chief Minister was such a learned man. He said that it was natural for him to speak fluently in Odia but it was wonderful to hear him quote Sanskrit *slokas* too and explain them so lucidly. He said that he would talk about it at Kolkata. Bimal Mitra said that Janaki Babu was



one of the most learned men in Indian politics. When I asked him why he resigned from his job in the Railways, he replied that when his novel *Kadi Diye Kinlam* was published in 1956, it became so popular that he received a royalty of Rs. 20,000. And when he received three years' salaries from one book, it was obvious that he resigned from the job. He said that he received a royalty of four to five lakh rupees now from a book. But he said that his in-laws took about one lakh rupees out of that. When I expressed my amazement at his generosity towards his in-laws, he said that he was forced to part with the money and that no generosity was involved in it. I said it was his greatness that he helped his in-laws to such a degree. When I asked him about the name of his father-in-law, he answered, 'Government of India, i.e. the Income Tax Department of the Government of India!' All of us burst out laughing.

An untoward situation unfolded in the field of Odia literature in the early eighties. The publishers and book sellers of Kataka decided to publish text books instead of books containing stories, novels, poetry and essays. It was March 1984 and the Budget Session of the Assembly was going on. One day, some of the eminent publishers of Kataka including Pitambar Mishra, Abhiram Mohapatra, Sahadev Pradhan, Govind Chandra Patra and Nuri Mishra telephoned me at the press lounge and asked me to meet them at the gate of the Assembly. I went to meet them and brought them inside. They wanted to meet the Chief Minister to tell him that they would stop the publication of books. I reassured them and asked them to meet the Chief Minister first. So when the Chief Minister returned to his chamber, I took all of them to him. They demanded that central purchases of text books for libraries of schools and colleges should be made in the same way as was done for the Raja Ram Mohan Roy Library. Sitakanta Mohapatra, the Education

Secretary, was summoned but he was not willing to make central purchases. He said that it would create problems with the distribution of the books. The Chief Minister persisted and asked him to find a way out. He said that a committee should choose the books and prepare a list of the same for the libraries of schools and colleges. It would be mandatory for all schools and colleges to buy the books from the concerned publishers according to that list. Library grants would be withheld for the errant schools and colleges. At the time, Rs 5,00,000 was being provided to the schools and various amounts were being sanctioned in favour of different colleges towards this end. The publishers agreed to the proposal and we came out of Janaki Babu's chamber feeling immensely grateful to him.

Book fairs were an important development in the field of Odia literature during the Chief Ministership of Janaki Babu. The first Bhubaneswar Book Fair was held in 1985 under the aegis of the National Book Trust and Lekhaka Sammukhya. Janaki Babu inaugurated the book fair while Lokanath Bhattacharya, the director of the NBT, was the chief speaker. The Bhubaneswar Book Fair ushered in the era of book fairs all over the State. The silver jubilee function of book fairs in Odisha was held last year. Janaki Babu attended each of the book fairs from the first till the last and I am sure he will be attending all the book fairs held in the future as well.

The publishers and book sellers wait expectantly for the arrival of Janaki Babu at each book fair. Publishers from Kataka and people associated with the NBT and the Sahitya Akademi often ask me about the day of Janaki Babu's visit. Janaki Babu always peruses and buys new books from every book fair.

Samaresh Basu, the unchallenged novelist of Bengali literature, had attended the book fair held in the year 1988 as

the distinguished guest while Janaki Babu inaugurated it. Two of my books had been published that year. One was a collection of stories titled *Klanta Nakshatra*. The other was the translated version of *Shamba*, a novel written by Samaresh Basu under the pseudonym Kalakuta. Janaki Babu released the translated book at the request of Samaresh Babu. Samaresh Babu also requested Janaki Babu to read excerpts from the book. I believe the book ranks among the best of Bengali novels.

Samaresh Babu told Janaki Babu that he was writing three novels based on the forests of Odisha. He said that he had seen more forests in Odisha than most people and expressed the desire to visit Odisha again if his health permitted. Janaki Babu declared in the meeting that he was requesting Samaresh Babu to visit Odisha again. He also assured that all arrangements would be made for Samaresh Babu's comfortable visit irrespective of whether he continued as the Chief Minister or not. In his address, Samaresh Babu said, "I have attended several meetings all over India. I have shared the dais with many heads of states and nations. But I have never received such an open invitation from anyone else. The reason is that Janaki Babu is not just a Chief Minister or a statesman. He is a litterateur and a journalist first and a political person and Chief Minister next. This is the difference between him and other chief ministers. I accept Janaki Babu's invitation. I'll accept his hospitality next year if I'm in good health. I thank Janaki Babu from the core of my heart." Samaresh Babu passed away ten days after returning from Odisha.

This essay would not be complete if I do not mention another event. The members of the Lekhaka Sammukhya were invited by the Viswa Bharati in June 1986 for an interaction with the Professors and students. Prof. Nimai Sadhan Basu, the eminent historian and Vice Chancellor of Viswa Bharati, had

also invited Janaki Babu to this meeting. Nimai Sadhan Babu entrusted me with the responsibility of persuading Janaki Babu to agree to accept the invitation. Prof. Khageswar Mohapatra was the Head of the Odia Department as also the Principal of Viswa Bharati at the time. Janaki Babu accepted the invitation to come to Shanti Niketan. Khageswar Babu was also a member of the Lekhaka Sammukhya and he was the chief organizer of the meeting at Viswa Bharati. Thirty five litterateurs including me went to Shanti Niketan by a special bus and Janaki Babu went there the next morning by the State Government plane. Around 11.30 in the morning, a meeting was held in Uttarayan which was attended by Professors from all the departments of the Viswa Bharati University and also by a few eminent litterateurs of Bengal. Nimai Sadhan Basu presided over the meeting. Annada Shankar Ray, eminent litterateur of Odisha and one of the stalwarts of the *Sabuja Yuga* was the chief attraction of the ceremony.

Soon the meeting started and after the introductory lecture of Satakadi Babu, when Nimai Babu requested Janaki Babu to deliver his address, the first sentence uttered by Janaki Babu somewhat jolted the audience. For he had started his lecture in Sanskrit! After delivering his lecture for about half an hour in flawless Sanskrit, he translated it into impeccable English. He established how ancient the Indian literature and various regional languages were and went on to say that Sanskrit was the mother of all languages. Everyone present had been charmed by the proficiency of Janaki Babu over both Sanskrit and English.

Annada Shankar Ray followed Janaki Babu and said, “No one in Indian politics could be compared to Janaki Babu. I’m not only amazed but also extremely pleased with the way he delivered his lecture on Indian literature in both Sanskrit

and English. I am happy because there is such a learned Chief Minister in Odisha, the State where I was born. Though I am older to him in age, I respect his wisdom and salute him.” The speech of Annada babu had greatly pleased us that day for we all were proud of Janaki Babu.

I, however, have no desire to discuss the success or failure of Janaki Babu as a Chief Minister. It’s true that he had kept his rivals at bay for a long time in occupying the centre stage in Odisha politics though I am not going to discuss the pros and cons of that. Rather, his contribution to Odia literature will make people remember him forever. Introduction of Odia in the State’s administration showed his resoluteness. Janaki Babu would be remembered for his decision to introduce Odia in all administrative work of the State and for adhering to it until the end of his tenure.

My good wishes are always there for him. I pray to God for his long life!

\* \* \*

## Janaki Ballav Patnaik & Publishing in Odia

Abhiram Mohapatra ♦

**P**olitical leader, litterateur, and scholar. Janaki Ballav Patnaik is indeed a multifaceted personality. Well-conversant in politics and administration, he has an unusual foresight. The mantra from the Upanishad, *chareibeti*, meaning move forward, can aptly describe his life's success mantra. And yes, he has used this mantra to inspire people not just in Odisha but across the country.

Politics aside, Patnaik is an ardent lover of the Odia language and literature. A writer and a critic himself, Patnaik's discourses on literature are scholarly. His learning and mastery over Sanskrit has helped him become a prolific writer with great depth. His knowledge of the country's religious and spiritual ethos has contributed to his powerful oratory skills. Added to

---

♦ Abhiram Mohapatra is a well-known publisher in Odisha

that, he was lucky to have a father who was a Pundit and a man of letters.

There are many people, who, once settled in jobs, forget the need to read books. Only the worthy know that books are friends for life, like sunshine in the day time and lamps at night. Patnaik is a real lover of books. I have seen him visiting book stalls and buying books during book fairs at Bhubaneswar. I am told, during his visits outside the State, once his official work is over, he would rush to the bookshops. He has a rich library where he spends time during leisure.

As such, Patnaik has always advocated the need for libraries to come up in large numbers in Odisha for local people to make use of them. At least they should read the *Bhagabat* of poet Jagannath Das that had kept the Odia language alive during the darkest moments in its history. Its language is so simple that it had won the hearts and minds of the Odia people for generations.

Keeping this wider readership in view, he made use of the schemes of the Raja Rammohun Roy Library Foundation. It is a Central Government Organization aimed at establishing libraries in rural areas. This organization gives corresponding grant to add to the funds provided by the State Government for purchase of books. As Chief Minister, he had enhanced State funding for purchase of books to be distributed among rural libraries. Due to this step, more books were published and both writers and publishers were greatly encouraged. New libraries also came up throughout the rural areas of the State.

In the devastating cyclone of 1982, many parts of Odisha were affected. Loss of life and property in the coastal areas was enormous. All educational institutions in the coastal areas were affected and libraries were washed away. Patnaik came to the rescue. Besides generous building grants, an amount of Rs 1

crore was set apart for the purchase of books for the libraries. That acted as a great incentive to the publishers. Funding for purchase of books by the State library, departmental libraries, particularly by the district libraries run by the Public Relations Department, and libraries supported by the Education Department was considerably enhanced.

Publishers generally stuck to publication of text books. Only few books of reputed writers were published as people's reading habit was limited and there was no market for general publications. He therefore introduced purchase of books, other than text books, on a large scale by the Government and persuaded the publishers to bring out more and more books by writers in general. He also made it a point that writers should be paid their royalty before the Government purchases books from individual publishers. One significant contribution of Patnaik was his sustained support to the long-term publication of the voluminous Odia encyclopedia, *Jnanamandala*.

In a nutshell, the goal of Janaki Ballav Patnaik as Chief Minister was to see that the Government comes forward to help the writers and publishers in a big way so that in the midst of the craze for English, people's love for their own language is kept alive. Patnaik's services to his mother tongue will be forever remembered.

\* \* \*



## Janaki Ballav Patnaik's Nirbachita Prabandha Sankalana

Rabi Singh ♦

**J**anaki Ballav Patnaik's name emerges as a distinguished architect of modern Odia literature. He is a poet, an eloquent speaker, translator, journalist and essayist in the same vein. *Nirbachita Prabandha Sankalana*, a 300-page book authored by him, was released during the Bhubaneswar Book Fair in 1997. Published by Vidyapuri Publishing House of Kataka, the book consists of 33 essays, both long ones and short.

Janaki Babu was at the helm of political power in the State at the time. However, had he not been in the field of politics and if politics would not have shadowed the incandescence of his creativity in the field of literature, Odia literature would have been enriched far more phenomenally. Yet, the sun of his

---

♦ Rabi Singh is an eminent Poet and Columnist and Former Vice-president, Odisha Sahitya Akademi

creativity is so bright that the lute of Binapani (Devi Saraswati, the goddess of learning) has broken into a lilting tune whenever that sun has revealed itself through the opening of the clouds of politics. Needless to say, as a critic I have all along been a detached admirer of intellect, poetic excellence and wisdom. Janaki Babu has stirred up several controversies and is always in the thick of controversies because he has never compromised with the prevalent social system and has always been a ruthless literary critic. But he is calmed when such a book as the said essay collection falls into his lap. The reason is that for someone like me who has been a critic for the last four decades, Janaki Ballav Patnaik is an exception. He accepts the lashes of the whip aimed at his writings as fragrant garlands. His scholarship, wisdom, fine poetic excellence and eloquence in speech are responsible for this. This is amazing indeed. The political world of Janaki Ballav is beyond my 'Laxmanrekha' as a critic. I have neither stepped beyond that 'Laxmanrekha', nor is there the slightest possibility of this critic setting foot in that domain. Janaki Ballav is a true litterateur at heart.

I have read his *Selected Essays* several times in the meantime as a detached critic. I've looked for incongruities, opportunism, duplicity, literary dishonesty or artificiality in language in the essays. This is my nature. But I've been disappointed. While repeatedly reading the essays, I've instructed Chief Minister Janaki Ballav Patnaik to stand back on the other side of that 'Laxmanrekha'. I've never been overawed by the accoutrements of his office.

Let me come to the point now. Each of the essays in the collection is a successful portrayal of our historical, cultural, literary and social thought process. The raised hammer of harsh prose is nonexistent. Rather, the language is simple. The essays are on a variety of subjects like environment, history, religion,

society, politics, literature, etc. There is no doubt in the least that the essays would help in widening the horizon of the mind of the cultured reader. The mode of discussion, the style of writing, the examples, appropriate quotes, all these are par excellence.

It would not be inappropriate here to say that literature has all along provided inspiration to politics. The Russian Revolution and the French Revolution had been inspired by motivational literature. Early literature in India started with Valmiki's curse to the hunter. Also, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru would not be etched in the minds of the people because he was the Prime Minister of India. He would instead be remembered for his book *Discovery of India*. Likewise, Harekrushna Mahtab, the 'Chanakya' of Odisha politics, would not be remembered for his politics. Rather, he would be remembered for his *Sadhanara Pathe* and other literary works. Hence, literature is the inspiration for politics. My statement is substantiated by the essay 'Literature and Politics' contained in Janaki Babu's collection of essays, where he has written, "In a way, politics and literature are closely related to each other. Politics does not mean party politics. Politics represents the principles adopted for the governance of a country. Literature is similar to politics since both politics and literature strive to bring about a beneficial change in the society. Every living thing goes through change. But it is the duty of the litterateur as also the men in politics to make this change beneficial." (p.186)

It is clear from this statement that literature and politics are complementary to each other. But alas! Things have taken a different turn today as the people in politics only indulge in politicking. People who do not understand English equate a politician with a tout.

The essay titled 'Mangoes of Odisha' in the collection is strange but wonderful. I have never come across such an excellent piece about mangoes earlier. Quoting a Sanskrit *sloka*, Janaki Babu has written, "When the mango, the king of fruits, arrived on the scene, the jamun turned black with shame. The heart of the pomegranate burst. The grapefruit would have burst too but it held on to a root inside it for dear life to save itself somehow. The insides of the coconut were filled with water out of fright. Hence, it grew on top of the tree and not on the ground ..."

Janaki Babu has provided a lot of interesting information on the 1725 varieties of mangoes grown in Odisha and gone on to say, "Considering the numerous names given to the mango in different parts of the country, any one would be led to believe that this is the most popular fruit of India..." Simultaneously, he has also written on a grief-stricken note, "The mango trees in the forests have already been felled. There are no mango groves around. Mango groves are usually found in the villages. The Sanskrit name for these is 'Amrakunja'. But there are no more 'Amrakunjas' around today. The villages are dusty. The greenery of mango groves has turned into a dream. Earlier, there was an unspoken rule that everyone should plant a mango tree during his lifetime. And they did it not just so they could eat the fruits themselves but they did it for their children. But these days, it would seem that everyone is interested only in cutting down mango trees. No one plants a new tree at the place where an old one has died down. We think neither about this generation nor about the future generations." (p.44)

The essay has turned out to be lively because of Janaki Babu's passion for tree plantation and afforestation, his deep sense of grief over the death of the 'Amrakunjas' and his disenchantment with needless plantation.

The essay titled 'Historic Responsibility' is extremely important. 'Minority community' ordinarily refers to the people from the Muslim community but according to Marxist thinking, the bourgeois form the minority community in the society. They live on the wealth created by the proletariat and they exploit the majority in several ways to assert their authority over them. In his essay titled 'Historic Responsibility', Janaki Babu does not consider the Muslim community as the minority community. His opinion in this regard is as follows, "... Minority community does not mean minority faction or people speaking a language spoken by a few. They are instead the educated, civilized and progressive community of the society. They include teachers, litterateurs, philosophers, engineers, doctors, journalists, politicians and government employees. They are the minority when compared with the populace ..." (p.156)

The minority community is identified thus by Janaki Babu who goes on to say, "A country will positively be on the growth path if its minority community is aware of its glorious past and applies its mind to its future development ..."

But today, this minority community is extremely opportunistic, bankrupt and barren. Their thought process is adulterated and polluted. They are incapable of providing any guidance to the nation. Keeping this degeneration of the minority community in mind, Janaki Babu has indirectly pointed a finger at them very carefully, and lamented, "...a country can never develop where this minority community is beset with narrow mindedness, casteism, communal discord, regionalism and seizure of political power by hook or by crook." (p.156)

If we look at ourselves in a spotless mirror, we see the soot of degeneration settling gradually in our minds and yet, it cannot stifle our voices.

As a critic, I am more or less familiar with the end products of the literary genius that Janaki Ballav Patnaik is. A proper evaluation of Patnaik's contributions to Odia literature has not been done as yet. Nor does this piece attempt to do so. A proper evaluation of his literary works would be possible only when Janaki Babu writes his autobiography. I have requested him more than once to do so. But always, his stoic answer has been that it is not possible to do so until he retires from active politics. No one knows when he would retire from active politics. But his autobiography would help the readers and critics to make a fair assessment of his literature and wisdom. The reason is that Janaki Babu has gathered a great deal of experience and skill bypassing several hurdles in his life. These cannot be perceived in totality from his literary creations. These can be perceived only from his autobiography.

Be that as it may, the essays in the *Nirbachita Prabandha Sankalana* are not only useful but they also provide a lot of food for thought for the conscious mind. However, there are a few shortcomings in this collection. First, the book does not contain a preface signed by the author himself. There was a need to know the circumstances under which he had composed the essays. Secondly, the time of composition of the essays is missing. This is extremely important for a critic. And finally, I cannot resist the temptation to mention another extraordinary feat. The essays are based on extremely important events but no essay is encumbered with footnotes. There are no footnotes because the facts contained in the essays have been presented in a simple, inimitable style.

The collection should be read and discussed widely since our literature and culture are continuing on their way towards degeneration.

On the whole, each of the essays contained in this collection is a rare treat.

## Revival of Professional Odia Theatre

Ananta Mahapatra ♦

**M**ost of the Princely States of Odisha like Mayurbhanj, Bolangir, Kalahandi, Bonei, Bamanda, Keonjhar and Sonapur were patrons of performing arts. Although the rulers of these States had built auditoria in their palaces, it was only in 1905 that Raja Padmanav Dev of Paralakhemundi built the Padmanav Rangalaya and the first Odia play *Babaji* was written in 1877 by Jag Mohan Lala.

However, the earliest theatre, Radhakrushna, was started in 1927 by Banamali Pati at the village of Balanga. Although there are more than a dozen forms of regularly performing arts in Odisha like Pala, Daskathia, Chadheiya and Ghumura, modern Odia theatre has a recent history. Professional modern theatre groups started coming into the scene only by the forties.

---

♦ Ananta Mahapatra is a well-known Dramatist and Actor

Odisha had the unique distinction of having commercial theatres with full time artists, musicians and backstage helpers. Every evening, plays were staged by three professional groups in their own Annapurna Theatre auditoria of which one was at Puri and one at Kataka which began in 1949. Later, the second Annapurna Theatre at Kataka, Janata Rangamanch, started in 1953. However, there were many other groups which opened only to close down after a few plays. These were Rupasri Theatre, Bharati Theatre, Kalashri Theatre, the Annapurna Theatre at Berhampur and Ekamra Theatre at Bhubaneswar to name a few.

But the three Annapurna Theatre companies of Puri and Kataka continued till the seventies and drew much public attention. They produced legendary actors like Samuel Sahu (Babi), who was a household name and was a recipient of the President's Gold Medal (later Padma Award) in 1958-59. Others like Priya Misra, Durlav Singh, Master Mania, Pandey, Tima, Master Kasinath, Niranjana Satpathy, Manimala, Leela Dulali and Bhanumati were adored by the audience and are remembered even today. Some of the plays were staged for over 300 nights and playwrights like Bhanja Patnaik, Rama Chandra Misra, Kartick Ghosh, Bhubaneswar Mahapatra, Anand Sankar Das, Kamal Lochan Mohanty and Gopal Chhotray were writing ceaselessly to provide plays to theatre companies every month. Later on, Manoranjan Das, Bijoy Misra and Basant Mahapatra also wrote for them. But among all of them, Byomkesh Tripathy, who wrote and directed plays and acted for Annapurna Theatre in Puri till his last days, was an exception. He came from a well known and educated family and was trained in the Asian Theatre Institute, later National School of Drama (NSD).

However, it was Kali Charan Patnaik who pioneered the conversion of the Rasa Leela group into the first Professional



Theatre at Kataka in 1942, naming it Odisha Theatre. He was thus considered the founder of professional theatre in Odisha. He had an unusual ability of writing plays, composing songs and dances and directing. He contributed to a large extent towards the recognition of the Odissi Dance as a classical dance form, like Bharat Natyam, Kathak etc.

It would be a surprise to many that the icons of Odissi Dance, Guru Pankaj Charan Das, Guru Kelu Charan Mahapatra and Guru Deba Prasad Das started their careers in the commercial theatres of Annapurna Theatre of Odisha first as comedians and later as dancers and Dance Directors before becoming famous as pioneering Gurus. They had stints in the late sixties as Dance Directors in the Janata Rangamanch.

While the professional theatre was losing ground because of the advent of cinema, television and stereo-type plays in the seventies, the Group Theatre movement like the IPTA (Indian People's Theatre Activity) was started by Anant Mahapatra on 11 July 1964, with the formation of a group called Srujani to stage relevant plays. The plays that Srujani staged on a regular basis every Saturday and Sunday at Nari Seva Sangha opened a new vista for theatre in Odisha.

One well known personality who was impressed with the productions and dedication of the Group Theatre was Janaki Ballav Patnaik, who was then the Editor of the *Prajatantra*. Years later, when he became the Chief Minister of Odisha in 1980, he initiated a movement for the cultural revival in the State. Many new music institutions were established such as the Odissi Research Centre and the Bibhuti Bhusan College of Fine Arts. Besides, the Konark Dance Festival and an annual Jatra Festival were started, along with the revival of the shadow play called *Ravan Chhaya*. There was a spurt in publication activities of the Sahitya Akademi, Lalit Kala Akademi and the Sangeet Natak

Academy. The Urdu Academy was also established at that time along with emphasis on Odia being made the official language of the State. Being an erudite scholar and connoisseur of arts and literature, he was able to identify and promote talents in all spheres of education and culture.

Unfortunately, after being in existence of hardly 40 years, modern theatre groups were in a moribund condition. The commercial theatre at Kataka and Puri had by then practically closed and revival of the professional theatre in the nineties started with a determined effort to prove that Odia theatre can be compared with any modern theatre across India.

When I had the privilege of meeting the Chief Minister on 10 January 1997 to seek lease of land for a group called Satabdira Kalakar, he asked me if the professional theatre could be revived. I was amazed that the Chief Minister was still nostalgic about the unique tradition of Odia professional theatre. Right at that moment, I assured him that the professional theatre could be revived with a new vision if the Government gave an auditorium and provided a capital and regular grants like the British Arts Council. His instant assurance to give Bhanja Kala Mandap on a long term lease for revival of modern theatre and regular staging of dramas raised my spirit. I soon met him with a feasibility profile for the revival of professional theatre, explaining my vision of modern Odia play and theatre. I do not know how many people would have this privilege of discussing the pros and cons of a theatre revival with the head of the State. I knew most of the theatre people in India at that time like Tendulkar, Mohan Rakesh, Panikar, Jabar Patel, Girish Karnad, B.V. Karanth, Rajendranath and of course Sambhu Mitra, Utpal Dutta, Tapas Sen and a host of other theatre personalities from Calcutta.

I submitted the proposal for the revival of the modern Odia theatre and floating of the Utkal Rangamancha Trust on

31 January 1997 and waited for the Government's action. To my surprise, on 26 February 1997, Chief Secretary R.K. Bhujabal informed me that he has instructed D.N. Padhi, Secretary, Department of Culture, to formalize the grant of lease of Bhanja Kala Mandap, and on 8 April 1997, I received a letter from the Joint Secretary, asking for registration of the Trust. Thereafter, at a meeting held in this regard on 27 August 1997, D.N. Padhi confirmed that decision had already been taken by the Chief Minister to grant our lease and the order would be issued soon. Finally the agreement of lease of Bhanja Kala Mandap was signed by Ajit Tripathy, Director, Department of Culture and myself as the Managing Trustee of Utkal Rangamanch Trust. That such a quick decision could be taken by the Government was unimaginable. But a visionary Chief Minister made it possible.

Thus, from the first day of May 1999, regular shows were staged every Friday, Saturday and Sunday with *Mahamaya Opera*. The *Mahamaya Opera* was staged for six weeks, after which, *Manik Jodi*, which was staged for over 300 nights at Annapurna Theatre in Kataka in the sixties, was staged here again. Janaki Babu himself had come to see this and was much impressed by the revival of Odia theatre. The same Utkal Rangamanch was chosen by the SAARC Secretariat for participating at the first Women Theatre Director's Festival at Bhanja Kala Mandap, Bhubaneswar, from 3-5 December 2005.

Utkal Rangamanch staged 16 plays till 2005, each play for 20-30 nights, after which the Government did not renew the lease of Bhanja Kala Mandap. All the efforts, energy and funds put into the revival of modern Odia theatre went in vain. Posterity will seek an answer to this but Janaki Babu's contribution will always be remembered.

## The Odissi Research Centre

Kumkum Mohanty ♦

**A**n amazing quality of Indian classical dance is its resilience and Odissi dance is a glowing example of this quality. Odissi stepped into the map of Indian classical dance in 1965 and within the next three decades it regained its lustre, brilliance and elegance. Owing to the zeal and efforts of some gifted Gurus, scholars, critics, supporters of art and tradition, Odissi dance got a new lease of life. It regained its position among the major classical dance forms of India and became a part of the international dance scene.

Padma Bhusan Guru Kelu Charan Mohapatra, along with his two sincere disciples and Pandit Bhubaneswar Mishra, started earnest research on ways to expand the repertoire and establish this dance form at par with other major forms.

---

♦ Kumkum Mohanty is an eminent Dancer, exponent of Odissi dance and former Director, Odissi Research Centre.

Some serious work relating to this went on at the residence of this author's father and in Sanjukta Panigrahi's house with Raghunath Panigrahi as a vocal support. Major performances of Odissi dance took place throughout the country and performances outside the country were sponsored by the ICCR. Soon the number of shows and performances shot up, Odissi became very popular and students thronged to Guruji's house to learn this classical dance form. Privately, a lot of complicated rhythmic compositions were done but Guruji gradually started staying outside Odisha and Odia boys and girls did not get the scope to learn from him.

Many new creations were done in my house but there was no vocabulary or method to keep them on record. Video cameras and other electronic gadgets were not available. Wonderful dance-dramas were choreographed and produced by Kumar Utsab Samitis but none of these were documented. The basic structure of the Odissi dance system was in a shambles. Various teachers taught the grammar of this dance in various forms, eventually leading to the birth to the Odissi Research Centre.

A scheme for the codification, documentation, notation and dissemination of the Odissi dance form was made by me and submitted to Government of Odisha. The scheme included the major Gurus of Odissi Padma Bhusan Kelu Charan Mohapatra, Pandit Bhubaneswar Misra and Pandit Balakrishna Dash, a Sanskrit scholar, an Odia scholar, a mardal player, an assistant dance teacher and others. I was brought on deputation to work in the Odissi Research Centre under the Government of Odisha and was posted as Director, Department of Culture. However, the work could not start due to lack of funds. I myself never wanted to work as an officer of the Government of Odisha though. I sincerely wanted to have the Gurus under one roof

with Governmental support and to do the work with their aid. My hopes were shattered when the scheme did not work.

But J.B. Patnaik, the then Chief Minister, a litterateur, supporter of art and tradition and a scholar in Odia as well as in Sanskrit, approved of the scheme and ordered to start the work at once. Since there was no place to house the Centre, a hall was given in the Archive Building by A.N. Tiwari, the then Secretary, Culture, to start the work. Thus with a simple *pooja* on 24 February 1984, the Odissi Research Centre was founded with Guru Kelu Charan Mohapatra and Pandit Balakrishna Das as the instructors and myself in charge of the office. Two of the three officials of the Directorate of Culture were deputed to manage the office work. J.B. Patnaik went out of the way to bring Pandit Bhubaneswar Misra on deputation from the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting to join the veteran group to work on the research project.

Serious work started on the project and seminars were conducted on the grammar of Odissi dance. Living Devadasis, Gotipua Maestros, Gurus like Pankaj Charan Das and Deba Prasad Das and senior dancers like Dr. Minati Misra, Priyambada Hejmadi, Sonal Mansingh, Sanjukta Panigrahi as well as many junior teachers took part in these seminars. The participants of these seminars discussed how they had learned this dance form and these discussions gave birth to the book *Odissi Dance Path Finder*. This book contains the real technique of the Odissi dance. No identification of foot position, foot movement and body movement as such had existed earlier. Physical demonstrations were given to the sketch artist to enable him to draw the foot positions, movements etc. and he drew them accordingly. No photographs were given in the book lest it becomes personal. After the sketches were made, a team of Gurus, Sanskrit Pandit

Nilamani Misra, Bhagaban Panda, Sanjukta and me sat for hours together, processing the nomenclature for the sketches.

In the mean time, profuse documentation of the Gotipua dance and the Mahari dance started with a video-camera bought by the Director, Department of Culture. Nidhi Rana, video cameraman of the Public Relations Department, was brought on deputation to work with us. Since J.B. Patnaik was also the Minister of Culture during that time, things moved very smoothly and the basic necessary infrastructure was provided. During *Jhulan Jatra*, all the Gotipua groups used to congregate at Puri in various *Mathas* or temples. I and Guruji along with the cameraman spent nights and nights in the different temples of Puri and documented the dance and history of their Gurus. Harapriya Devi and Kokila Mahari, two of the Devdasis then living at Puri, were invited to the Centre for a documentation of their dance. Arrangements were made for their stay and during their stay at the Centre, Kokila Prava was convinced to perform a pure dance item with her own mardal syllables which was not only unique but also a direct proof of the existence of the present day Odissi dance form.

Soon video and audio cassettes were required and the Director, Department of Culture called for quotations and the lowest priced cassettes were supplied. The interference of the then Secretary, Culture was highly essential during that time and Samar Mohapatra made a lasting contribution to the scheme and according to his suggestion, The Odissi Research Centre was converted to an autonomous body on 15 July 1986. As its Chairman, Patnaik held board meetings and the first decision taken was on the propagation of Odissi dance and new creations for the repertoire. Advertisements seeking dancers were published and soon, 10 boys and girls (only Odias) were selected, on a monthly scholarship of rupees 750 each and

based on the Gurukula system, their training was finalized. Along with dance, dancers had to learn music, Sanskrit, Odia literature, rhythm, notation writing etc. The training became so successful that most of the famous dancers and Gurus of today belong to this batch of students of the Odissi Research Centre which started in 1987.

Meanwhile, equal importance was given to Odissi music as well. Chairman and Chief Minister J.B. Patnaik took personal interest to uplift Odissi vocal music on to the map of Indian classical music. In this regard, he insisted that Odissi vocal and instrumental music should be supported, serious training be imparted and research be done in this field. Pandit Bhubaneswar Misra started training students on how to expand a particular Raag and also showed how the Odissi Raag is to be expanded. The students of the 1987 batch were really good and hard working and J.B. Patnaik wanted to bring the best singers under the Odissi Research Centre. He also supported them financially and gave them scope to improve their style of singing.

As Chairman of the Centre, he arranged an evening of Odissi vocal recital in the Kamani Hall, New Delhi, which was presided over by the Vice-President of India. Hariprasad Chourasia, Pandit Bhubaneswar Misra, Guru Kelu Charan Mohapatra and the Odissi singers of the Centre presented a brilliant Odissi vocal recital at Kamani that day. It was a grand success and all the newspapers noted that Odissi Vocal Music definitely should be the third system of classical music in India. All this could be possible only because of the support and interest of the Chairman and Chief Minister of Odisha, who even attended the rehearsals before the show. It was a grand success and the documentation of the programme on a CD is



still available in the Archives of the Odissi Research Centre (ORC).

In the next board meeting, the Chairman agreed to open a Repertoire Company in the ORC. Those students who were trained as interneers and did well were allowed to join the Repertoire Company with a scholarship of Rs. 1000 and were trained to become solo-dancers with rigorous practice and learning of new-items.

J.B. Patnaik's lasting contribution towards Odissi dance and Odisha was the setting up of an open-air auditorium at Konark with the temple as the back-drop and initiating the Konark Dance Festival by the Odissi Research Centre in 1989. Today, the Konark Dance Festival is one of the most famous dance festivals in India and the auditorium itself is unique in its design. Nowhere in the country does one see such an auditorium in front of a temple and this was possible only due to J.B. Patnaik's personal supervision.

The method of the Odissi Research Centre—documentation, codification, dissemination and notation—calls for highly technical work which was to be done through the vision of dance. Being an artist himself, J.B. Patnaik understood the method and whole heartedly supported and encouraged the team to work together and bring out the basic techniques of Odissi dance through books. He also aided the preservation and protection of these techniques through a unique Archive in the Centre which by now had got its own building on a five acre plot of land given by the Government of Odisha when J.B. Patnaik was the Chief Minister.

## Contemporary Art in Odisha

Dr. Dinanath Pathi ♦

**A**ccording to our Shastras, establishment of dharma in a monarchy depends on the conduct of the king. This concept of monarchy is more or less true in a democracy as well. As the king and his officers form the basis of the ideals of a monarchy, the ideals of a democracy are formed by the ministers, administrators, industrialists and traders. In the days of yore, the one who controls and manages these aspects was the king, and today it is the Prime Minister or the Chief Minister.

If the king does not follow his dharma or the chief minister deviates from principles, it has an adverse effect on the society and on the subjects. Development is arrested. If we look at things in today's context, the chief minister's vision activates

---

♦ Dr. Dinanath Pathi is an eminent Painter and Writer and former Secretary, Lalit Kala Akademi

and inspires the people and the society. As Chief Minister, Janaki Ballav Patnaik's vision greatly inspired the people of Odisha. He was not only efficient but was also a man of good taste, a lover of art, an orator and a poet. I am known to Janaki Babu not only as a Government official, but also as an artist, a writer and a researcher.

On the basis of this relationship, I would like to state some facts that could be helpful in the study of contemporary art in Odisha. The first Government College of Art was established at Khallikote in Ganjam district in 1957. In spite of the natural beauty of the Chilka lake and the quiet beauty of the Khallikote palace, the influence of the College was limited to the locality and the College did not do much towards the development of art in Odisha. Managed by the Department of Education, it languished under a weak administration and organizational deficiency. So there were frequent demands to shift it to Bhubaneswar. But an organization under the leadership of a few stalwarts of Ganjam like Biswanath Dash and Dibakar Patnaik kept resisting the idea of shifting the College. The demand and resistance finally took a political shape.

Considering the fact that the establishment of a second Government Art College at Bhubaneswar would satisfy the desire of the artists, we, along with renowned artist Bibhuti Kanungo, had met with the Chief Minister and requested him for the establishment of an Art College at Bhubaneswar. Sadly, Kanungo was no more when the college was founded. However, it was named after the great artist. I became the first Principal of the college. Soon after its establishment, the Bhubaneswar Art College carved a niche for itself at the national and international levels. About 10-15 alumni of this College are among the established artists in the country today. The College was nurtured during the tenure of Janaki Ballav Patnaik. Late Sudhanshu

Mohan Routray, a personal friend of the Chief Minister and the then Deputy Secretary, Department of Culture, was a well-wisher of the College. He saw to it that the Chief Minister's vision and progressive attitude were materialized and assured us of all support from the Government. Thus, the College was fortunate to have the Chief Minister's personal support and goodwill.

Though there were many renowned artists who were eligible for the post of Principal of the College on the basis of seniority, the Government appointed only active, efficient, and far-sighted persons as the Principal. I would like to put on record my sincere gratitude to Janaki Ballav for giving me the opportunity of shouldering the responsibility of this nascent Art College and working with the goodwill of the concerned Government officials. More than the position of the Principal, I was happy with the wonderful opportunity I got and the challenge I faced in giving a new direction to contemporary art education in Odisha and in trying to make the institution self-reliant.

The Golden Jubilee of the Odisha Museum was celebrated in 1984. Indira Gandhi, the then Prime Minister of India, inaugurated the celebrations. I was in charge of the decoration of the marquee and the exhibition and our students had decorated the floor space between the portico and the dais with the Odia *jhoti*. The motorcade of the Prime Minister finally arrived there and as soon as she came out of her car, the *jhoti* caught her eye. The Chief Minister was close by. We could see Indira Gandhi's delight reflected on her face as she saw a chain of *jhotis* in front of her. The Prime Minister was overwhelmed. "These *jhotis* remind me of Shantiniketan", she told Janaki Babu. The Prime Minister and the Chief Minister enjoyed the beauty of the *jhotis*. I was presented before the Prime Minister as she wanted to see

me and congratulated me and my students. The Prime Minister and the Chief Minister, I assumed, must have exchanged a few words on the activities of the College.

Another important event which coincided with the founding of our College was the establishment of the Rashtriya Lalit Kala Kendra at Kharavel Nagar in Bhubaneswar. Although it was not a Government project, the Government of Odisha had provided the Kendra with the land and contributed 50 per cent of its estimated cost. This happened while Janaki Ballav Patnaik was the Chief Minister. He laid the foundation of this Kendra on the very day of the inauguration of our College and that too on the same platform. He inaugurated the first phase of the Kendra's building after a few days. The Rashtriya Lalit Kala Kendra undertook various programmes on contemporary art. A number of renowned artists came to Bhubaneswar to participate in the various programmes of the Kendra. The skill of the Odia artists improved as they interacted with them and discussed their work. The development of Graphic Art, the most significant branch of contemporary art, has been possible owing to the contribution of this Kendra. Graphic art of Odisha was so far confined to wood carving and leno carving. It may not be an exaggeration to say that lithography and etching are the contributions of this Kendra to Odia art.

Janaki Ballav Patnaik nurtures a special love for the research and development of art and literature. I would like to list some significant writings, projects and seminars which he initiated in the interest of art. These include, the first book in English on Jayadev and Gita Govinda, my book on Saura Art which he had launched in Kolkata at the All India Camp organised by the Lalit Kala Akademi of Delhi, and the book on Oshakothi Festivity of South Odisha which was published by Indira Gandhi National Kala Kendra in collaboration with

the Reit Museum (Reitberg Museum is in Zurich, Switzerland). The appreciation in the special Odisha number published by the Swiss Air Gazette was also launched by him.

Let me elaborate these events a bit. I had edited an anthology of essays on Jayadev and *Gita Govinda* called *Jayadev and Gitagovinda in the Traditions of Orissa*, with the help of Bhagaban Panda and Bijaya Kumar Rath. When I requested the Chief Minister to launch the book, he readily agreed. The book was released with pomp and grandeur at the Harekrushna Mahtab State Library and the function was attended by eminent persons like Professor Manmath Nath Das, Secretary, Department of Culture, Rajendra Kishore Panda, Pandit Nilamani Mishra, Subas Pani, Bhagaban Panda, Director, Department of Culture, Bimalendu Mohanty, Chief Executive of Odishi Research Centre Kumkum Mohanty, Harischandra Dash, Rabi Narayan Dash and Mahesh Prasad Dash. Having launched the book, the Chief Minister assured that the Government of Odisha would buy some copies to encourage the publisher. Two hundred copies of the book were eventually purchased by the Government.

The next important event was the inauguration of the National Seminar organized by the Lalit Kala Akademi at the Eastern Zone Cultural Centre in Kolkata. At that time I was the Secretary of the Lalit Kala Akademi. I had invited the Chief Minister to inaugurate the event. He not only came over to Kolkata to inaugurate the conference of the artists and research scholars but also delivered a lecture on the art traditions of Odisha and launched my book on Saura Art of Odisha titled *The Painted Icon*. The participation of the Chief Minister of Odisha at a national level event on art boosted my esteem as well as the esteem of the Lalit Kala Akademi. Janaki Ballav never hesitated to encourage studies and research on Odia art.

During Janaki Babu's tenure as the Chief Minister, Dr. Erhard Fisher, Director of the Reit Museum of Switzerland, had come to conduct research on Oshakothi Art tradition. And when the Chief Minister declared Dr. Fisher as a State Guest, the work was made easier for us. I was grateful to the State Government for permitting me to work as his Research Associate. The research work was released in the form of a book titled *Oshakothi Festivity of South Odisha*. I had requested the Chief Minister to launch this book too. Needless to say, he attended the launch programme held at the Hotel Garden Inn and gave a brilliant lecture on folk art and traditions.

The fourth significant event was the publication of the special issue of the Swiss Air gazette on Odia culture. In its in-house magazine, which has a circulation of six lakh copies, the Swiss Air published 48 colourful pages on Odisha. I was one of the contributors to that particular issue among internationally renowned writers like Hermann Kulke, Thomas Donaldson, Marie-Louise Nabholz, Dr. Erhard Fisher, Barbara Fisher and Debala Mitra. That year, on my way back from Switzerland, I stopped at Delhi and showed the magazine to the officer in charge of Delhi Tourism. The officer was so impressed that he immediately informed this to Bibekananda Patnaik, the then Culture and Tourism Secretary. Bibekananda Patnaik asked me to come to the Secretariat straight from the airport and meet him in his office. Accordingly, I went to him with two copies of the magazine. The Secretary carried the copies with him and happily marched into the office of the Chief Minister. While I was asked to sit with the Personal Secretary to the Chief Minister, the magazines were carried to Janaki Ballav who was immensely happy to see them. He could guess that I must have brought it from Switzerland. He asked his men to call Padhi (even now he calls me 'Padhi') in and when I was presented before him,

he praised me profusely before his officers and instructed the Culture Secretary to send a commendation letter to Swiss Air. I do not know what happened at the lower level, but this letter of the Odisha Government never reached Switzerland.

\* \* \*



## Kalinga Studio: Golden Era of Odia Films

Batakrushna Tripathy ♦

Curtains fell on the era of silent movies with the screening of India's first talkie, *Alam Ara*, on 14 March 1931 at the Majestic theatre in Bombay. The world of movies had turned vibrant. Talkies were made in Bengali, Tamil and Telugu at a later stage. Ripples of the change were felt in Odisha, too, which soon joined the mainstream. Mohan Sundar Goswami, the legendary figure in Odia film history, brought this laurel for Odisha. He started making the first Odia movie *Sita Vivaha* in 1934 in association with Priyanath Ganguly, the owner of Kali Films of Calcutta. There were no facilities at the time for production of films in Odisha. And yet, overcoming several hurdles in completing the movie at Calcutta, Mohan Sundar had finally released it with splendor

---

♦ Batakrushna Tripathy is former IG and former Chairman of Odisha Film Development Corporation

at the Laxmi Cinema hall in Puri on 28 April 1936. The release and success of *Sita Vivaha* created an unforeseen enthusiasm among Odia filmgoers and others who had an interest in the art and culture of Odisha. However, no other film in Odia could be made for a long time, till 1949-50. Several people had made efforts in this direction during this period but nothing had materialized because of unfavourable situations and lack of encouragement. At the same time, many films made in Bengali, Tamil and Telugu during this period brought financial success, laurels and popularity to the film makers.

On an average, two movies in Odia were released in a year between 1950 and 1960 and five movies in a year were released between 1960 and 1970. All these movies were mostly produced in studios located in Calcutta, Bombay and Madras. Despite undergoing a great deal of hardship, producers could not make movies as they desired. They had to take the directors, music directors and singers with them and stay in expensive city hotels for months at a stretch. They were totally dependent on the mercy and moods of studio owners belonging to other states. The work could never be completed within the scheduled period. They had to put up with enormous cost overruns. As a result, they had to often compromise with the quality of the movies. Many producers never dared to make a second movie despite their expertise after the harrowing experience with the first movie. After the arrival of Odia movie directors like Govinda Tej, Nitai Palit, Sisir Mishra, Nagen Ray, Prashanta Nanda and others into the scene towards the end of the sixties, our producers were no longer dependent on directors from outside the State. And yet, considering the importance of a studio in the development of the film industry, the producers and directors of Odia movies had no other option at the time but to depend on the studios of other states. They had somehow managed to

keep the film industry alive although the number of films made every year was extremely small. On the other hand, during the same period, the film industry had flourished in other states. Compared with the hardship the producers had undergone, the number of good movies made in Odia was very few.

Efforts had been made at a personal level to build studios in Odisha. Raja Vikram Dev, the Zamindar of Jeypore, had set up the Vikram Studio at the foothills of Simachal Hills in 1933 with the help of a few Odia technicians for the production of Odia films. Vikram Dev was an eminent dramatist himself. He has made remarkable contributions to the art and culture of South Odisha. He had built the studio at Simachal and not at Jeypore because of communication and other ancillary facilities available there. From there, the city of Madras was closer than from other big cities of Odisha. Hence, it was easier to get technical knowhow and advice from Telugu and Tamil producers. Simachal was also the right place from the point of view of conducting business. However, Vikram Studio was closed down after five years. Not a single Odia film had been made there although a few Telugu pictures had been produced.

A few people related to film-making along with a few other intellectuals had met Dr. Harekrushna Mahtab, the then Chief Minister, in 1960 and requested him to get a film studio set up by the State Government. A meeting was held in this regard on 5 December 1960 at the Secretariat under the Chairmanship of the Chief Minister and it was decided to build a studio with the active cooperation between the Government and a few private entrepreneurs. It was proposed that the Government would contribute 51 per cent of the needed funds and the remaining 49 per cent would be contributed by the individuals. An estimate of nine lakh rupees was prepared for the purpose. Thus on 26 January 1961, the Chief Minister laid the foundation of the

Odisha Film Studio Limited at Khandagiri in Bhubaneswar. But with the collapse of Dr. Mahtab's ministry the same year in June, only the foundation laying brick was seen there for a long time. The succeeding Government showed no interest in this regard and the situation continued unchanged for a long time. Production of Odia films remained as slow as ever even though many artistes had, in the meantime, started excelling themselves in the fields of direction, acting and music composition.

In the mid-sixties, national and international awards were instituted to honour producers of movies made in regional languages. Such awards were also given to films based on regional culture and tradition as also to film artistes. In view of this, there were demands at various levels that the Government should provide incentives for Odia movies. Films based on Odia culture and authentic Odia stories such as Sri Lokanath, Amadabata, Mala Jahna, Matira Manisha, Ka, Ghara Sansar, Kanakalata, etc. received awards at the national level in the sixties and mid-seventies and they all had success at the box office. This gave the producers, directors and artistes of the Odia film industry a great deal of encouragement to pursue their profession. Many people showed interest in setting up cinema halls when they realized that Odia films were doing good business. This led to a few new cinema halls coming up in both rural and urban areas. The Government of Odisha set up the Odisha Film Development Corporation in 1976 because of encouragement given to regional cinema at the national level and also due to a persistent demand from several quarters inside the State for Odia cinema. But the response of the Government was poor and pathetic. The Corporation existed only for name's sake. In 1978 when Pradyumna Kumar Mishra was its administrator, only one clerk and one peon were appointed as

his staff. At one time, the Government even considered winding up the Corporation.

Then in 1980, Janaki Ballav Patnaik became the Chief Minister of Odisha. Since then, there have been many instances to show that success and prosperity come only at the right time and under the right leadership. Prominent people associated with the film industry became active when they found that the person at the helm of affairs was a cultured man and a lover of the arts. Under the leadership of people like Govinda Tej and Nitai Palit, representatives of the film industry met Chief Minister Patnaik. They discussed with him various aspects of the Odia film industry. The Chief Minister assured the representatives that he would take all possible steps to help develop the Odia film industry.

And sure enough, the Chief Minister immediately took some momentous decisions. He took three important steps as a result of which the Odia film industry achieved its desired growth within a very short time. First, cinema was declared as an industry and it came under the purview of the Industrial Policy Resolution. Second, it was decided that a studio would be built at Bhubaneswar and third, the Odisha Film Development Corporation was reorganized and properly funded.

In October 1980, the Chief Minister laid the foundation of the Kalinga Studio on 25 acres of land along the Bhubaneswar-Chandaka Road, adjacent to the scenic Khandagiri Hill. Construction of the studio was completed within 18 months, long before the scheduled date of completion and the Chief Minister inaugurated the Studio on 5 September 1982. A full-fledged studio could be completed in such a short time only because of the personal interest taken by the Chief Minister. On behalf of the State Government, the Odisha Film Development Corporation had signed an agreement with the famous L.V.

Prasad Studio of Madras for the construction of the studio as also for technical knowhow and provision of necessary equipments. Janaki Babu had personally made a request to Anand Rao, Managing Director of Prasad Studio, to help build a fully equipped studio. The studio came up in no time. The Chief Minister visited the studio from time to time to sort out any problem that came up during its construction. Provision was made in the studio for outdoor and indoor shooting with 16mm and 35mm cameras as also for editing, dubbing, mixing, background scoring, generator van and hi-tech video unit. A guest house was constructed inside the complex for the directors and artistes. In a few days, Kalinga Studio became famous in Eastern India as a full-fledged, modern studio. As a result, producers came from Assam, Bengal, Andhra and Bombay to produce films at the Kalinga Studio. Producers and directors even came from Bangladesh and produced films in Bengali. At one time, three Bangladeshi pictures were being made simultaneously in Kalinga Studio.

Aparna Sen, Buddhadev Dasgupta, Tapan Sinha, Bhupen Hazarika of Assam and Amol Palekar came to Kalinga Studio to produce their films. The studio became so famous that Buddhadev Dasgupta, the eminent Bengali film producer, had brought a tiger with him to produce the movie *Bagh Bahadur*. The picture had won the Swarna Kamal Award in the National Film Competition. Odia artistes came in contact with these eminent producers of the country and were inspired to produce good films. Artistes like Uttam Mohanty, Aparajita Mohanty, Mahasweta Ray and Bijoy Mohanty got a chance to act in Bengali and other films and earned a great deal of fame.

The income of the Studio continued to increase and by 1996-97, the studio started paying a minimum bonus to its employees. Many successful, artistic films based on Odia

lifestyle and culture were made after the Kalinga Studio was set up. These films had earned fame not only in India but overseas as well. An ultra modern colour processing unit was also set up in this studio complex. As a result, producers did not have to go outside the State for raw print and colour processing. Quality pictures could be made in the State itself at a low cost as all facilities were available inside the studio. The number of films made also increased significantly. Odia movies were shown for longer periods in the cinema halls as better pictures were made. On an average, six pictures were made in a year before the construction of the Kalinga Studio (1970-80). But after the studio came up, this number increased to fifteen on an average every year.

Declaring cinema as an industry was an important decision made by the State Government. Cinema was brought within the ambit of the industrial policy of Odisha in 1980. However, the Government of India accorded the same facility to films only in 1998—18 years later. Electricity cess was reduced when Cinema was accorded the status of industry. Banks and the Odisha State Financial Corporation provided ample loans at reduced rates of interest for production of films and construction of cinema halls. Entrepreneurs had to provide a margin of only 20 per cent to avail of loan facilities. As a result, more films were produced and more cinema halls were constructed. The State Government acted as the guarantor for the borrowers. There were only 119 cinema halls in Odisha in 1979. Between 1980 and 1990, the number more than doubled to reach 256. Subsidy was provided to producers for production of films. A subsidy of Rs. 1,00,000 was provided for black and white movies while Rs 1,50,000 was provided for films in colour. A surcharge of 20 paise was levied on tickets in rural cinema halls and 25 paise on tickets in urban cinema halls. The money

so collected was spent for the development of cinema through the Film Development Corporation. Funds were provided in State Plans for this purpose. A directive was given that every cinema hall in Odisha had to screen Odia movies for at least eight weeks in a year. Thus, all cinema halls were compelled to screen Odia movies.

Several other improvements were brought about in the film industry of Odisha between 1980 and 1990. The Fifth International Children's Film Festival was organized in Odisha during this period. Rajiv Gandhi, the then Prime Minister of India, had inaugurated the festival on 14 November 1987, in the Jawaharlal Nehru Indoor Stadium at Kataka. Regional film festivals were also organized several times during this period. Many highly educated young men and women entered the film industry during this period because of the prevailing favourable situation. They demonstrated their excellence in all aspects of film-making. Many of our actors and actresses got the opportunity to act in films made in other states. Indeed, it was a golden period for films and film-making. All this had been possible because of the personal interest taken by Janaki Ballav Patnaik.

It is a matter of regret that most of the cinema halls located in the coastal areas crumbled during the super cyclone in 1999. The owners of the halls received no incentives from the Government to repair the halls. There were 256 cinema halls before the super cyclone but the number dwindled to less than 150 afterwards. The Kalinga Studio had sustained heavy damage during the cyclone but no attention was given to put it back in shape. Even ordinary repair and daily cleaning was not done. As a result, the studio complex fell into disuse, overgrown with wild grass and plants. Herds of elephants from the Chandaka forest entered the complex and stayed there for several days. The hall



meant for indoor shooting was let out to ETV. The producers did not receive any subsidy and hence, they preferred making films in studios outside the State. Thus the days of grandeur of the Kalinga Studio were gone within a short span of time under a different Government which was callous and apathetic to arts and the culture of the State and the film industry in particular. The old glory days remains just a memory of a golden era!

Movies, after all, are a powerful medium of culture. While Hindi movies have contributed a great deal to the popularization of the Hindi language among the masses, movies in other languages similarly contributed to the language movements in those states. But the Kalinga Studio, which was once the cultural Konark of the State of Odisha for the film industry, today lies in ruins with a pathetic tale of negligence, just like the famous temple of yester years.

\* \* \*

## Patronage to Art

Govinda Tej ♦

**T**he year was around 1960. Janaki Ballav Patnaik was the editor of the *Prajatantra* and the Vice President of the National Music Association, the famous centre of art in Kataka. He had gone to Delhi on some work and while there, he had gone to see the Ramayan which had been presented there on behalf of the Indian Centre of Arts, in the form of a dance-drama. He was so impressed with that presentation that he called me when he returned and said, “Govinda Babu, they have presented an impressive dance-drama in Delhi on the basis of the Tulasi Ramayan. I am sending you to Delhi with a letter to the organizers. Please see that dance-drama yourself and present a similar one here on the basis of various Odia Ramayans. Only you can do it.”

---

♦ Dr Govinda Tej is a famous Dramatist, Director and Actor

I was closely related at the time with the National Music Association. I accepted his proposal and went to Delhi. I observed the performance closely and on my return it was decided to present one such Ramayan, in the form of a ballet in Odia, under the banner of the National Music Association. An open stage would be erected in the Barabati Stadium and the dance-drama would be presented under the aegis of Bisuva Milan organized by the Prajatantra Prachar Samiti. I produced the dance-drama on the basis of the Balaram Das Ramayan and the Bichitra Ramayan. Rehearsals were conducted with famous artistes of Odisha of that time. The famous violinist late Bhubaneswar Mishra and eminent flautist Hariprasad Chaurasia (now honoured with the Padma Vibhushana) provided the background and vocal music. Shyamamani Patnaik, the famous Odia singer, also participated. A three dimensional stage (two stages on the sides and one at the centre) was erected for the first time in Odisha in front of one of the galleries of the Barabati Stadium and the Ramayan ballet was staged. With the price of a ticket fixed at a rupee, the gallery filled in to capacity. A large number of people were clamouring outside for tickets as it happens with cricket matches now-a-days. Ramdhari Singh Dinkar, the famous Hindi poet and Member of Parliament, had graced the Bisuva Milan as the chief guest. It had been so successful that several demands came up to stage it again. But it had been organized only for the Bisuva Milana and the performance has never been repeated in Odisha. Ramdhari Singh Dinkar had been highly impressed with the presentation that day and praised it profusely. Janaki Babu had introduced me to him and said that I deserved all the kudos for the presentation.

Another experience was to popularize the Ravanachhaya, a rare and fading folk art. This was limited to one particular

village in Pallahara. Ravanachhaya had been presented at the Bisuva Milan after proper stage management and provision of good background music. Apart from being appreciated by the cognoscenti, Dr. Harekrushna Mahtab had profusely praised the performance as well. Janaki Babu had called me and put me in charge of the entire presentation. The reason I mention this is that art cannot prosper without patronage and this kind of patronage was seen in Odisha after a long time.

Earlier, kings and zamindars were patrons of art. Several art forms passed into oblivion in the name of modernity. A new awakening came up in the eighties just when the general interest in art had started to decline. Janaki Ballav Patnaik was the Chief Minister of Odisha at the time and he ushered a great movement for patronage of art. Earlier, dramas were enacted on a regular basis in Kataka at the Annapurna and Janata Theatres. However, these had been discontinued for lack of patronage. But when the Utkal Rangamancha Trust was formed through the initiatives of the Government, dramas were once again staged on a regular basis. Similarly, a number of evanescent folk arts were revived. I am talking again about Ravanachhaya which is an ancient folk art of the highest order depicting the characters in the *Ramayana*. In order to popularize it among the masses, a workshop was also held with the help of its artistes and organizers. Ravanachhaya was also popular in countries like Indonesia and Thailand. The Ghumura Dance and other folk dances too got a chance to be presented at the all-India level during this period when the arts received much patronage. The Ghumura Dance, which was highly praised by delegates from outside the country, was a hit during the 1982 ASIAD Games.

In the same vein, there was not a single film studio in Odisha and no incentives were offered to producers of Odia films even though the first Odia movie had been released way

back in 1934. Our producers, directors and artistes had to go and stay in the neighbouring states for months on end to get a new movie made as they were totally dependent on the studios outside the State. However, all these difficulties came to an end with the setting up of the Kalinga Studio in the eighties. With its colour processing laboratory and other equipments, it provided a convenient place to the movie makers of the State. This was not just a boon for the producers, directors and artistes of Odisha but also for producers and directors from outside the State. Famous directors and producers from other states came to produce their movies at the Kalinga Studio and Odisha came to be held in high esteem in the realm of film making. Improvements were brought about in movies. Cinema was declared as an industry and government grants were made available for construction of cinema halls. As a result, a large number of new halls came up in the State.

Today, Odissi Dance is famous throughout the world. Artistes come from other parts of India and abroad to learn this dance form. The Odissi Research Centre was established for the all-round development of Odissi Dance, particularly for producing an authorized grammar of this classical dance form and for further research on it. The Centre helped in making the dance form more enchanting and beautiful. In a way, there was remarkable progress in art and culture of Odisha during that period. J.B. Patnaik was an art lover of the highest calibre and a devoted patron of art and culture of Odisha. He was a pioneer in putting Odisha on the world map of art and culture.

But now, I feel that the presentation and encouragement of our art and culture have started taking a different turn. The spiritualism and consciousness of art are gradually on the decline. Traditions and culture seem to have been forgotten. The decadence is widespread. Nobody believes now that

practicing art involves dedication and devotion on the part of the practitioner. Art could only exist in an atmosphere of sincerity and cooperation among artists, due patronage, and above all, public appreciation for art. This can be ensured if the Government comes forward to encourage it by all means.

*Vinashrayam Na Vartante Kavita Vanita Lata.*

\* \* \*

## Development of Agriculture & Role of the APICOL

Dr. Jogesh Chandra Rout ♦

**O**disha is an agricultural State. No matter how much we may talk about industries or industrialization, agriculture cannot be ignored in Odisha as it is the State's mainstay.

Agricultural production had almost become stagnant in India at the time of Independence. The country moved around with a begging bowl to get rice, wheat and edible oil from other countries. It was in this backdrop that Mahatma Gandhi wanted India to be self-sufficient in the production of food grains. A change was witnessed under the leadership of Pandit Nehru and Indira Gandhi and the country became self-sufficient in food in the course of the green revolution. This is the biggest success of the country after Independence.

---

♦ Dr. Jogesh Chandra Rout is former Chairman, Agricultural Promotion and Investment Corporation of Odisha Limited and the Founder of the Co-operative Movement in Odisha

However, it may seem strange that Odisha had remained stagnant in this regard for a long time even after Independence. Production of paddy had not been able to cross the mark of a tonne an acre between 1960 and 1980 whereas between 1979 and 1980, production per acre was limited to just 900 kilograms. A change came in the 1980s when a stable Government was formed in the State by Janaki Ballav Patnaik. Earlier, six kilograms of fertilizer was being used for every acre of land. But this reached 22 kilograms in the eighties and increased further to 40 kilograms between 1995 and 2000 after the Agriculture Promotion and Investment Corporation of Odisha Ltd (APICOL) was formed. However, in the decade between 2000 and 2009, it has not exceeded the 40 kilogram mark. Odisha not only became self-sufficient in food in the eighties but there was also a surplus of 3 to 3.5 lakh tonnes of food grains. Between 1995 and 2000, the surplus reached a level of 10 lakh tonnes. This came about because of increased use of fertilizers, provision of increased agricultural facilities, use of quality seeds and insecticides, etc. Educating the farmers also contributed substantially to the increased production of food grains.

Odisha was the foremost state in the country in the production of groundnut in so far as the yield per acre of land was concerned. For the first time, a large oil mill was set up near Khurda. Later on, another oil mill came up at Bargarh. Cotton farming was encouraged in the districts of Bolangir, Kalahandi and Koraput and eight spinning mills were established in the State. Sugar mills were set up in the districts of Kataka (Baramba), Bargarh, Bolangir, Dhenkanal, etc. to encourage the cultivation of sugarcane. I am not sure how many of these agro-based factories are still functioning because it may be said



without any doubt that many of these have been closed down and the others have become sick due to lack of will power.

### **The Coming of APICOL**

I plan to discuss at length here about the new agricultural policy adopted between 1995 and 2000 and the formation of the APICOL to give a boost to agricultural activities during the tenure of Janaki Ballav Patnaik as the Chief Minister. I had undertaken certain responsibilities at that time as the Chairman of the APICOL. Under the new agricultural policy, agriculture was granted the status of industry. APICOL had been formed in June 1996 to help entrepreneurs establish agricultural projects to enable them to earn at least Rs. 10,000 per month from cash crops and to set up food processing units.

Irrigation facilities are essential for the production of food grains and fruits. If water is available on mountain tops, paddy can be cultivated even there. Because, irrigation facilities had been provided to only 30 per cent of cultivable land through large, medium and small irrigation projects, the Government of Odisha had aimed to irrigate 50 per cent of the cultivable land during the Ninth Five Year Plan. Though this objective was not achieved, a great deal of progress had been made in comparison to earlier Plans.

Under the new agricultural policy, farmers were enabled to set up tube-wells with their own efforts or draw water from rivers and streams through motor pumps to irrigate their land. It was declared that through the APICOL, the Government of Odisha would provide a subsidy of 50 per cent of the expenses involved. The Government thus provided financial assistance of a maximum of Rs 20,000 for shallow tube-wells and Rs 50,000 for deep tube-wells and motor pumps. Some

more land could be irrigated through private initiative in the process. A driver was paid approximately Rs 30,000 by the Lift Irrigation Corporation to water 10 acres of land under a project while about Rs. 10,000 was spent for repairs. Later, however, many lift irrigation pumps became non-functional because of lack of funds with the Government or the Corporation. The same was the state of affairs with the Water Panchayat Projects. But APICOL used to give a subsidy of Rs. 20,000 to Rs. 50,000 to the farmers for a tube-well or motor pump. The farmer took care of all the recurring expenses thereafter. Similarly, the Government was spending more than Rs. 100,000 for every acre of irrigated land under the large, medium and small irrigation projects. On the other hand, the Government had to spend only Rs. 2000 to Rs 3000 per acre as about 10 acres of land were irrigated by a single tube-well. Rainfall is plenty in Odisha and there is also enough ground water. But it was not put to good use. Hence, the farmers were encouraged to use tube-well and motor pumps. The District Agriculture Officers had sent utilization certificates for 11,300 tube-wells and lift irrigation pumps between 1 July 1996 and 4 April 1999. APICOL had provided a subsidy of Rs. 10.61 crore to 6,439 beneficiaries. Another 4,861 beneficiaries were supposed to get a subsidy of Rs. 9 crore. In other words, farmers had received a sum of Rs. 20 crore from the APICOL. Apart from this, 3,501 beneficiaries had not sent their utilization certificates out of the 16,801 shallow tube-wells and bore-wells dug in the State during this period.

On an average, four hectares or 10 acres of land could be irrigated by one tube-well. As a result, 16,801 farmers were able to irrigate about 66,000 hectares or 1,67,000 acres of land to raise two or three crops a year. Kharif rice was not affected during the droughts in the said irrigated land. Most of the

farmers were able to raise three crops every year, i.e. kharif rice, grams and mustard, potatoes and other vegetables and rabi rice. The farmers could control the quantity of water to be used on their land. As a result, there was no fear of their land getting flooded as often happened while using canal water. It may be mentioned here that farmers were able to raise about four to six tonnes of kharif and rabi rice per acre from the land irrigated by tube-wells. Earlier, there were uncertainties regarding harvesting only kharif rice from this land. In the process, many agricultural labourers got employment and the farmer was able to earn between Rs. 1,000 and Rs. 1,800 for every acre by providing the surplus water to the neighbouring land after catering to the needs of his own land. The farmers could earn a lot of money as a result by selling large quantities of paddy.

Apart from all these, the Government provided a subsidy of 20 per cent of the project cost, subject to a maximum of Rs.20 lakh, for cash crops like tea, coffee and fruits. Besides irrigation, 20 per cent of the project cost for all APICOL projects was being provided as subsidy, subject once again to a maximum of Rs.20 lakh. Moreover, those unemployed found livelihood options in programmes such as cattle farming (milch cows), poultry farming, piggeries and pisciculture. Five cold storage plants had been completed and another ten were in the final stage of completion. Food processing and fruit juice production units had also made much headway. Work relating to 15 cold storage plants, seven fruit orchards, two coffee gardens, 13 milch cow farms, 15 poultry farms, five food processing units, four agro industries, three piggeries, two composite farms, one goat farm and two sheep farms had been completed during that time. Fifty service centres had been set up for the repair of agricultural equipment in order to encourage mechanized farming for greater production. The beneficiaries tilled the land of other

farmers besides their own and earned between Rs. 5,000 and Rs 10,000 a month by transporting straw and other products on tractors on a rental basis. The beneficiaries of all these projects received a subsidy of about Rs 3 crores from APICOL. About 10,000 people had got permanent or temporary work-engagement in these projects. Many people also came forward to establish agro industries. The common people did not ordinarily pay back money borrowed from banks. Hence, the banks were unwilling to lend loans for agricultural purposes. Many agricultural entrepreneurs had brought this fact to the notice of the District Agriculture Officer but they were not in a position to start any agro industry as they did not have enough capital to do so. Fortunately, however, the entrepreneurs who had set up industries with the financial assistance of APICOL paid the loans back on time. This prompted the banks as well to provide loans to the entrepreneurs.

Compact Area Fruit Plantation Scheme was one of the major initiatives of the Government at that time. Extensive fruit farming had taken place in 69,350 hectares of land between 1995 and 1999 under the programme. Provision was made to supply quality prawn seeds (both fresh water and salt water) for superior pisciculture. Thirty Pisciculture Development Agencies were established in all the 30 districts and 4,844 hectares of fresh water ponds and 12,439 hectares of salt water ponds had been set up by these Agencies by February 1999. Financial assistance for this purpose had been provided by APICOL.

A few other programmes had been carried out with success under the new agricultural policy. I am mentioning these below.

**(i) Seed Village Programme**

Foundation seed or very good quality seed was provided under the scheme to the farmers. The seed

produced from such foundation seed was sold by the farmers as certified seed to fetch them a good profit. Earlier, about 70,000-75,000 tonnes of good quality seed required by Odisha were being purchased from Madhya Pradesh and other states. But by 1998, Odisha had a stock of about 200,000 tonnes of certified seed through this Seed Village Programme. The excess seed was sold to neighbouring states like Chhatisgarh.

### **(ii) Soil Testing Kit**

The farmers had to earlier come to the headquarters of the agricultural district to test their soil. Most of the farmers did their farming without any soil test which led to low production. But now the Agriculture Officers were asked to move around the villages with the soil testing kits to test the soil and advice farmers on the crop that was most suited to the soil.

### **(iii) Farm Mechanization Scheme**

Tractors, power tillers and other agricultural machines were provided to the farmers in large quantities at subsidized rates. Earlier, 500-600 tractors were being sold through the D.R.D.A. But now this number increased to 1,500 a year. The number of power tillers also increased similarly from 200 to 800.

The Government had waived an interest amount of Rs.33 crore on cooperative agricultural loan during this period to

encourage farmers. Crops being hit by hailstones was considered to be a natural calamity as a lot of crop was getting destroyed because of this. The State Government declared the Panchayats to be crop insurance units in those cases where the crop had been affected by drought.

As the Chairman of APICOL, I used to visit each village and in the course of these visits, I came across many a success story. A Harijan farmer from the Nimapara block in the district of Puri had four acres of cultivable land. There he had dug a shallow tube-well with a depth of a hundred feet with financial assistance of Rs.34,000 from the Agro Industries Corporation. He had also received a subsidy of Rs.14,000 from APICOL, had borrowed Rs.5,000 from Puri Gramya Bank and raised another Rs.15,000 through gold loan to dig the tube-well. He then sowed *Dalua* rice in his land in the last Rabi season to harvest two bags of paddy in place of one bag per gunth (25 gunth=1 acre). He had also supplied water to eleven acres of neighbouring land and earned a sum of Rs.19,800 at the rate of Rs.1,800 per acre as water cess. He could thus pay off all his loans and could even get his gold released by August 1998.

In yet another instance, a farmer named Dinabandhu Sahoo had dug a tube-well on his land near the Alarnath Temple in the Brahmagiri Block. Apart from being able to cultivate coconut and turmeric on his land due to availability of water, he had also earned Rs. 4,000 during the course of a year by selling water from the tube-well.

And then there was Indramani Jena of Kathuaredi village who had planted coconut and banana on his twenty acre land by digging a tube-well and using the process of sprinkle irrigation.

In the Balasore district, while *kharif* rice in more than half the land had been destroyed because of drought and stray cattle moved around on the barren land, it was amazing that

large quantities of ripe paddy crop stood on the lands of those farmers who had dug tube-wells on their lands. It seemed like an oasis in the desert. Farmers with tube-wells had harvested large quantities of *kharif* rice while the other farmers were left high and dry. For example, the lands of Brundaban Nayak of Punjibag, Ganesh Prasad Saha of Rasagada, Amulya Panda of Sheragada, Remuna, Sisir Kumar Senapati of Sheragada, Bipin Bhuyan of Jaleswar, Gouranga Bhuyan of Dhana Simulia and Raj Kumar Parida, Akhyaya Kumar Jena and Hemanta Patra of Bhogarai were bursting with *kharif* paddy. Brundaban Nayak had not only met his own needs from his four acres of land irrigated by tube-well but also earned a profit of Rs.30,000 by selling paddy and vegetables during the course of a year. He had earned a total profit of Rs.50,000 from his *kharif* crop, *rabi* paddy and vegetables. Two thousand farmers had dug tube-wells with the incentive provided by APICOL in the form of financial aid. In spite of the drought, farmers had been able to save the *kharif* crop in 16,000 hectares of land because of the tube-wells.

Gopal Krushna Jena of Digapahandi Block in Ganjam was a highly educated youth who had done his post graduation and also obtained a graduate degree in Education. In spite of his qualifications, he had dug 13 ponds on his 12 acre cultivable land to engage in pisciculture. He had invested about Rs.25,00,000 in the project of which he had received a subsidy of Rs.5,00,000 from APICOL for the purpose. And within a period of two months he had sold spawn amounting to Rs.3,00,000. He also took to poultry farming along with pisciculture and was hopeful of being able to earn about Rs.1,00,000 per month.

The farmers in the hilly, tribal blocks of the Gajapati district were encouraged to install lift irrigation pumps because of the large number of small streams and springs that flowed

throughout the year. Lift irrigation projects were installed at a maximum expense of Rs. 40,000 and the farmers had to bear half the cost. The rest of the money was provided as subsidy by APICOL. The farmers operated the pumps either themselves or engaged a driver and could irrigate about 10 acres of land on an average. They could thus raise two to three crops a year and improve their standards of living.

Prashanta Kumar Rout, an unemployed graduate of Kamarabandha village in Dhamnagar block of Bhadrakh, had started a poultry project with an investment of Rs.3,00,000. For this he had taken a loan of Rs.1,00,000 from the UCO Bank and had even repaid Rs.15,000 in installments. He had received a subsidy of Rs.58,000 from APICOL and had invested the remaining amount of Rs.1,40,000 from his own sources. He and his unemployed brother together started this project with 3,500 chickens and had provision to keep another 500. He had even engaged a permanent accountant and about 20 labourers to look after the farm. After taking care of all his expenses Prashanta Kumar Rout used to earn a net profit of Rs.12,500 per month.

Samirang Singh of Shuliapada block in Baripada had invested Rs.38,000 in installing lift irrigation pump on a stream and received a subsidy of Rs.19,000 from APICOL. He had cultivated paddy on his three acres of land and even during the *rabi* season he made a decent profit by cultivating paddy, groundnut and vegetables.

Lalatendu Mishra, an unemployed law graduate of Khajuripada block of Phulbani, had planted bananas on his two and a half acres of land and had received a subsidy of Rs.26,565 from APICOL. He had already sold bananas worth Rs.50,000 and expected to sell bananas worth another Rs.1,00,000. Lalatendu babu had told us that cultivation of bananas was a



profitable business. He had also planned to set up a poultry farm with 10,000 chickens.

Elsewhere at Nowrangpur district, the tribals had dug several large wells under the Million Wells Programme. Thereafter, they had made large profits by cultivating cauliflowers and other vegetables. An old tribal had dug a large well on his land under the Million Wells Programme and cultivated cauliflowers. He later confessed that he was unable to count the large sum of money he was earning by selling cauliflowers and that his father had never seen so much money in his life!

Meanwhile in the Bargarh district, 111 farmers had dug deep bore-wells and four other farmers had installed lift irrigation pumps. Twenty four of them had received subsidy from APICOL. Apart from the lift irrigation pumps, a milch cow farm, a bakery, two poultry farms, a chicken-feed making factory and one banana plantation programme had also been undertaken.

Thus, with financial assistance from APICOL, a great deal of enthusiasm had been witnessed towards the development of agriculture in different districts of the State. The farmers had made an effort to advance the cause of agriculture in their own areas by setting up tube-wells, milch cow farms, poultry farms, agricultural equipment centres, cold storage plants, etc. Unfortunately, APICOL had been shut down from 2000 to 2008. I hear that the Government is planning to revive the organization. A revolutionary change had come in the field of agriculture in the 1980s and between 1995 and 2000, and I was fortunate enough to play a small role in it.

\* \* \*

## Kalahandi: From Begging Bowl to Bread Basket

Bhupinder Singh ♦

**P** rime Minister Rajiv Gandhi arrived at Nuapara in the undivided Kalahandi district on 27 July 1985. His scheduled destination was Amalapali, the last village of Nuapara near Khariar. In those days, it was being widely reported in newspapers that unable to ward off hunger, a poor woman named Phanas Punji had gone to the extent of selling her six year old child. There was so much adverse publicity about the poverty in the district that Kalahandi came to be synonymous with indigence and starvation. The situation had compelled the Prime Minister to visit Kalahandi, and thus, accompanied by Chief Minister Janaki Babu and Member of Parliament Jagannath Patnaik, he went to visit her. Of course, the State Government had given Rs. 10,000 and allotted an

---

♦ Bhupinder Singh is a former Minister and Leader of Opposition, Odisha Legislative Assembly

Indira Awas Yojana house to Phanas Punji. Inquiries were made to ascertain why she was not getting rice at subsidized rate. The district collectors had been directed to ensure that no starvation death occurred anywhere in the State. They were also cautioned that in the event of any such incident, the collectors would be held responsible.

Since the time of feudal rule, Kalahandi has remained a poor and problem-ridden region. Rajiv Gandhi had visited Kalahandi on 22 October 1984, when he was the General Secretary of the Indian National Congress Party. He began his Kalahandi tour from Titlagarh. He arrived at Amath on the Kalahandi border and addressed two public meetings, one at Kesinga and the other at Bhawanipatna. While on tour, he met thousands of people and left the district at Ambapani. Afterwards, he addressed a large public meeting at Nawarangpur.

As Prime Minister, he had arrived at Nuapara in 1985 after completing his tour of Chhattisgarh. While travelling by road from Nuapara, he closely observed the dwellings of the local people and said that parts of Chhattisgarh he had seen were more poverty-stricken and underdeveloped than Kalahandi. There could be more such areas in India. Then, why was there so much uproar only about Kalahandi?

He had to go to Boden via Khariar on 27 July 1985. At that time, the Sundar River was in spate. The Prime Minister along with his wife risked their lives and crossed the river in a rubber boat. However, the condition of the road ahead was so bad that his jeep could not proceed to Boden. He had to break his journey and come back.

I write all these with a purpose and the purpose being to point out how the condition of roads in Kalahandi was. It was indeed deplorable. One had to cross seven rivulets while travelling from Nuapara to Khariar. Drought and famine

conditions prevailed again and again because of the absence of any irrigation facility. The condition of Kalahandi in 1966 is worthy of mention. When the then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi had come on a visit to Kalahandi, she had felt the urgent need for irrigation. In 1980, the Congress Government headed by Janaki Ballav Patnaik had accepted the sad state of Kalahandi as a challenge to the new Government. Prompt and strong measures were adopted to transform Kalahandi into a developed region. Irrigation, education, health, roads, improved methods of farming, including cotton farming, and empowerment of women were accorded due priority.

## **Irrigation**

The foundation stone was laid for the Upper Jonk Irrigation Project, which was completed on a war footing. It irrigates 25,000 acres of land in Nuapara district and some parts of Chhattisgarh. The incomplete work (sluice gate) of the Sundar River Medium Irrigation Project was also completed.

The Pendrabandh Minor Irrigation Project between Khariar and Komna, Ghatpara-Bhalujar under Kesinga Block, and the Kesarimunda and the Turla Minor Irrigation Projects were made operational. Many Lift Irrigation (L.I.) points were set up on the river banks. Earlier, there were only thirty seven L.I. points, of which only eight or ten were operational. Now there are 487 L.I. points. The Soil Conservation Department was entrusted with the task of building several check dams and water harvesting structures to protect kharif crops.

The most important among these was the Upper Indravati project. Although the foundation stone was laid during the rule of the Janata Party, no further progress was made. The irrigation needs of Khariar and Kantabanji regions of Bolangir

district also depended on successful implementation of this project funded by loan from the World Bank. But because of lapses and irregularities, the World Bank stopped releasing the loan. Successful completion of this project became a reality only during the rule of the Congress Government led by Janaki Ballav Patnaik. This is an unceasing blessing for the people of Kalahandi. This large project provides assured irrigation to 1,25,000 acres of land in Kalampur, Jaypatna, Junagarh, Dharamgarh and Koksara, resulting in paddy cultivation during both kharif and rabi seasons. Presently, next to Bargarh in western Odisha, Kalahandi is the second most rice growing district of the State. It was envisioned that another 100,000 acre of land would be irrigated. This is yet to become a reality. There are areas in Narla and Thuamul-Rampur which are drought-prone. Irrigation facilities are needed in these areas. The Narla irrigation project was approved by the Planning Commission and the foundation stone had also been laid. Khariar in Nuapara district and Kantabanji in Bolangir district would be benefited by this project. Digging of ponds and other water preservation works were taken up in eleven of the eighteen Blocks under the drought prone area project in Nuapara district. Subsidy at a rate of 50 per cent to Adivasi farmers, 33 per cent to Harijan farmers and 25 per cent to other farmers was provided for digging wells and putting up motors under poverty alleviation schemes. Electricity supply line to a distance of one kilometer or 20 poles was drawn free of cost. The poor farmers did not have to pay for electricity connection. Again, the poor people were provided 100 per cent subsidy for cashew plantation, fishery ponds, brick yards and saloons. Under the DWACRA scheme, they were trained in handicrafts including horn craft and at Utkela, people were trained to make appliqué items.

Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao had inaugurated a handicrafts exhibition at Chancher village. Suguna was the District Collector at the time. The handicrafts made by the women and their saving schemes had received high praise from the Prime Minister. High quality wooden horses and elephants are carved at Khaera-padar of Dharamgarh block. These items are being sent to other states of our country and also abroad. An industrial training centre has been set up there.

### **Cotton Farming**

Once upon a time, Kalahandi was well known for cotton farming. But farmers lost their interest due to lack of encouragement and incentive. The black cotton soil of Sadar and Kesinga blocks is suitable for cotton cultivation. Initially, cotton farming was started in Kikia village on an experimental basis. Later, widespread farming was adopted in Sadar and Kesinga blocks. It was proven that the cotton produced in Kalahandi was qualitatively far better than that produced in Maharashtra. Arrangements were made for proper pricing and marketing so that the cotton farmers could earn good profit.

### **Road Connectivity**

I have already said that one had to cross seven rivulets while travelling from Nuapara to Khariar by road. A public works division was set up at Khariar. Bridges were constructed over all the rivulets. Once the construction of the bridges was completed, there was no difficulty in the movement of vehicles throughout the year. All-weather roads were laid between Nuapara and Bhawanipatna, Dharamgarh and Sinapali, Sinapali and Boden, Boden and Khariar and Kesinga and Karlamunda.

This work was accomplished under a project that aimed at connecting all the sub-division headquarters with the district headquarters. Thus, all the regions of the district were linked through a network of roads. On the road between Titilagarh and Kesinga, the Mahtab bridge across the Tel river had been washed away by flood. This bridge was reconstructed. Again, I wish to mention that a bridge was built across Sundar River along the stretch where Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi and Sonia Gandhi had crossed the river in a rubber boat.

## **Health**

There was a time when doctors were unwilling to stay at the Primary Health Centres in Kalahandi. But soon, provisions were made to encourage the doctors to stay in such places. They were offered an extra amount of 50 per cent of their salary as incentive. It was also ensured that after serving at these places for three years, they would be transferred out. Every Primary Health Centre had three doctors (Two M.B.B.S. and one Ayurvedic or Homeopathic doctor). Four Primary Health Centres were upgraded to function as hospitals, which were located at Vishwanathpur, Madanpur Rampur, Kesinga and Koksara. These hospitals had a minimum of 30 beds each and six doctors.

## **Education**

Arrangements were made to set up a Women's College at Bhawanipatna, a Higher Secondary level Science College at Nuapara and a High School in every Panchayat. It was also decided that with a deposit of Rs. 100,000, people themselves could establish Higher Secondary level and Graduate level

Colleges. Boarding Schools in Thuamul Rampur and Lanjigarh Blocks were established for the benefit of the adivasi students who were provided free food, dress, lodging and books.

### Other Measures

The employees of the Civil Supplies Department were deployed to strictly supervise distribution of essential commodities through the Public Distribution System. The Collectors were directed to undertake tours in rural areas and find out whether people were getting the right quantity of rice, kerosene etc. The Chief Minister used to visit Kalahandi frequently and he used to stop at controlled commodity shops in villages without any prior notice.

It was also arranged to sell kerosene without cards in the village *haats*. This scheme was further implemented in Phulbani and Koraput districts, where the adivasi people were a dominant majority. I was a Minister of State for the departments of Irrigation and Public Relations and later, a Cabinet Minister in the department of Tourism and Culture in Chief Minister Janaki Ballav Patnaik's Ministry. This had provided me the opportunity to participate in the all-encompassing development of Kalahandi, which was prone to all sorts of problems.

I myself was born in Kalahandi and even received my education in Kalahandi district and Sambalpur University. I had joined politics when I was a student. Later, as the president of the District Youth Congress and District Congress, as a Member of the Legislative Assembly and a Minister, I had the opportunity to work with Janaki Ballav Patnaik for improving the lot of this backward and drought-prone district. Along with Rasbihari Behera, ex-Minister and ex-Member of Parliament, Jagannath Patnaik, ex-Minister and ex-Member of Parliament,



Manmohan Mathur, former Member of Parliament and a few others, we succeeded in liberating this district from the feudal yoke through a younger leadership. There is yet much to be done in Kalahandi despite all these noteworthy achievements. There used to be a lot of noise about starvation and poverty in Kalahandi. No longer is that noise heard. Now Kalahandi is recognized as a surplus district in production of food grains.

Kalahandi is no longer a showpiece of abject poverty.

\* \* \*

## Odisha Placed on National Dairy Map

Dr. Ramesh Chandra Panda ♦

**C**oastal Odisha, located in the country's eastern flank, has a population of about four crore that includes a large number of disadvantaged and weaker sections of the society belonging to the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. Dairy Development in Odisha has been a recent phenomenon and can be traced back to the early 1980s. Prior to 1980, during the first phase of Operation Flood, dairy development projects was being implemented in 14 states. Odisha was among the few states which could not access the Operation Flood Project funds from the Indian Dairy Corporation (IDC) and National Dairy Development Board (NDDB). It was only in 1980 that the Odisha State Cooperative

---

♦ Dr. Ramesh Chandra Panda, IAS (retd.), was the first Director of Odisha State Co-operative Milk Producers' Federation Limited

Milk Producers' Federation (OMFED) was organized with the four undivided districts of the State namely, Kataka, Puri, Dhenkanal and Keonjhar.

Between 1970 and 1973, the estimated quantity of milk produced in Odisha was 1,96,000 MT a year and the trend was growing at a snail's pace, reaching about 3,10,000 MT by 1980-1981. In terms of per capita milk availability per day between Odisha and the country as a whole, it emerged that Odisha continued to be one of the poorest states in India. While in 1950-1951 the per capita milk availability per day in the country was 132 grams, in Odisha it was a measly 29 grams. The per capita availability of milk steadily declined in both the country as a whole and Odisha mainly due to the predominance of poorly bred milch cattle and steady rise in population. While the per capita milk availability per day fell in the country to its lowest in 1970-1971 to 105 grams, in Odisha it declined to 23 grams in 1971-1972. When Operation Flood II was launched in 1980-81, Odisha had a very poor dairy base with neither appropriate and regular channels for milk procurement from the rural areas nor any arrangement for the sale of milk to urban consumers. Milk production in Odisha in 1981-82 was less than 800,000 liters a day with a per capita availability of 27 grams, as against the national average of 120 grams.

It was only in 1980, under the dynamic leadership of Chief Minister Janaki Ballav Patnaik, that the Operation Flood-II Dairy Development Project implementation was cleared in Odisha. He got the State Government's approval for implementation of the project with a total outlay of Rs. 7 crore. The National Dairy Development Board (NDDDB) included four districts, as already stated, in the jurisdiction of the OMFED to implement the Operation Flood Development Programmes in the State.

At that time, I was already implementing Operation Flood (OF)-I Dairy Development Programme in Tamil Nadu and Dr. Varghese Kurien, Chairman of Indian Dairy Development Corporation and the National Dairy Development Board, requested Chief Minister Patnaik to get me over to Odisha for the implementation of the OF-II programme. When I joined, all I could find was a very old chilling plant at Phulnakhara (a place between Kataka and Bhubaneswar) where about 350 liters of milk used to be collected daily in the morning, boiled by the officials of Odisha Agro-Industries Corporation and distributed at Kataka and Bhubaneswar, more specifically, to the higher functionaries of the Government.

Both the cities received their supplies of milk and milk products from the middlemen coming by bus from the neighbouring villages. Class-I towns in Odisha in those days included Sambalpur, Berhampur and Rourkela besides Kataka, Bhubaneswar and Puri. But all these urban places did not have any organized dairy procurement, processing and distribution system. It is needless to point out that by 1980, however, well established dairy processing and marketing networks were already in position in the metropolitan cities of Delhi, Bombay, Calcutta and Madras. In certain development oriented states, the important cities and towns were getting milk for distribution through well established procurement, processing, storage and haulage network. In those states, public sector units were handling the dairy and chilling units for milk and the marketing of milk products.

Looking at the historical growth of the dairy sector in Odisha, it is noticed that the first step towards dairy development was taken in 1963-64, when the first liquid milk plant was set up by the State Government at Phulnakhra. Subsequently, this milk plant was strengthened by the addition of small chilling units of

2000 LPD capacity at Niali and Nimapara in the districts of Kataka and Puri respectively. Small chilling units of 2000 LPD capacity were also set up at Kaimati and Angul in Dhenkanal district. Simultaneously, the Directorate of Animal Husbandry, with the help of the Department of Cooperation, organized a number of Dairy Cooperative Societies in the districts of Kataka, Puri, Dhenkanal and Keonjhar from 1963-64 onwards. These societies were organized with a view to enable the farmers to purchase milch cattle with loans provided by the different commercial banks and regional rural banks through these milk marketing cooperative societies and to market the milk thus produced by the beneficiaries.

Milk production in the country exhibits a skewed distribution across the states. Though dairy farming is considered a tool for alleviating rural poverty, the success of the same was visible only in some states. The geographical nature, resource endowments, affluence of the population, production environment, milk availability and consumption patterns are all contributing factors towards the imbalance in milk production among states.

With the implementation of Operation Flood II, the Odisha Cooperative Milk Producers' Federation (OMFED) was started and it became operational in the year 1980-81. The OMFED followed the principle of the Anand Pattern of dairy cooperatives which is based on the cooperative principles and practices developed by the Kaira Cooperative Milk Producers' Union at Anand. This principle envisages that members of the Union who are into the production of milk, shall also be the owners of production, processing and the marketing system in the three-tier dairy cooperative structure, that is, in the village, district and state levels.

In the words of Dr. Kurien, “The Anand Pattern really means that dairies are owned by the farmers and not by the Government, that these dairies are managed by employees of the farmers and not by bureaucrats deputed by the Government and that they are organized in such a manner as to be sensitive to the needs of the farmer and responsive to their demands. Also, the Anand Pattern recognizes that privilege of collecting the farmers’ milk also carries with it the responsibility to help the farmer increase production by improving the productivity of their cows and buffalos by providing the necessary input.”

With the financial assistance of the IDC, technical know-how of the NDDDB and due patronage of the State Government, the OMFED took up the responsibility of the intensive dairy development programme through Operation Flood II in Odisha with the objectives to

- (1) Enhance milk production, procurement, processing and marketing of milk and milk products on the basis of the Anand Pattern
- (2) Bridge the gap between the national level average and the state level average of milk production
- (3) Create, for its farmer members, a climate conducive to better living with special emphasis on marginal and tribal farmers
- (4) Provide technical inputs and establish milk processing capacities and marketing facilities in the rural milk sheds.

Operation Flood II in Odisha was carried out through a three-tier cooperative institutional infrastructure namely (a) a state level cooperative milk producers’ federation (OMFED)

(b) district level cooperative milk producers' unions and (c) village level primary milk producers' cooperative societies.

The Anand Pattern of dairy development involves the producers themselves to be the owners of the production, processing and marketing of their products. And to change the mindset of the people of Odisha to this concept was a herculean task for me. In 1980, there were about two dozen milk suppliers cum Marketing Cooperative Societies who were procuring milk from middlemen before boiling and marketing it to some people in Bhubaneswar. But the concept of the Anand Pattern being far different and not linked to loan based dairy, we started organizing Milk Producers' Cooperative Societies (MPCS) in those districts. In 1980-81, we could organize only 52 MPCS with 3328 farmer members. With fond memory, I recall that some of the Odia Veterinary Officers who were working in AMUL, HIMUL and other similar dairy unions and federations joined the OMFED. We used to visit potential villages as a team in the evenings and show the Hindi film *Manthan*, dubbed in Odia, to inculcate the concept of the Anand Pattern in the minds of the farmers. Milk procurement began on 26 January 1981 from the Niali-Phulnakhara route and on that first day, 359 liters of milk was procured. However, rowdy middlemen attacked our milk truck in the morning at a place about 15 kilometres from Niali. Yet that did not deter the organizing spirit of the OMFED team. Dr. G.K. Padhy, who was working with AMUL and had come to Odisha at a much lesser pay packet, was then in charge of the Farmers' Organization. He continued with OMFED till his retirement. I was lucky to get about a dozen Odia Officers like Dr. Padhy from outside Odisha for OMFED.

Before I move to delineate the growth of dairy movement in Odisha, I must acknowledge the commitment and guidance received from J.B. Patnaik, S.B. Mishra, former Secretary to the

Chief Minister, S.M. Patnaik and Gyan Chand, the then Chief Secretary of Odisha. With gratitude, I must mention how effectively they guided the nascent OMFED and did the perfect handholding for a strong foundation for Odisha. Posterity should not forget their overt and at times unseen contributions to OMFED's growth.

Starting from a small number of Societies in 1980-81, by 1985-86 the number of MPCs grew to 270, with an average milk procurement of 14,347 kilograms from 15,949 farmer members. Average milk procurement per member of the society was about 1.5 kilograms in the beginning which has been slowly improved.

In the initial days of the OMFED, milk procurement was constrained by the non availability of adequate milk storage, processing and marketing facilities. Also, there was hardly any chilling centre to procure bulk quantities of milk. It is distinctly noticed that the rainy season is the peak period for milk procurement and in July 1981, the milk procurement was so high compared to the milk marketing that one tanker load of 12,000 liters of milk used to be dispatched once a week from Bhubaneswar to Calcutta Mother Dairy at Dankuni. Of course, subsequently a milk feeder balancing plant had come up at Bhubaneswar Dairy with a ten tonne milk powder plant to ensure that the milk powder requirements in the summer months (lean seasoning) would be met by the OMFED by converting surplus milk of the peak season.

Milk chilling and processing facilities were gradually created during the period from 1980 to 1985. During this period, the Bhubaneswar Dairy was set up with a handling capacity of 60,000 liters of milk. At the time of putting up this plant, I was cautioned by an officer who felt my proposal to put up a dairy plant with a capacity of 60,000 liters instead



of a plant with a capacity of 5000 liters could turn out to be too ambitious. I would be responsible, he thought, if the dairy limit remained underutilized and will be answerable to the auditors. It was only after I had given a written assurance to the officer that I could get the proposal cleared. My proposal and views have been vindicated not only with the expansion of the Bhubaneswar Dairy Plant from 60,000 liters to 1,00,000 liters but also by adding a powder plant to it to convert the surplus milk during the rainy season. Simultaneously, the Rourkela Dairy at 30,000 LPD and the Sambalpur Dairy at 10,000 LPD were created to meet the marketing needs of the city population. In order to maintain the cold chain for the milk being procured from far off villages, chilling centres at Tirtol (10,000 LPD which was expanded to 20,000 LPD in November 1991), Nimapara (10,000 LPD expanded to 20,000 LPD in March 1993), Dhenkanal (10,000 which was later on converted into a full fledged dairy) and Keonjhar (10,000 LPD which was converted into a full fledged dairy in 1993) were established. A cattle-feed factory was also set up in the Kataka district. Besides all these, other smaller chilling centers were established at Kendrapara, Athgarh, Adaspur, Banki, Nayagarh, Chandeshwar, Angul, Anandpur, Telkoi, Berahampur, Aska, Chiplima, Jharsuguda, Bargarh and Kalahandi. It is worth mentioning that the Kalahandi Milk Chilling Centre (10,000 LPD capacity) was fully funded by the National Cooperative Development Corporation (NCDC).

The Anand Pattern of dairy cooperative envisages that a milk producer selling milk at his own cooperative society must get the price of the milk daily on the basis of the quality and quantity. Accordingly, the infrastructure of the cooperative societies was strengthened with milk testing facilities. It was so transparent that the farmers could test the milk quality

themselves and find out what was the percentage of fat etc. Another milestone was the establishment of a cattle-feed factory which used to produce balanced nutrition for the milch animals in the form of a pellet. A Training and Demonstration Centre was also set up to ensure that the milk producing farmers, dairy cooperative society secretaries and other members are trained in the principles and practices of cooperatives, more specifically dairy cooperatives. It may be noted that OMFED started animal health care facilities by providing artificial insemination, treatment of cattle diseases and provided grass slips and seeds for the production of fodder. In a nutshell, all the technical inputs required for higher levels of milk production and improving the quality of milk through a cattle population of a better pedigree was also introduced during this period.

It would not be out of place to mention that J.B. Patnaik, the then Chief Minister of Odisha, led an official team to Anand in Gujarat to get acquainted with the principles of the Anand pattern dairy cooperative society, systems and structures and to interact with the NDDDB and the IDC representatives. The team also talked to farmers at different levels starting from the village to the district and also at the state level. He also held a detailed discussion with Dr. Kurien, the then Chairman of the NDDDB and invited him to visit Bhubaneswar, which he did and laid the foundation stone of the Bhubaneswar Dairy Plant. All these guided the State towards the mainstream of dairy development in the country.

Starting from the daily procurement of 3,169 kilograms in 1981-82, OMFED brought up the same to more than a hundred times in the last 27 years, to 3,61,402 kilograms in 2008-2009. During this period, milk marketing has taken a quantum jump from 2004 liters a day (1981) to 3.63 lakh liters in 2008-09.

Examination of milk production figures in the country during 1991-92 across the states indicates that Odisha ranks the last and the per capita milk availability was 41 grams as against the national average of 178 grams. By the end of 1997-98, the all India average of per capita milk availability per day had reached 204 grams, but in the case of Odisha, this had slowly crawled up to 51 grams. Based on the current growth rates, an analysis of the projections of human population and milk output of Odisha for the next 15 years indicates that Odisha would continue to occupy the last seat in milk production even after 15 years if it continues in the current growth rate. While the annual gap for the next 15 years between the nutritional demand for milk and the availability of milk would revolve around 2,600,000 tonnes, Odisha's performance on milk production after 15 years would be far less than even the current level of output in the country. Despite the existence of a vast potential in the dairy sector, the performance of the sector in Odisha is progressing slowly. We have a long way to go in the performance of the sector in Odisha to catch up with the advanced states.

But, undisputedly, Odisha has been put on the country's dairy map.

\* \* \*

## Odisha & The Poultry Industry

Sudhansu Sekhar Das ♦

**I**t was nineteen-eighties. Not many in Odisha had enough idea about poultry farming. Nobody perhaps thought that poultry farming could be given the status of a disciplined business and that shortage of protein in the human body and the problem of unemployment in the society could be removed to a great extent through this business. When Janaki Ballav Patnaik became the Chief Minister, things would change. With his foresight, Chief Minister Patnaik encouraged poultry farming that emerged as a major business, providing succour to thousands of unemployed young people.

At the time, there were many critics of the slogan—“a thousand industries for thousand crores in thousand days”. It was natural to expect this in any underdeveloped state without

---

♦ Sudhansu Sekhar Das is an Industrialist and Managing Director, Kalinga Hatchery, Odisha

any leaders with foresight who can think 10 to 25 years ahead. Luckily for Odisha, the impact of the industrial revolution which began in the State on account of the foresight of Patnaik was also felt in the agricultural sector. Not hundreds but thousands of young men and women came forward to embrace poultry farming. In the rural areas, a young man, who otherwise could not do anything on account of lack of facilities, could now set up a small farm and sell broiler chicken as he or she got decent incentives. They were able to earn their livelihood. The amount of money earned every month was not important. What mattered most was his self-confidence. He received the necessary inspiration to do something and to build his own destiny as defined in the slogan “one thousand industries in one thousand days”.

At the time, facilitated by the liberal policy of the Odisha Government, the Industry Department conferred the status of industry on poultry farming. Each unit was provided with an assistance of Rs. 25,000 and as a result, broiler farms were set up in large numbers in the villages. Many of those entrepreneurs who had applied to the Government for assistance of Rs 25,000 at that time are today standing like strong pillars of the poultry industry in Odisha. Producing thousands of fowls, they have removed the scarcity of chicken. At present, Odisha is self-reliant in the field of poultry. Today, they are not running after salaried jobs. Each of them is an employer today. At that time, banks behaved in a conservative manner. They followed a policy that did not encourage poultry farming. They would ask many questions in many ways that would take away the zeal from any new entrepreneur. I clearly remember, some of us telling Chief Minister Patnaik about the problem. It was our good luck that we did not have to worry about it for the second time. Chief Minister Patnaik readily decided to accord poultry farming the

status of industry. The Odisha State Finance Corporation was made to finance such projects. This was a right step taken at the right time.

That very decision of the Chief Minister led to sort of a poultry revolution in Odisha. At present, the cost of three kilograms of chicken is same as a kilogram of mutton in the State. This is due to the poultry farming on a massive scale in the State. Estimates show that more than 300,000 chicks are hatched in a day.

Though there was no poultry farming in Odisha, the Government collected sales tax on poultry diet which was imported from outside the State. As a result, the cost of poultry diet increased and profit for the farmers decreased. Why would a farmer do business without profit? When the Government realized this, it exempted poultry diet from sales tax. As a result, many national level producers of poultry diet set up their production units in Odisha.

After the O.S.F.C started funding, poultry farming spread even to rural areas. Profit was made and many young men and women found work. Peasants could also sell local raw materials at a suitable price. The organizations which prepared poultry diet could collect *pidia* (oil-cake), broken rice, millet and corn from within Odisha at a good price from these peasants.

Despite Odisha having a long costal area, the fish-powder which was required for preparing poultry diet was imported from outside the State. Generally, this powder is prepared from fish which is not suitable for eating. The first fish-powder factory was set up at Paradeep with the help of funds from the O.S.F.C.

The establishment of hatchery and breeding farm is essential for producing broiler chicken. If chicks are not available on time, the farm cannot run. Realizing this, the Government of

Odisha offered loans for hatchery and breeding farms through the O.S.F.C. As a result, Odisha became an advanced State in the production of chicks and sold chicks to neighbouring states as well after fulfilling her own requirements. The incentive which was needed for it could be possible because of the liberal industrial policy of Janaki Ballav Patnaik.

Influenced by the slogan of “one thousand industries in one thousand days”, I myself decided to enter the field of poultry farming. Like hundreds of young men of our time, I did not go for a salaried job that I had got after completing my post graduation. Instead, I geared up to do something myself. Let me narrate my own story here. Though I lacked both technical knowhow and capital, I believed in the liberal policy of the Government of Odisha and set up the first broiler breeding farm and hatchery.

Today, when I look back after so many years, I cannot believe how I could dare to do so many things with a capital of only Rs 1,800 which I had received as scholarship for my post graduate studies. Of course, I faced difficulties at every step. I was laughed at for running after a dream instead of joining the salaried job that I had received. Getting suitable land is always a challenge in setting up an industry. It is impossible to get a piece of land on lease from the Tahsildar or Collector. At the time, when the problem came to his notice, the Chief Minister Patnaik established the IDCO, an institution which would take land from the Government and provide it to entrepreneurs. Entrepreneurs no longer had to run from pillar to post. So once again, hundreds of entrepreneurs got land because of the foresight of the Chief Minister and these entrepreneurs were thus able to set up farms. I myself took land near Bhubaneswar through the IDCO and set up a breeding farm and hatchery. Then the problem of finance arose. Though banks rendered some

financial assistance, they demanded a large amount as margin. I started my farm taking only Rs 110,000. It was not possible on my part to arrange the margin amount way back in the eighties. Like me, many faced this trouble. So another epoch-making step of the Chief Minister commenced. The O.S.I.C. was instructed to lend money to entrepreneurs at minimal interest to pay the margin money. My problem was solved. Hundreds of entrepreneurs availed of this facility. I myself have repaid the entire money with interest to the O.S.I.C. And once again, this in itself was not an important matter. What was important was that had this not happened, my dream would have remained just a dream. The institution which had commenced with a breeding stock of only 2000 grew 20 times in only 15 years. The farm which had hatched only 4000 chicks in a week could produce 400,000 chicks per month within the next 15 years and centering that, not only hundreds but thousands of small broiler farms grew up in Odisha. Thousands of young men could earn their livelihood. I have never thought of the extent of my achievement, but had there been no proper industrial atmosphere, no liberal policy of the Government and no right step at the right time, all these would not have been possible.

By announcing a subsidy, the State Government created a proper atmosphere for poultry farming. But, lack of proper training of entrepreneurs was felt at the first stage of this revolution. Discussing with the Director of Animal-husbandry, we arranged a training programme in Bhubaneswar on behalf of our union. Three to four batches of entrepreneurs benefited from this training. Our union felt that as urban areas were more suitable for the sale of chicken, a peasant would make more profit in such a place because less money would then be spent in the transportation of the chicken from the farms. Keeping this



in view, we decided that at least 50 farms should be set up at one place in the vicinity of Bhubaneswar.

We gave the proposal to the IDCO and after consulting with the Department of Industry, the IDCO gave assurance to give 12 acres of land near Janla within a few weeks. Later, however, the training could not continue and the Director did not show any interest. The IDCO waited for long and finally took back the land. This, of course, is another story.

At that time, production of eggs was not up to expectation. The reason was that lots of capital investment was necessary for it. It was impossible on the part of an ordinary, unemployed young man in Odisha to invest so much money. Despite this, taking help from the OSFC, a few small-scale farms grew up but these were not enough to cater to the demand.

Nevertheless, it may be admitted that the base which is necessary for poultry industry was built in the eighties during the Government of Patnaik. It became a popular source of income within a few years in a State where there was earlier no mention at all of poultry farming.

The poultry industry has survived in spite of repeated bird flu and other difficulties, though peasants do not get the facilities today that they should have got under such a difficult environment.

\* \* \*

## Planned Efforts towards Irrigation

Er. Prabhat Mishra ♦

**I**ndustrialized countries are just a few in the world. For the rest, agriculture has been their mainstay. India, too, is an agricultural country and like many of its states, Odisha depends mostly on its agriculture. Seventy per cent people of Odisha depend on agriculture for their livelihood, and development of agriculture, in turn, depends to a large extent on irrigation. In India, the states which have larger areas under irrigation are more developed. In Punjab, 97 per cent of the cultivable land has irrigation facilities. In case of Haryana, it is 87 per cent. Hence, these two states are among the most developed states in India. Providing irrigation facilities is the only way by which Odisha can be turned into a developed state.

Irrigation facilities can be provided to 58,00,000 hectares of land in Odisha. If as much land could be irrigated properly,

---

♦ Er. Prabhat Mishra is an eminent Engineer and Irrigation Specialist

2,900 lakh quintals of paddy could be produced in Odisha at the rate of 50 quintals per hectare. Odisha could then earn Rs. 17,400 crore from the production of paddy per year at the rate of Rs 600 per quintal and this would be enough to make the inhabitants of Odisha rich.

A stable Government was formed in Odisha for the first time in 1980 under the leadership of Janaki Ballav Patnaik. Every government has completed its full term of five years since then.

Here, I would like to present a comparative study of the development of irrigation in the State during the Congress regime from 1980 to 1990 and again from 1995 to 2000 and the non-Congress regime from 1990 to 1995 and again from 2000 to 2009. I would like to make it clear that a great deal of emphasis had been laid on providing irrigation facilities during the 15 year tenure of Janaki Babu as the Chief Minister while the same had been neglected during the 14 years of non-Congress rule. I will only mention about large and medium irrigation projects in the State in this essay since data relating to these are more reliable.

The British rulers had provided for irrigation facilities in only 176,920 hectares of land before Independence. Such facilities were available mostly in the rainy season. Irrigation facilities were available chiefly in the Mahanadi delta and in the relatively upper regions of Rushikulya River. Only three per cent of the total land of Odisha could be brought under irrigation.

Irrigation facilities had been provided in an additional 117,080 hectares after Independence during the First 5-Year Plan (1951-1956) and the Second 5-Year Plan (1956-1961). During the Third 5-Year Plan (1961-1966), another 92,680 hectares of land was brought under irrigation. During the three Annual Plans (between 1966 and 1969), 34,500 hectares of land were

irrigated. Further, 1,74,440 hectares of land were irrigated in the Fourth 5-Year Plan (1969-1974), another 94,390 hectares in the Fifth Plan (1974-1978) and 47,780 hectares in the Annual Plans between 1978 and 1980.

In this way, a total of 737,790 hectares of land (12.72 per cent) had been provided with irrigation facilities through major and medium irrigation projects by the beginning of the Sixth Plan.

Land areas brought under irrigation facilities from the beginning of the Sixth Plan (1980) through major and medium irrigation projects till 2008 are given below:

- 7,37,790 hectares or 12.72 per cent of cultivable land was irrigated till 1980
- During the Sixth Plan (1980-1985) 1,11,490 hectares or 1.92 per cent land was irrigated  
This brought the total irrigated land till the end of the Sixth Plan to 849,280 hectares or 14.64 per cent
- During the Seventh Plan (1985-1990) total irrigated land stood at 78,150 hectares or 1.35 per cent
- Between 1990 and 1995, it was 65,260 hectares or 1.12 per cent  
With this, the total irrigated land till the end of 1995 came up to 992,690 hectares or 17.11 per cent
- 2,85,860 hectares or 4.90 per cent of land was irrigated between 1995 and 2000
- 93,000 hectares of land was irrigated between 2000-2008, which amounted to 1.60 per cent

Thus, 13,71,550 hectares of land, which totaled to 23.63 per cent, was irrigated till the end of the year 2008.

It has to be mentioned here that out of the 93,000 hectares of land irrigated between the years 2000 and 2008, about 60,000 hectares are accounted for by projects which had been taken up between 1995 and 2000 and for which funds had been arranged earlier.

The above figures may be summarized in the following manner :

<b>Congress Rule:</b>		
<b>Year</b>	<b>Additional Irrigation (hectares)</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
1980-1985	1,11,490	1.92
1985-1990	78,150	1.35
1995-2000	2,85,860	4.92
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,75,500 hectares</b>	<b>8.19</b>

<b>Non-Congress Rule:</b>		
1990-1995	65,260	1.12
2000-2008	93,000	1.60
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,58,260 hectares</b>	<b>2.72</b>

In the comparison shown above, while 475,500 hectares of additional land had been irrigated during the 15 years of Congress rule, only 158,260 hectares additional land had been brought under irrigation during the 14 years of non-Congress rule. As has been said above, about 60,000 hectares of land out of 93,000 acres irrigated between 2000 and 2008 are accounted for by projects which had been initiated between 1995 and 2000 and for which funds had already been arranged. If this is considered, only 98,260 hectares of land was irrigated during the non-Congress rule compared to 534,500 hectares of land irrigated during the Congress rule.

It is clear from the above analysis that while rapid strides were taken between 1995 and 2000 in the realm of providing irrigation facilities, the lowest pace of growth was witnessed between 2000 and 2004. I worked as the Engineer-in-Chief of the Government of Odisha from 1996 to 1999 and as a consultant to the Government later. The steps taken during this period for the growth of irrigation are listed below.

The Chief Minister himself had accompanied a group of delegates to the headquarters of the World Bank in New York and the headquarters of the O.E.C.F. in Tokyo to arrange for a large loan for irrigation purposes.

1. Arrangement of a loan of Rs. 1,409 crore from the World Bank for the construction of five medium irrigation projects (Badanala, Hariharajor, Aparajanka, Baghua Second Phase and Harabhanga) and three large irrigation projects (Naraj Barrage, Mahanadi-Chitrotpala Project and Rengali Leftside Canal Project) as also for the improvement of six large and sixteen medium irrigation projects;
2. Construction of the Jambhira Project, Sapua-Badajora Project, Birupa-Genguti Project, Derajanga Second Phase, Manajora, Baghalati, Titilagarh and Govardhanpur Barrage as well as the expansion of five medium irrigation projects by arranging for a loan of Rs. 110.60 crore from the NABARD;
3. Commencing of the extension work of the important portions of four large irrigation projects, viz. Indravati South Canal, Rengali South Canal, Subarnarekha Main Canal and Anandapur Barrage

Project, with a grant of Rs. 92.10 crore from the Accelerated Result Irrigation Programme declared by the Central Government

4. Arrangement of an additional sum of Rs. 3 crore to launch six creek irrigation projects for which the Chief Minister himself had brought technical knowhow from overseas
5. Completion of the main canal of the Upper Kolab Irrigation Project and a canal of the Upper Indravati Project by arranging financial assistance amounting to Rs. 250 crore from the O.E.C.F. (Japan)
6. Security arrangements of eight completed dams were made by arranging an assistance of Rs. 116 crore from the World Bank
7. Starting the Deo, Bagha Barrage, Telengiri and Rukura medium irrigation projects along with the Kanpur large irrigation project from the resources of the State
8. Arrangement of financial resources amounting to Rs. 34 crore from the World Bank for the establishment of a hydrology project
9. Preparation of a prioritized master plan of the irrigation projects of the State to form a priority list of all possible large and medium irrigation projects within Odisha on the Mahanadi basin on the basis of profitability with regard to (a) increase in production and income (b) increase in employment (c) poverty alleviation and (d) removal of regional disparities. Even though no

progress has been made in this sphere in the last nine years, similar prioritized master plans should be made for other river basins without any further delay

10. Geometric models of all the tributaries in the Baitarani delta have been prepared. As a result, it will be possible to know the water level of the main river and the tributaries at any place if one knows the water level at the head of the delta during the floods. There is a necessity to prepare a balanced geometric model for the deltas of other rivers of Odisha and especially for the deltas of the Mahanadi, the Brahmani and the Baitarani as these three rivers are interconnected. The incumbent Government can take up this work even now although no progress has been made on this front in the last nine years since the ground work in this regard has been completed long back.
11. Preparation of detailed plans of the Subalaya Barrage and Rajnagar Dam to permanently control floods in the Mahanadi and Baitarani rivers respectively.

Floods can be eradicated and huge progress can be made in the provision of irrigation facilities, if these two plans are carried out.

Irrigation facilities should be provided with an eye on the progress of the State and politics should not interfere here. There was a dearth of funds in the State when Janaki Babu was the Chief Minister. There was also a shortage of funds at the Centre. Huge sums of money were neither available then nor is it



at present. But emphasis had been laid at that time on activating several new and old projects by getting assistance from agencies like the World Bank and the O.E.C.F, as well as by directing the resources of the State for the development of agriculture. Large irrigation projects like Rengali, Upper Kolab and Indravati are included under this. Several plans had also been made at the time, keeping in view future prospects of extensive irrigation facilities in the State.

\* \* \*

## Fast Track Irrigation

Dr. Bishnu Prasad Das ♦

**A**griculture is Odisha's mainstay and the State has around 6.56 million hectares of cultivable land. Its agricultural output is reduced by about 20-25 per cent because of floods and droughts. Due to this, the State Government had laid special emphasis on flood control and irrigation measures with the avowed objective of irrigating at least 50 per cent of the cultivable land.

### Devastating Floods - September 1980 and August 1982

In September 1980, the Hirakud Basin witnessed a rainfall of 300 to 350 mm within just three days, which had caused incalculable damage in South Odisha. As a result, about 12.5 lakh cusec of flood water entered the dam and the

---

♦ Dr. Bishnu Prasad Das is Chief Advisor, Water Resources Department, Government of Odisha

delta was flooded because of the limited capacity of the Dam. Investigations revealed that the possibilities of floods in the upper level and the lower level had to be assessed in advance for the proper management of the Hirakud Dam in the future that would help make full use of the flood prevention capacity of the Dam. The Dam authorities analyzed the data for 25 years (1957-1981) along with the International Hydrology Organization of Britain and settled on the method of assessment. This had helped control the most devastating flood of the century in 1982. There were rains of about 1,000 mm in widespread areas of Balangir and Kalahandi and 200 mm in the upper reaches of Hirakud between 28 and 30 August 1982. As a result, 16 lakh cusec and 9 lakh cusec of flood water had collected in the lower basin and upper basin respectively. As per the method of assessment adopted, the level of the Dam was reduced from 621 feet to 618 feet before the flood and the flood water of the upper end was stored in the Dam. No water was released from the Dam for about two to three days and the flood water in the delta was restricted to 16 lakh cusec. Had a wrong method been implemented (at least 5 lakh cusec water would have been released under ordinary circumstances) in the management of the Dam, there would have been 21 lakh cusec flood water in Kataka which would have caused havoc in the city of Kataka as well as the delta.

Extensive damages had been caused by floods to roads, to the Puri Canal and the Dalei Ghai. It was apprehended that kharif crop in 2 lakh hectares would be completely destroyed. But the Puri Canal and the Machhagan Canal were fully repaired on a war footing by the Government with the help of a central assistance of Rs.200 crore. In the process, only 20 per cent of the crop was damaged. It may be mentioned here that there had been rains of 581 mm within nine hours in the

Sambalpur city area on the night of 18 August 1982 and this was a record. A master plan was prepared in advance to expel the flood water from Sambalpur city. Two huge sluices were constructed in the Balibandha and Dhobijor Canals on the left side of the Mahanadi to ensure that flood waters did not enter the city. In the next phase (1996-97), a seven kilometer ring dam was constructed on the left of the Mahanadi to protect the city from flood. The distance between Sambalpur and Bargarh has also been reduced by 10 kilometer in the process.

As a result of the damages suffered in the 1982 floods, the State Government was able to pressurize the Central Government to get assistance to complete the ring road at Kataka and development work for the city of Bhubaneswar. The capacities of the dams of the Mahanadi and its tributaries were increased as well to hold 12 lakh cusec of flood water. The Naraj Barrage built after 1995 at a cost of Rs.150 crore helped in controlling floods in the Kathjodi River.

### **Unprecedented Progress of Irrigation Projects**

Under the leadership of Janaki Ballav Patnaik, the Congress Government once again took charge of the state administration in 1995. A review of the major and medium irrigation projects undertaken in the drought prone western Odisha revealed that 7 major, 14 medium and 160 minor projects operated only partially and that too, at a slow pace. It may be mentioned that while a sum of Rs.4,500 crore was needed to make these projects fully operational, an annual plan outlay of only Rs.200 crore for irrigation programmes was prepared in 1994-95. The machines used in penstock and electricity generation in the Indravati Hydro-Electric Project had been destroyed in the devastating floods of July 1991 and

the project had almost come to a standstill for the three years after that. The World Bank had stopped providing financial assistance for the project. However, the Government took certain definite steps to put the project back on the track. With assistance from the Power Finance Corporation and the expeditious irrigation programme of the Government of India, Rs.100 crore was invested per year and the irrigation capacity of the project was increased to 40,000 hectares by 1998-99. Generation of electricity was also started.

One of the most important programmes undertaken to complete all incomplete irrigation projects was the formation of the Odisha Water Resources Consolidation Project. This five-year project which started in November 1995 was undertaken with an investment of \$291 million with assistance from the World Bank. In Tamil Nadu and Haryana, such programmes had taken three years to take shape. However, the Government of Odisha had taken only eight months to get the approvals of the Central Water Commission, the Departments of Forests and Environment, the Tribal Development Corporation and the Planning Commission. A sum of Rs.439.14 crore was spent on irrigation during the financial year 1996-97 after obtaining Rs.200 crore from the Central Government and taking a loan of Rs.100 crore per annum from the NABARD. The Chief Minister also arranged for an assistance of Rs.1,100 crore from the Overseas Economic Consolidated Fund, Tokyo, Japan, to complete the left side canal of the Rengali Irrigation Project, the biggest irrigation project in Odisha. The project started in 1997. The incomplete projects at Kolab, Indravati, Patteru, Uparjanka, Badanala, Harabhangi, Harihorjor, Baghua and a few others had almost been completed by the year 2000 with this assistance. A further 200,000 hectares of land had been

irrigated as a result. Thus, about 274,000 hectares of land were irrigated between 1995 and 2000.

A comparative picture of the land area under irrigation in different periods is presented below.

Period	Irrigation Capacity Created (hectares)
1980-85	2,72,208
1985-90	1,82,095
1990-95	1,43,259
1995-2000	2,74,126

Out of the total land area under cultivation between 1995 and 2000, it was noted that 64,861 hectares in Kalahandi, 51,568 hectares in Koraput and 27,765 hectares in Ganjam had been irrigated. Earlier, all these used to be drought prone areas.

Apart from this, all approvals relating to the Lower Indra Project in Nuapara and Lower Sukatela Project in Balangir, including that of the Planning Commission, were obtained. Irrigation programme was started in 60,000 hectares from 1999 at an investment of Rs.600 crore. The following table clearly demonstrates the strong determination of the Government in this regard. It also indicates that irrigation capacity increased by about fifty per cent during the period.

Year	Plan Expenditure (Rs. Crore)	New Capacity (hectares)
1994-95	212.05	36,270
1995-96	273.40	48,480
1996-97	439.14	64,840
1997-98	637.85	80,000 (approx.)

It is a matter of regret that this progress has not been maintained after 2000. There is no doubt that the pace of the

irrigation projects initiated between 1995 and 2000 for the economic development and food security of KBK districts (Kalahandi, Bolangir and Koraput) have slowed down to a great extent.

\* \* \*

## Irrigation in Kalahandi

Er. Bhaskar Chandra Nayak ♦

**B**e it the Indus Valley, the Hwang Ho Valley in China, Egypt's Nile Valley or the Tygris-Euphrates Valley in Iraq, civilizations had come up with the realization that irrigation facilities were essential for the development of agriculture. Indeed, two things are important for the development of mankind. The first is the development of agriculture and the second is the development of industry. So in the pre-historic era, civilization had started with the development of agriculture. But with time and the progress of science, by the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, human civilization took a different shape which led to development of industry in Europe. With a constant growth in population, societies dependent on agriculture have been able to sustain themselves by producing more and more food grains through

---

♦ Er. Bhaskar Chandra Nayak is a former Superintending Engineer



the adoption of improved methods of agriculture. They have been able to successfully compete with industrially advanced nations.

India is an agricultural country and Odisha is an agricultural state. Mineral resources of other districts of Odisha are negligible except for Mayurbhanj, Keonjhar, Sundargarh, Jharsuguda and Angul. Kalahandi's resources are limited to only bauxite and gem stones. Thus, there are almost no industries in this district. Ninety per cent of the people in this district are dependent on forest products while the other 10 per cent depend on *kendu* leaves or some such cottage industry.

A discussion about the geographical situation of Kalahandi is necessary before discussing the progress of irrigation in the district. The Mahanadi is a major river of Odisha and its basin is located in Chhatishgarh. However, the Tel River, the chief tributary of the Mahanadi, has originated from Kalahandi. Similarly, China Godavari (it has been so renamed after the union of Indravati, Kolab and Machhkund), a tributary of the Godavari River, has originated in Kalahandi and Koraput. Kalahandi and Koraput have divided the waters of the Mahanadi and the Godavari between themselves. Thus, if Kataka lies downstream, towards the lower end of the Mahanadi, Kalahandi may be described as lying at its source, its head. Therefore, it is but natural that the waters of the Mahanadi flow away from it and that it should be a drought prone area. Almost nothing had been done for the development of irrigation facilities in Odisha during the long 200 years of British rule. Only a few arnicotts had been built on the Mahanadi, Brahmani, Baitarani and the Rushikulya after the Na'Anka Famine of 1866. Work had been completed in two reservoirs in the Bhanjanagar and Sorada. Apart from these, the Maharaja of Paralakhemundi, the King of Khallikote and the Maharaja

of Mayurbhanj had built a few small reservoirs to facilitate irrigation. No important step had been taken in the district of Kalahandi in this regard. The total land area irrigated in Odisha before Independence was around 177,920 hectares. By 1980, this had increased to 735,790 hectares. The irrigated areas of Sambalpur and Bolangir through the Hirakud Dam and the delta-irrigated areas of Kataka and Puri accounted for a major chunk of this area. Till 2008, the total land under irrigation in Odisha was around 13,71,550 hectares. The irrigated area of the undivided Kalahandi district accounted for 198,282 hectares. In other words, Kalahandi accounted for 14.46 per cent of the total land under irrigation in Odisha.

Kalahandi came under the public scanner for the first time after Independence because of the drought of 1966. Many people compare this drought with the Na'Anka Famine. Crops had been totally destroyed in most of the blocks of Kalahandi due to lack of rainfall. The memory of the famine scares people even now. The drought of 1966 as well as the droughts of 1974, 1977 and 1979 had attracted the attention of the Government of India. Kalahandi became the centre of attention of the whole of India when incidents like desperate parents selling off their children hit the headlines. Rajiv Gandhi, the then Prime Minister of India and Sonia Gandhi, his wife, had visited the village where children had been sold by their parents. Thus from 1980 onwards, the Government of India took a keen interest in the development of agriculture in Kalahandi. Phulbani and Kalahandi districts were declared to be drought prone areas and the districts of Kalahandi, Bolangir and Koraput (K.B.K.) were declared to be underdeveloped areas. Plans were prepared for the all-round development of Kalahandi district.

### **A Profile of Undivided Kalahandi District Till 2008**

Total cultivable land:	549,000 hectares
Irrigated kharif land:	198,272 hectares
Land irrigated through major & medium irrigation projects:	103,840 hectares
Land irrigated through minor irrigation projects:	8,600 hectares
Land irrigated through lift irrigation:	23,492 hectares

Another 32,360 hectares of land had been irrigated by the Department of Soil Conservation. Till Independence, the total cultivable area under irrigation in the Kalahandi district was negligible. In this context, a question that arises naturally is this—how has it been possible for the total cultivable land under irrigation to come up to 1,98,272 hectares or 36 per cent within such a short period?

This has been possible because of the dams built on the Indravati River (tributary of Godavari), the Tel River and its tributaries such as Indra, Reta, Sagada, Utei, Udanti, Janka and Anga rivers flowing through this district. The Government prepared a detailed plan with the help of distinguished engineers of the State after a stable government was formed in Odisha in 1980. The Indravati Multipurpose Project chiefly led to the development of irrigation in the district.

### **The Indravati Project**

Just as Egypt is described as the Gift of the Nile, Kalahandi may similarly be described as the Gift of the Indravati. The Indravati river valley has originated from Thuamal-Rampur in Kalahandi and the hilly areas of Koraput. It would seem that God had especially created the river valley for Kalahandi. How

else would it be possible to build four reservoirs for four dams in a straight line in the valleys of the Indravati, Podagada and Muraba rivers? Moreover, the drought prone Kalahandi district lies 336 meters below this reservoir. The water of the reservoir helps produce 660 mega watts of electricity besides irrigating 150,828 hectares of land. Already 125,344 hectares of land has been irrigated. Work is in progress for the rest of the 25,500 hectares of land. The prospects of industries coming up in the district are quite bright in view of the fact that power generation is also in progress along with provision of irrigation facilities.

### **Medium and other major irrigation projects**

The Lower Indra, Utei and Aparajanka irrigation projects are the other major and medium irrigation projects that have been undertaken in the district. It is possible to irrigate 30,960 hectares of land through the Udanti Irrigation Project.

A brief overview of major and medium irrigation projects:

Upper Indravati	: 128,000 hectares
Reta	: 8,500 hectares
Utei	: 9,300 hectares
Lower Indra	: 13,640 hectares
Sundara	: 4,400 hectares
Aparajanka	: 9,400 hectares
Khankara	: 3,340 hectares
Saipala	: 200 hectares

Apart from the above, efforts have been made to produce more food grains in Kalahandi by undertaking a number of minor irrigation projects. A few of them are mentioned below.

<b>Block</b>	<b>Project</b>	<b>Irrigated area</b>
Bhawanipatana	Medinipur	396 hectares
	Pipala Nala	809 hectares
Golamunda	Nuagaon	769 hectares
	Alabhata	514 hectares
	Mahalinga	445 hectares
Kesinga	Reta	1,214 hectares
Kokasara	Behera	2,428 hectares
	Suini	1,092 hectares
Lanjigarh	Karakata	728 hectares
Kankani	Nala	500 hectares
Madanpur	Rampur Kaliganga	486 hectares
Narla	Narla	825 hectares
	Telimal	472 hectares
	Tulapada	2,023 hectares

This discussion will not be complete without a brief overview of the unexpected progress witnessed in the provision of irrigation facilities in Odisha after 1980 along with the development of irrigation facilities in the Kalahandi district.

From 1947 to 1980, there was no stable government in Odisha. Either there was a coalition Government or the Congress formed the Government with the help of other political parties. It was only in 1980 when the Congress got a clear majority that they were able to provide a stable government in the State for the first time, with Janaki Ballav Patnaik as the Chief Minister. Only 735,790 hectares of land had been irrigated in Odisha until then. This was 12.72 per cent of the total cultivable land. This would come to about 19 per cent if minor irrigation projects, lift irrigation projects, wells and other means of irrigation were taken into account. This had gone up to 33 per cent by the year 2000.

Only the Hirakud and Delta Irrigation Projects had been completed in Odisha by 1980. Work had just started on the Kolab, Rengali and Poteru projects. Not much progress had been achieved in the case of medium irrigation projects such as Harabhangi, Badanala, Harihara Jora, Janka, Ramiala, Sarafabada and Talasara. But a revolutionary change came about in the state of affairs after Janaki Babu took charge as the Chief Minister. Niranjan Patnaik became the Minister of Irrigation. The benefits derived as a result of laying emphasis on the development of irrigation and power generation may be appreciated from the following description.

- (i) New barrages were constructed on the Mahanadi and the Birupa in place of the arnicotts built in the nineteenth century and which had become extremely old by now. This had been done in the lines of the arnicotts built on the Godavari and the Krishna. A ring road was built for the protection of Kataka town on the banks of the rivers Mahanadi and Kathjori besides the construction of the barrages. One thousand hectares of land was reclaimed for construction of houses and Greater Kataka was built. All this was possible because of Chief Minister Patnaik's initiatives.
- (ii) Work on the Upper Kolab, Poteru and Rengali projects as also another eighteen medium irrigation projects was progressing at a slow pace in 1980. Only the survey work had been completed for the Indravati Project. The work could not progress because of lack of funds. A conflict was also raging at the time with Madhya Pradesh regarding the

division of water resources. During that time, Arjun Singh was the Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh and it was only after liaising with him that obtaining the approval of the Central Government became possible for the Chiroli project in Sambalpur and projects like Janka and Indra in Kalahandi.

- (iii) Subarnarekha is an inter-state river of Odisha and Bihar. The Subarnarekha Project had been started and it had made initial progress only because of the Government of Janaki Babu which had liaised with the Government of Bihar for the purpose. Its progress slackened after Janaki Babu was out of power in 1990.
- (iv) Indravati is a multi-purpose project. Irrigation facility was to be provided by transferring its water through tunnels from the Godavari Valley to the Mahanadi Valley. The project could not be approved because of lack of funds. It was approved only as a hydro-electric project because of the efforts of Patnaik. Apart from the generation of power, it helped irrigate 125,000 hectares of land later which helped in the production of large quantities of food grains in the drought prone Kalahandi district.
- (v) Large areas were getting inundated due to the Tikarpara and Bhimkund Projects because of which there were mass uprisings by the people belonging to the districts of Boudh, Sonapur and Keonjhar. The coastal areas had to be simultaneously protected from floods in the Mahanadi and the

Baitarani rivers. Janaki Babu had directed the senior engineers of the State to find a solution to the problem so that people would not be affected by floods.

- (vi) Minor and lift irrigation facilities were limited to Ganjam and other coastal districts. Patnaik had made efforts for its proliferation. He had made use of the grants for droughts to execute a number of minor and lift irrigation projects in western Odisha. These included Kalimati, Koreja Jodi, Jaunria, Jagadalpur and Hanumantia in Keonjhar district, Hatia Nala, Padmapur Nala and Sanamachakandana in Sambalpur, Baghajharana, Mashanikata and Mathanapola in Bolangir, Sarafagarh and Mankada in Dhenkanal and Pipala Nala, Behera, Reta and Narla in Kalahandi.
- (vii) The terrible flood of 1982 in the Mahanadi was a challenge for the Government. River embankments and canals were repaired on a war footing at the time and rehabilitation work had been undertaken swiftly to set an example in the districts of Kataka and Puri.
- (viii) Irrigation work gained momentum in Odisha between 1995 and 2000. This period was the third term of Janaki Ballav Patnaik as the Chief Minister and Basanta Kumar Biswal was then the Minister for Irrigation. Irrigation facilities were extended to an additional 285,000 hectares of land. In the



process, five per cent more land was irrigated within a span of five years.

Total irrigated land constituted only three per cent of the total cultivable land before Independence. This had increased to nineteen per cent between 1947 and 1980. However, this had reached 33 per cent because of the strong leadership and dedication of Janaki Ballav Patnaik. At one time, Kalahandi was infamous in the whole of the country because of drought and famine which compelled people to sell their children. Today, irrigation facilities have been provided to 200,000 hectares of land there and Kalahandi has witnessed a total transformation.

\* \* \*

## Strengthening the Mahanadi & Birupa Weirs after a Century

Er. Sushil Chandra Kar ♦

**T**he Mahanadi and Birupa arnicotts at Jobra and Jagatpur near Kataka were built in the 19th century during British rule to irrigate 80,000 hectares of land in the Mahanadi Delta through the Taladanda, Kendrapara and the High Level Range I canals.

As those arnicotts had completed their designed life span of 100 years and as there was apprehension of discontinuance of irrigation in the 80,000 hectares of land (increased to 167,000 hectares after availability of more water from the Hirakud Dam), the J.B. Patnaik Government in the 1980s renewed both the structures as full scale barrages by arranging for an assistance of 83 million U.S. dollars from the World Bank. Revamping of both the arnicotts to full scale barrages which were renamed

---

♦ Er. Sushil Chandra Kar is former Chief Engineer and an expert on the Mahanadi River

as the Mahanadi Barrage and the Birupa Barrage has not only stabilized irrigation to 1,67,000 hectares of cultivable land but also improved the communication greatly due to provision of all-weather-roads over the barrages.

In the event of a flood peak of 42,475 cubic meters per second at the head of the Mahanadi Delta (hundred years' flood), the renewed Mahanadi Barrage would carry 15,300 cubic meters of water per second and the renewed Birupa Barrage would carry 2070 cubic meters of water per second. The remaining water would flow over Naraj Barrage in Kathjodi.

Again, the spillway crest level of the renewed Mahanadi Barrage is 18.50 meters with an under sluice crest level of 16 meters and with a total waterway of 1728 meters (96 bays of 18 meters each). Similarly, the spillway crest level of the renewed Birupa Barrage is 16.50 meters with an under-sluice crest level of 14.50 meters. The renewed Birupa Barrage has a total waterway of 180 meters.

Both the renewed Barrages have been built some distance downstream from the old weirs. So the new Mahanadi Barrage is located 60 meters downstream from the old Mahanadi weir at Jobra and the new Birupa Barrage is 300 meters downstream from the old Birupa weir at Jagatpur.

The two barrages mentioned above constitute the life line of the old Kataka district serving a million farmers who benefit immensely from an assured irrigation for two annual crops and the barrages serve as a link to Kataka on one hand and Choudwar on the other, reducing the distance between them by eight kilometers. The huge spread of water in the barrage area again has its cooling effect during the summer months for the citizens of Kataka.

## Odisha: The Pioneer in Power Sector Reforms

Er. B.C. Jena ♦

**R**eforms in the power sector have been a hot topic of discussion, particularly after the tariff order of the OERC in 2001. Irate consumers have started doubting the rationale of going for the reforms and restructuring and have even demanded a roll back of the reforms. Those of us with a long association with the power industry are asked whether it was necessary to go for such sweeping structural changes in the SEBs. Was it not possible to achieve the same result by internal reorganization or by introducing a tougher method of accountability? Before answering these questions, it is perhaps worthwhile to have a close look at the power sector from its inception till date.

---

♦ Er. B.C. Jena is former Chairman, Odisha Electricity Regulatory Commission. At present, he is the Chairman of CESU.

India got its first power plant, reportedly the first in Asia too, on 10 November 1897. It was a hydroelectric station with a capacity of 130 KW, set up at Sidropong near Darjeeling town. On 17 April 1899, the CESC gave Calcutta its first electricity power supply at a place then known as Emumburg Lane near Prinsep Street. By 1900, the total installed capacity in the country was 1.1 MW, of which 1 MW was thermal and 0.1 MW was hydro. In these initial 50 years or so till Independence, the generation and distribution of electricity was through private sector efforts only. In Odisha, we had the Kataka Electricity Supply Company, the Puri Electricity Supply Company, the Balasore Electricity Supply Company and the Berhampur Electricity Supply Company.

Hydroelectric stations were developed along the Western Ghats by the Tatas, starting the supply of power to Bombay. Along with hydro plants, coal based thermal power stations were also set up, though only by private companies. These companies were licensees as per the Indian Electricity Act, 1910, and were usually managed by large and well-known companies like Martin Burn, B.N. Alias, Kilburn and others.

Generation and distribution of electricity grew from 1.1 MW to 1363 MW by the year 1947. However, in Independent India, it was felt that widespread availability of electricity was vital for the country's development. This was the consideration which resulted in the enactment of the Electricity (Supply) Act, 1948, which aimed at the rationalization of generation and distribution of electricity in India and created Electricity Boards to achieve the objective. The 1956 Industrial Policy Resolution also emphasized the need for development of the sector through State initiative and virtually barred the private utilities in adding generation capacities. The SEBs were empowered to set up power generating stations but not Nuclear

Power Stations, which remained with the Central Government. The Central Electricity Authority (CEA) was formed to oversee the integrated development of the sector.

In the initial decades after Independence, State Governments received Central Plan Assistance to set up generating stations and construct the transmission and distribution systems. However, power demand increased at an exponential rate. To meet this increasing demand, Central Sector Organizations like the NTPC and the NHPC were formed. The PGCIL was hived off from the NTPC to be exclusively in charge of transmission and to develop the interconnected grid system across the country. The Rural Electrification Corporation (REC) was set up to assist the State Electricity Boards to take up rural electrification works and the Power Finance Corporation was set up to fund state projects. Five Regional Electricity Boards (REBs) were created to monitor and regulate generation by the different agencies and to keep a proper control of export and import of power among states.

These steps yielded remarkable results. The achievement in the first 50 years after Independence was stupendous. The installed capacity, which was only 1363 MW in 1947, increased to 85919 MW by 31 March 1997. As on 31 May 2009, it stood at 149,111 MW. The total energy generation shot up from a meager 5000 MU to 723,556 MU per annum. During the same period, the number of consumers increased 59 times and the per capita increase of consumption of power, approximately 47 times.

But in spite of these remarkable achievements, the country was reeling under the following problems in the power sector.

1. Power is a critical indicator of development. For an overall GDP growth of 6 per cent, the growth of

power generation should be at a rate of 9 per cent. The CEA has estimated that by 2012, the installed capacity in the country should be 240,000 MW to cater to the demand, which meant an additional capacity of 100,000 MW and calling for an investment of about Rs. 500,000 crores. A similar amount would be needed for building transmission and distribution capacity to evacuate the power. In other words, an investment to the tune of Rs. 10 lakh crores in the power sector is needed against a likely outlay of Rs. 2.5 lakh crores. This estimate is based on the annual rate of capacity addition during 1997-2000 which was around 4,000 MW. The resources for repair and maintenance works (R&M) are also pathetically deficient. There is no way the needed resources can be raised without attracting investment into the power sector from private investors and by generating internal resources.

2. Under section 54 of the Electricity (Supply) Act, 1948, the SEBs were required to have a return of at least 3 per cent on their capital after meeting all expenses. This was to be achieved by adjustment of tariffs with shortfalls being met by State subsidies. This formula started failing after the mid 80's. The annual commercial losses of the SEBs in the country increased from Rs. 1,565 crores in 1985-86 to around Rs. 19,546 crores in 2005-06. At the national level, the effective subsidy, which is the difference between the cost of supply and the revenue realization, to agricultural and domestic sectors worked out to Rs. 27,227 crores by 1998-99. However, cross subsidization, mainly

from commercial and industrial sectors to domestic and agricultural sectors, also increased to Rs. 10,120 crores, representing about 37 per cent of the subsidy provided to these sectors.

3. The efficiency level (PLF) of the power stations in the country is 77.19 per cent (2008-09). This should be optimally between 80 and 90 per cent.
4. The total system losses which include transmission and distribution losses and commercial losses in different states is more than 30 per cent whereas the acceptable level of losses in the Indian context should be within 15 per cent.
5. India's per capita consumption is 704.2 kwh, less than one fifth of the world average of 2659 kwh. The per capita consumption of China, another major developing country with a comparable population size, is more than 2000 kwh, nearly thrice that of India.

Thus, the power sector has made itself non-sustainable in the present form. In spite of the remarkable achievements, what might have really gone wrong with the SEBs leading to such a situation?

### **Major factors contributing to non-sustainability of the power sector**

- a. Lack of commercial orientation and conflicting objectives- *is it a social service or a commercially viable*



*activity?* Then there is Government interference in the day-do-day running of the utility despite 'autonomy' promised to it. This proved that MoUs with the Government are as good as useless

- b. Adverse capital structure
- c. Huge loss in transmission and distribution
- d. Unmanageable size and monolithic structure
- e. Unrealistic pricing policy, resulting in a skewed tariff structure. Initially, many of the State Governments tried to recover a part of the costs by charging commercial and industrial consumers a little more. Over the years, this kind of cross subsidy reached a level where it was almost impossible for power intensive industries to survive after paying such high electricity charges. As an aftermath of this unrealistic pricing policy, the industrial consumption either remained stagnant or it came down since many industries went in for captive generation. The result was that the mechanism of cross subsidy became counter-productive.
- f. Poor billing and collection
- g. Poor service due to want of repair and maintenance and lack of spares
- h. Manpower related problems like over staffing, low skill levels and lack of training. Also, low motivation levels coupled with low accountability.

- i. Misuse of the statutory power of the State Governments to issue directives to SEBs.

To debate the crisis in the electricity sector, the chief ministers of the country had several rounds of discussions. After protracted deliberations in December 1991, a new National Economic Policy was adopted in which the power sector featured prominently. The new policy, which went for liberalization and welcomed private participation in infrastructural development like power, roads etc., set the following objectives for the power sector.

- i) To reduce reliance on the Government and raise resources from private sources for generation, transmission and distribution
- ii) To make available power at a reasonable cost
- iii) To ensure stable and good quality power supply
- iv) To supply power on demand

It was against this backdrop of acute resource crunch that the Central Government adopted the new economic policy and decided to open up the power sector to private investors, both local and foreign.

This marked a reversal of policy followed in the past and it welcomed an increasing role for the private sector in meeting the growing demand for funds and greater sector efficiency. The unsatisfactory financial health of the SEBs and the lack of structural safeguards, however, have resulted in poor response from private investors. The reforms of the type pioneered in Odisha were meant to deal with those weaknesses in the legal and commercial framework governing electricity.

## Power Sector Reforms—Odisha Scenario

Formed on 31 March 1961, the OSEB took over the generation and transmission from the State Government. Several private supply companies engaged in distribution of power were taken over by the OSEB through a Government Notification. By 1970-2000, the total consumption of power was 1900 MU and the consumer strength was about 1.70 lakhs. By 2007-08 the consumption was 10,759.2 MU with the consumer strength growing to 25.89 lakhs.

Till 1990-91, the OSEB managed to carry on its business with the help of the subsidy mechanism mentioned earlier. After 1990-91, the financial burden on the OSEB increased tremendously as it started taking large loans from financial institutions like the REC, the PFC and the LIC to meet the cost of massive rural electrification, energization of lift irrigation points and construction of new lines and sub-stations. The State Government was not in a position to meet its subsidy which had accumulated to over Rs. 369 crores by March 1996. As a result, maintenance works at different levels of generation, transmission and distribution suffered. No money was available to meet the consumer requirements for extension of lines and to set up sub-stations to cater to increasing load. Initially, till the year 1980-81, Odisha was a marginally surplus state in power but due to massive industrialization and rural electrification, the demand of the State increased during the eighties and nineties. With the rising trend of power consumption, the then State Government took two highly laudable steps to increase the generation in the sector. In the year 1989, the then Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi laid the foundation stone for a 4x210 MW thermal power plant in the IB Valley to be constructed by the state-owned OPGC and a 2x500 MW plant at Kaniha to be constructed by the

NTPC. It so happened that construction work started both at the IB Valley and at Kaniha simultaneously but the first unit of the IB Thermal was synchronized ahead of the Kaniha unit which got delayed due to some technical snag.

In the subsequent years, the demand for power supply outstripped generation, which forced the State Government and the OSEB to impose load restrictions by way of power cuts. By 1993-94, the gap between peak demand and supply reached an alarming proportion of 40 per cent to 47 per cent. Frequent power cuts were a regular feature. The situation improved only when the unit-1 of the IB valley Thermal Power Plant was commissioned. The NTPC units came up later.

The political leadership in Odisha at that time could visualize the gravity of the situation and the problems which would emerge in the future. So in April 1992, the Government of Odisha and the OSEB agreed upon a Power Sector Reforms Programme. The Chief Minister of Odisha conveyed the State Government's decision to reform the Power Sector in the State to the World Bank.

However, the real reform work started only between 1995 and 1999 when the then State Government, under the leadership of J.B. Patnaik, took the following positive steps in initiating power reforms which were the first in the country.

**June 1995:** The Working Group Reports about power reforms are finalized. The nine working groups are merged and seven working groups are created. The work is internalized.

**Nov. 1995:** The Legislature of Odisha passes the Orissa Electricity Reforms Act, 1995.

**3 January 1996:** The Orissa Electricity Reforms Act, 1995 was approved by the President of India.

**March 1996:** The State Government notified that 1 April 1996 will be the date on which the Orissa Electricity Reforms Act, 1995 shall come into force.

**1 April 1996:** The OSEB was split into the GRIDCO and the OHPC. The GRIDCO takes over the transmission and distribution business and the OHPC takes over the Hydel generation business of the OSEB.

**July 1996:** Odisha Electricity Regulatory Commission was constituted.

**19 November 1997:** The GRIDCO divided its distribution functions into four geographical zones, namely the Western Zone, the Northern Zone, the Southern Zone and the Central Zone. The GRIDCO incorporated four wholly owned subsidiaries namely WESCO, NESCO, SOUTHCO and CESCO under the Companies Act, 1956.

**28 November 1997 to 18 December 1998:** The process of privatization through international competitive bidding and due diligence by prospective investors was completed.

**26 November 1998:** Section 23 of the Orissa Electricity Reform Act was amended, empowering the State Government to draw Transfer Schemes to transfer and vest in a subsidiary company of the GRIDCO, any undertaking or part thereof comprising property, interest in property, rights and liabilities and personnel etc. on such terms and conditions as may be specified in the Transfer Scheme. Pursuant to the above, the Orissa Electricity Reforms (Transfer of Assets, Liabilities, Proceedings and Personnel of GRIDCO to distribution Companies) Rules, 1998 was notified by the State Government.

**1 November 1998-25 February 1999:** Evaluation of bids and selection of the private strategic investor were done.

**27 March 1999 :** The State Government accepted the recommendation of the Board of the GRIDCO and conveyed its approval for the disinvestment of equity.

**1 April 1999:** The management of the three Companies, namely the NESCO, the WESCO and the SOUTHCO were handed over to the BSES, pursuant to the agreement signed.

**1 September 1999:** The management of the CESCO was handed over to the AES.

Fifty one per cent of disinvestment of equity of the distribution companies fetched a premium value of Rs 159 crores against a book value of Rs. 115 crores.

The World Bank, in a letter to the Secretary, Department of Energy, greatly appreciated the positive and expeditious steps taken by the State Government to conclude the privatization of distribution functions ahead of the schedule of December 2000 and characterized the process as done in a most transparent and detailed manner conforming to international standards.

Village electrification during the reform period was at its peak, contrary to a feeling that rural power supply was not a priority in the reform agenda. The table below published by the Ministry of Power, Government of India, will show the level of Village Electrification in Odisha vis-a-vis other States of the Country.

Rural Electrification work during the post reforms period was the highest in the national context (report of the Ministry of Power)

States	IX Plan Trgets	No of villages electrified during					Achievement	Total %
		97-98	98-99	99-00	00-01	01-02		
Arunachal Pradesh	579	38	48	24	35	-	145	25.00
Assam	2798	20	-	-	-	NA	20	0.70
Bihar & Jharkhand	4500	5	8	43	37	13	106	2.00
Jammu & Kashmir	203	14	NA	NA	NA	NA	14	6.00
MP & Chattisgarh	3785	463	300	87	16	-	866	22.80
Meghalaya	100	43	-	-	8	NA	51	51.00
Odisha	3000	800	817	748	42	-	2407	80.20
Rajasthan	5000	698	685	510	465	49	2407	48.00
UP & Uttaranchal	6000	851	711	476	418	24	2480	41.30
West Bengal	2800	48	83	113	81	32	357	12.75

Just after the privatization of distribution functions, there was a super cyclone on 29 October 1999, affecting the coastal areas of the State. The cyclone severely damaged the transmission and distribution lines and sub-stations, paralyzing life. Meanwhile, there was utter confusion at the government level as to who would bear the cost of the restoration of power supply since distribution functions were in private hands. The fact that the assets belong to the State and were being jointly owned by the GRIDCO, a State Government owned PSU and a private strategic investor who was in-charge of the utility, was ignored. Had the cyclone occurred prior to privatization then the State Government would have borne the entire cost of restoration. However, during this period of uncertainty, the World Bank immediately sent a team to assess the damage caused by the super cyclone. According to the survey, the asset loss was to the extent of Rs. 350 crores. GRIDCO alone suffered a transmission loss of Rs. 216 crores. In the Project Steering Committee meeting, the World Bank took the decision to permit the utilization of such line materials which have already been received for World Bank funded projects, for restoration

of power supply in the affected areas. And in this manner, power supply was restored without any Government assistance. It is understood that later on, after a series of deliberations, the State Government decided that in the event of such calamities, it will provide financial assistance from the State Relief Fund.

### Measures Envisaged by the OER Act

- (i) **Restructuring unbundling** generation, transmission and distribution. The rationale was that the requirements of generation, transmission and distribution are quite different in terms of staff skills. In an integrated utility, there is constant movement between generation, transmission and distribution in the name of 'broadening experience'. But it defeats specialization which is actually the need.
- (ii) **Regulation.** A transparent and independent regulatory body to set tariffs and oversee the entire sector.
- (iii) **Competition.** Competitive bidding for new generation and later, for transmission and distribution.
- (iv) **Privatization.** Private sector participation in generation, transmission and distribution which was aimed at distancing Governments from the Utilities and to attract private investment into the sector.
- (v) **Tariff.** Tariff reforms at bulk power transmission and retail level in such a manner that in a few years, tariffs will recover costs.



In July 1996, the Odisha Electricity Regulatory Commission was constituted. On 19 November 1997, the GRIDCO divided its distribution functions into four geographical zones namely the Western Zone, the North-Eastern Zone, the Southern Zone and the Central Zone. The GRIDCO incorporated these four wholly owned subsidiaries namely the WESCO, NESCO, SOUTHCO and the CESCO under the Companies Act, 1956. The assets and liabilities were assigned to these Companies with an equity base for each Company. A decision was taken at the Government level for privatization of the distribution system in the State through a joint sector or joint venture route in which the proposed equity sharing will be as under:

Private Strategic investor (PSI)	51%
GRIDCO	39%
Employees Trust	10%

Private Investors were selected through a process of international competitive bidding and 51 per cent equity was off-loaded to them on an overall additional value of 38.6 per cent. There was no asset sale. The private companies were responsible for the day-to-day management of the distribution companies because of their majority shareholding.

They were issued retail supply licenses by the Regulatory Commission which also had the authority to regulate their functioning as per the provisions of the OER Act, 1995. Three distribution companies, namely the WESCO, NESCO and the SOUTHCO, were taken over by M/s BSES of Mumbai from 1 April 1999 and the CESCO was taken over by the AES of USA with effect from 1 September 1999. The State Government, which was paying a subsidy to the tune of Rs. 300 Crores per year by 31 March 1996 during the time of the OSEB, did not

pay any subsidy from 1 April 1996 onwards after the split up of the OSEB and the creation of the GRIDCO and the OHPC.

The Central Government brought out the Electricity Regulatory Act, 1998, which sought to distance the Government from the functioning of the SEBs and to create independent regulatory bodies at the Central and State levels. The main objects of this Act were the rationalization of electricity tariff, transparency in policy formulations, promotion of efficient and environmentally benign policies and a greater involvement of the private sector.

However, the need was felt for a more forward looking Act which would remove the various entry barriers into generation, transmission and distribution and would look into the setting up of the CPPs. On 10 June 2003, the New Central Electricity Act was enacted and it came into force from the same date. The Act repealed all the three Central Acts namely the Indian Electricity Act, 1910, the Supply Act, 1948 and the CERC Act, 1998.

The Act seeks to establish a more competitive market in the power sector by removing restrictive barriers:

- \* Steps were taken to de-license the industry
- \* Social interests were taken into consideration
- \* Provisions were made for the protection of consumer interests by creating the GRF and the Ombudsman.
- \* Policies consistent with environment friendly objective were encouraged.

### **Salient features of the Electricity Act, 2003**

The objectives of the Act are to consolidate the laws relating to the generation, transmission, distribution, trading and use of

electricity and generally for taking measures conducive to the development of the electricity industry, promoting competition therein, protecting the interest of the consumers and the supply of electricity to all areas, rationalization of electricity tariff, ensuring transparent policies regarding subsidies, promotion of efficient and environmentally benign policies, constitution of the Central Electricity Authority, the Regulatory Commissions and the establishment of the Appellate Tribunal and such matters connected therewith or incidental thereto.

It will be worthwhile to mention here that substantial benefits accrued to the State Government after restructuring and privatization of the distribution functions. These are as follows:

- (i) Previously, the State Government was paying subsidy to the erstwhile OSEB. This amount was around 350 crores per annum and went on increasing year after year. It is estimated that the State Government has saved around 4400 crores by way of not paying subsidy to the power sector.
- (ii) The State Government received an amount of 603 crores by disinvesting 49 per cent of the equity worth Rs. 280 crores in the OPGC. Each year the State Government is receiving 159 crores by disinvesting around Rs. 75 to 80 crores towards dividend from this company right from the year 1999-2000.
- (iii) The State Government received Rs 51 per cent of shares in the four distribution companies.
- (iv) Due to better billing and collection by the distribution companies, the electricity duty paid to the State Government increased from Rs. 121.35 crores in 1995-96 to Rs. 327.46 crores by 2007-08.

All of the above could be achieved only through the Power Sector Reforms in the State. Recently, the Central Power Minister, while answering some questions in Parliament, mentioned that the State of Odisha has gained maximum due to reforms of the power sector amongst all other reforming states and has gained Rs. 775 crores after wiping out all past losses. This statement gave a befitting reply to critics and has proved that the Power Sector Reforms in Odisha have been successful.

\* \* \*

## Towards Energy Security

Er. Jayadev Mishra ♦

**O**disha is one of the first States in the country where a power station was erected. According to the history of electrical power in India, Derjeeling was the first to have a power station in 1905, though of a very limited capacity. Odisha is probably the second, with a hydro power station in the erstwhile princely state of Deogarh, where hydro power was generated from the Pradhanpat falls in 1917. Since then, the country has made tremendous progress in power generation, both hydro and thermal.

I am fortunate to be associated with the development of the power sector in Odisha from 1954 onwards. I have been a ground breaker with most of the projects, starting with the Machhkund Hydro Electrical Scheme, the Balimela Hydro

---

♦ Er. Jayadev Mishra is former Advisor, Energy Department, Government of Odisha

Electrical Scheme, the Hirakud Transmission System, the Talcher Thermal, the EHT Transmission Schemes of Odisha State Electricity Board, the Upper Indravati Hydro Electric Scheme, the NALCO's Captive Power Plant and the IB Thermal Project.

The first exercise of the reforms in the power sector in Odisha was done with the formation of the Odisha Power Generation Corporation (OPGC) in 1984, when Janaki Ballav Patnaik was the Chief Minister. This was the second corporation of its kind in India after the one at Karnataka. Many other states followed this example later on. One of the major policy decisions of the Government of India in economic reforms is disinvestment. It was again Odisha, under the chief ministership of Janaki Ballav Patnaik, which carried out the first disinvestment, pertaining to the IB Valley Thermal Power Plant which was under the Odisha Power Generation Corporation. This was done in a transparent manner through international bidding. The highest bidder was the American Company, AES. Forty nine per cent of the Government share valued at Rs.204.24 crores was sold at Rs.603.40 crores.

I was involved in the formation of the OPGC in 1984 and in the disinvestment of the OPGC in October 1998. I took over as the first Managing Director of the Corporation on 7 December 1984. It was a real challenge to establish a major power plant in the state sector. I can well remember the keen interest and active support of the Chief Minister at every step for the establishment of the project. Although the power position in the State at that time appeared to be comfortable because of the functioning of the Talcher Thermal Stage-II (1982-1983) and the Rengali I & II (1985-1986), the Government had the foresight to plan for total power requirement of the State for the next two decades. As the power sector was not open to private

investment at that time, the State Government formed a power generation corporation of its own on the model of the National Thermal Power Corporation (NTPC). The State Government levied five paise per unit as special electricity duty to generate Rs. 20 crores as equity capital for the 4X210 MW project, which was estimated at Rs. 840 crores. On 17 December 1984, the Central Power Ministry approved the IB Thermal Power Project, subject to environment clearance as well as clearance from the Planning Commission. After both the clearances, the IB Thermal Power Project was included in the Odisha State Plan.

The next big hurdle was project financing and to discuss this issue, a meeting was organized at the Odisha Bhawan, New Delhi, by the Chief Minister. The Finance Minister, the Power Secretary, the Secretary, Planning Commission, and the Chairman, BHEL were invited. The revised cost of 4X210 M.W. came to Rs.1600 crores. As the cost was beyond the financial ability of the State, it was decided to take up the first two units of 2X210 M.W. at Rs.800 crores with BHEL equipments, loan from the Power Finance Corporation and State Budget financing. The Power Finance Corporation of India, which was a newly formed company at that time, was reluctant to finance such projects. But the Chief Minister, taking me with him, arranged for a meeting with Vasant Sathe, Union Power Minister, at his residence in Delhi. The Minister told us that the Power Finance Corporation did not finance any new project, it was meant instead to provide for repairs, maintenance and renovation of old projects. The Chief Minister, however, successfully persuaded him to agree to finance the project. On 3 June 1989, late Rajiv Gandhi who was then the Prime Minister, laid the foundation of this project along with the Talcher Super Thermal Plant at Kanhia. It was a very big achievement for the

State Government. The Talcher Super Thermal Plant was one of the five such mega projects in the country. Each such project was to produce 3000 M.W. of power.

The next big step of power production was the 600 M.W. Captive Power Plant of NALCO. At that time, it was visualized that with this extent of production of captive power by NALCO, there would be some surplus power available for the State. The NALCO has since been a major power supplier of the State during times of need. I felt privileged to have been in charge of executing this plant along with two other officers who were deputed by the State Government to see that the captive plant was completed on time.

After liberalization, the Power Sector Reforms of Odisha was really a pioneering effort. It set an example for the rest of the country. I was inducted as Advisor, Power, as well as Special Secretary in the Department of Energy, in 1996. Prior to that, the Chief Minister called a meeting on 18 June 1995 where the power situation was reviewed. I was called for this meeting along with the Chief Secretary and 20 other officers of the Department of Energy. In this meeting, a decision was taken to expedite rural electrification, the remaining work of the Upper Indravati Project, Power Sector Reforms and other programmes of the Electricity Board. The GRID Corporation of Odisha (GRIDCO) and Odisha Hydro Power Corporation (OHPC) were incorporated under the Companies Act, 1956 on 21 April 1995.

In November 1995, the Orissa Electricity Reform Bill was pioneered by the Chief Minister in the State Legislative Assembly and it was passed on the same day. It got the President's assent on 3 January 1996. On the tenth day of the same month, the Orissa State Electricity Reform Act, 1995 was notified in the Official Gazette. On 4 April 1996, GRIDCO



took over transmission and distribution of power and the OHPC was entrusted with all hydro projects of the State, for the operation and maintenance of existing projects and for the completion of ongoing projects. On 12 June 1996, in exercise of powers conferred by sub-section (1) of Section 3 of the Orissa Electricity Reform Act, 1995, the State Government established the Odisha Electricity Regulatory Commission which became operational on 1 August 1996. On 19 November 1997, GRIDCO incorporated four wholly owned subsidiary companies for effecting a better distribution system. These companies were the Central Electricity Supply Company of Odisha Ltd. (CESCO) at Bhubaneswar for the central zone, the Southern Electricity Supply Company of Odisha Ltd. (SOUTHCO) at Berhampur for the southern zone, the North Eastern Electricity Supply Company of Odisha Ltd. (NESCO) at Balasore for the north eastern zone and the Western Electricity Supply Company of Odisha Ltd. (WESCO) at Burla, in charge of the western zone. These four companies became operational on 26 November 1998.

On 1 April 1999, the Odisha Electricity Regulatory Commission amended the Odisha Transmission and Bulk Supply License, 1997 (2/99) of the GRIDCO and revoked the Odisha Distribution & Retail Supply License (1/97) by way of cancellation, on GRIDCO's application. The Odisha Electricity Regulatory Commission issued four Distribution and Retail Supply Licenses to CESCO (1/99), SOUTHCO (2/99), NESCO (3/99) and WESCO (4/99). The BSES Ltd. acquired 51 per cent share in the three Distribution Companies of WESCO, NESCO and SOUTHCO and took over the management of those companies from the GRIDCO. The AES Corporation and Jyoti Structures Ltd. acquired 51 per cent share of the CESCO and took over the management

from GRIDCO. The Government held 49 per cent shares in all distribution companies. As a unique feature, the Employees' Trust was allotted 10 per cent shares free of premium to make the employees more involved. This was specially announced by the Chief Minister.

The monetary gains accrued to the State Government on account of the Power Sector Reforms were as follows:

A. Direct Gains		Rs.in crore
i) TTPS sales to NTPC		Rs.356
ii) 49% share disinvestment in OPGC		Rs.363
iii) 51% share disinvestment in distribution business.		Rs.159
iv) Dividend from OPGC upto 2005-06		Rs.561
		Rs.1439
B. Saving of State Government on account of no subsidy support @ Rs.250 crore/year for last 10 years (at the level of 1996)		Rs.2500
C. Other Gains		
i) interest on asset loans up to 2006--7	OPGC-	Rs.55.03
	OHPC	Rs.41.41
	Gridco	Rs.108.87
ii) Guarantee Commission	OPGC-	Rs.16.09
	OHPC-	Rs.13.87
	Gridco-	Rs.26.77
iii) Repayment of principal	OHPC-	Rs.19.00
	Gridco	Rs.329.33
		Rs.610.37
	say	Rs.610.00
Total Direct Gains A+B+C= 1439+2500+610=		Rs.4549
D. Indirect Gains-Form up valuation of assets of OHPC & GRIDCO on 1.4.96 while corporatizing		Rs.2000
	Total:	Rs 6549

The address of the Chief Minister at the Chief Ministers' Conference on Power at New Delhi on 18 December 1998, which covered all the areas of reforms as adopted in Odisha, is reproduced below. The Chief Minister had said:

*It gives me great pleasure to address this gathering organized by the Minister of Power. I wish to highlight some issues which, I believe, will be of interest.*

## 1. POWER SECTOR REFORMS

*As you are aware, Orissa has pioneered the Power Sector Reforms. The Orissa Electricity Reforms Act was passed on 10 January 1996 and the Reforms came into effect on 1 April 1996. Others are trying to do today what Orissa did in 1996. The Orissa model has been adopted in Haryana and Andhra Pradesh and we believe that other States are following suit. The Orissa Electricity Board was restructured into two corporations, (1) GRID Corporation of Orissa (GRIDCO), for transmission and distribution activities and (2) Orissa Hydro Power Corporation (OHPC), for all hydro power generation activities.*

*Prior to this, in 1984, we had set up the Orissa Power Generation Corporation (OPGC) which is operating a 420 MW thermal power plant at the IB valley. This station is operating very well and is presently supplying power to the western region by separating itself from the eastern region. For larger national interest, Orissa has allowed the power generated at this power plant to support the western region by supplying surplus power from the eastern region through the process of displacement. This plant is operating at more than 100 per cent PLF on many occasions. The State Government has since disinvested shares in this corporation*

*to the extent of 49 per cent through a transparent international tendering process. The disinvestment exercise has been a resounding success and has resulted in the Government realizing Rs.603 crores through sale of shares of the value of Rs.240 crores.*

*The GRIDCO is presently handling transmission and distribution activities. The distribution functions are planned to be privatized through disinvestment of 51 per cent of equity. For this purpose, the distribution functions have been organized into four subsidiary distribution companies. 51 per cent of the shares of these companies are proposed to be disinvested through an open global tender. Eight international firms have expressed interest in acquiring majority stake in the distribution companies. The financial bids are scheduled to be received on 14 January 1999. We expect to complete the privatization of the distribution companies by 1 April 1999. We believe that privatization of the distribution business will promote competition and would ultimately provide cheap and reliable power to the consumers.*

## **2. IMPLEMENTATION OF COMMON MINIMUM NATIONAL ACTION PLAN**

*A 'Common Minimum National Action Plan' was formulated after deliberation by the Chief Ministers during October and December, 1996. I am happy to announce that the Government of Orissa has implemented many of the recommendations of the Common Minimum National Action Plan even before the December convention. For instance, an independent State Electricity Regulatory Commission was established on 1 August 1996. The electricity tariff in Orissa was decided by the OERC for the year 1997-98 and again in 1998-99 after public hearing. Tariff for the agriculture sector in Orissa is set at 90 paisa per kwhr. A policy for establishment of captive and*

*co-generation plants for aluminium industries and oil refineries has been announced. A policy for development of small, mini and micro hydel power projects has also been announced. Orissa has led the way in the power sector reform which has been acclaimed worldwide.*

### 3. ESTABLISHMENT OF MEGA POWER STATIONS

*As you are aware, the country is facing a power shortage to the extent of about 14 per cent during peak hours and 7 per cent during the off-peak hours. Generating capacity needs to be augmented by about 40,000 MW during the next five years to meet such shortage. Although a number of MoUs have been signed and negotiations taken up in various states, only a few projects have the required clearances and financial closure. Fuel supply and fuel transport agreements have been the major hurdles. I would earnestly submit that we address these issues urgently.*

*In December 1985, I presented to the then Prime Minister a proposal for setting up Mega Thermal Power Stations at Talcher and the IB Valley in Orissa. Such projects should supply power to the deficit states over HEV or HVDC transmission systems. In view of the large coal deposits in our country, coal fired thermal power stations should be the first choice.*

*In this regard, I volunteer to provide all facilities in Orissa for the establishment of such projects. It should, however, be recognized that Orissa would bear the brunt of the substantial burden of pollution and other ecological consequences. We must therefore provide for adequate compensation packages to address such ecological issues.*

*Presently, rules do not permit levy of electricity duty on power generation. While the State has to meet the additional expenditure to provide infrastructure for the development of these*

*projects, tackle law and order problems and take the brunt of environmental degradation, there is no compensation forthcoming. The beneficiary states would not only get clean power but also earn revenue through electricity duty. I would, therefore, suggest for a national policy to provide 12 per cent free power to the host State as is admitted in the Hydro Policy. Additional income from such free power will help the states to effectively address the problems of environmental degradation caused by the mega power projects. I would assure that even after paying for 12 per cent free power, it would still be cheaper to transport power over transmission lines than to transport coal over long distances. It would also save the recipient state from creation of additional infrastructure for rail and sea transport. The Government of India has recognized this as would be evident in the Hydel Power Policy. I would only urge that the policy of 12 per cent free power to the host state be applicable to Mega Thermal Power Stations as well.*

#### **4. OVER FREQUENCY PROBLEMS IN EASTERN REGION & EVACUATION LINKS**

*Presently, there are acute over-frequency conditions in the Eastern Regional Grid. It is estimated that the Eastern Region is having about 1000 MW surplus capacity. A 2000 MW expansion at Talcher is being undertaken by the NTPC in which the first unit is scheduled to be commissioned by 2002. Similarly, a 4320 MW Power Plant of CEPA at Hirma (near Jharsuguda) is also planned for supply to the Northern and Western Regions. To evacuate this additional energy, transmission lines from Orissa to the Western and Southern regions should be completed on war-footing. I understand these lines have already been planned by PGCIL. It should be taken up immediately. In the short*

*term, certain additional 400 KV link lines may be constructed, connecting Orissa, Andhra Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh within a year so that 1000 MW of surplus power can be evacuated from the Eastern Region.*

*Presently, Orissa is supporting the Eastern Region by supplying hydro power during peak load hours. Unfortunately, Orissa is subjected to pumping of off-peak, unwanted surplus power from the NTPC. Such injection of unwanted power not only offsets the peak support given by Orissa but also causes over-frequency. Apart from causing financial loss to GRIDCO to the tune of about Rs.100 crores a year, it constitutes a serious risk to the machines at the generating stations and consumer installations. There is an urgent need to sort out this issue and in this connection I would suggest that availability tariff should be introduced immediately in the EREB. Power supply from the central units should be available only to meet the actual needs of the constituent states and no extra power should be pumped through over-frequency. Alternatively, Orissa may be allowed to isolate itself from the Eastern Grid along with the Talcher Super Thermal Station of the NTPC. It will supply power to its own loads and needs of the Western and Southern Regions to the maximum extent possible.*

## **5. HYDRO POWER DEVELOPMENT POLICY**

*We support the recent policy of the Government of India on hydro power development, issued in August 1998. Orissa has about 1300 MW of hydro capacity and we propose to add another 1500 MW during the next five years. We have initiated a policy for development of new hydro stations through joint ventures. We have received encouraging response from many international and Indian firms.*

*We are concerned about the delay in obtaining statutory clearances. I would suggest that the State Governments be given the powers to accord clearance for all run-of-the river Hydro Power Projects which do not envisage creation of large reservoirs. Other major reservoir based projects can be cleared by the CEA or the CWC after proper scrutiny. Similarly, hydro power projects on inter-state rivers which would utilize downstream discharges to the sea should be cleared by these coastal states without insisting for interstate agreements. These suggestions may be incorporated in the Hydro Policy so that Hydro Projects are not delayed on account of interstate clearances.*

## 6. PROJECT CLEARANCES

*Two I.P.P. (Thermal) Projects namely the AES IB Valley Project of 500 MW and the Kalinga Power Corporation of 500 MW capacity are awaiting CEA clearance. It is requested that CEA clearance may be given to these two projects by December 1998 so that power from these can be available within the 9th Plan Period.*

## 7. SECURITISATION OF DUES PAYABLE TO CENTRAL PUBLIC SECTOR UNDERTAKINGS

*At present, Central PSUs supplying power to the State Grid are ensuring payment of their dues through L.C. Mechanism. In recent years, the Plant Assistance to the State is also being encroached upon in order to realize the dues payable by the State PSUs to the Central PSUs. On many occasions, such harsh measures have been taken without consulting the affected States regarding their counter claims or opinion. I would, therefore, suggest that before such deduction from Central Plan Assistance*



*is made, the concerned States must be given an opportunity to put forth their views. The present arrangement of payment of dues of CPUs through L.C. Arrangement may continue and where such facility does not exist, it should be brought in place. But neither the Plan Cut nor Supply Regulation is right or ethical.*

*I take this opportunity to invite you to come to Orissa and get a firsthand account of the work that we are doing. I thank you very much for giving me a patient hearing.*

As I have narrated earlier, I was associated with the setting up of power plants and the reform process right from 1984 to 1999. It was a fruitful period of the State in the power sector with Janaki Ballav Patnaik as the Chief Minister. During his 13 years of governance, some of the major projects in Odisha namely the TTPS, the Upper Indravati, the NALCO Captive Power Plant and the IB Thermal Power Plant, along with far reaching reforms in the power sector, came up to transform the power situation in the State.

No other thermal or hydro station has been built either in the State or in the Central Sector since 1997, leading to the present situation of power shortage. Of course, many CPPs and IPPs are coming up in other states from which Odisha can obtain power although at a higher cost. It is necessary for the State to build sufficient generating capacity to insulate it from scarcity and shortage. For this, we need another Chief Minister like J.B. Patnaik.

\* \* \*

## The Golden Era of Industrialization

Sudhanshu Bhusan Mishra ♦

**I**n the past 30 years, Odisha's industrial map has undergone a sea change. The seeds of this transformation were sown in 1980, the year of radical change in Odisha's industrialization. It was in 1980 that Odisha had launched a well conceived industrial development programme wherein genuine efforts were made to explore new horizons in industry. Janaki Ballav Patnaik, after assuming office as Chief Minister of the State, gave a clarion call to set up 1000 industries in 1000 days in order to fulfill his vision of an industrial Odisha. This was a promise that had to be translated into reality. The slogan brought about a dramatic change on the industrial front, raised new hope, and generated excitement among entrepreneurs.

---

♦ Sudhanshu Bhusan Mishra is a well-known Administrator and former Chief Secretary, Government of Odisha

Till 1980, Odisha was considered one of the most backward states in the industrial front. During the first 33 years after Independence, a limited number of industries such as the Rourkela Steel Plant, the cement plant at Rajgangpur, the Odisha Textile Mills and the Titagarh Paper Mills at Choudwar, the Orient Paper Mills and the Belpahar Refractories near Jharsuguda, Jayashree Chemicals at Chhatrapur, IMFA's Ferro Alloys and J.K. Paper Mills at Raygada, Tata's Ferro Alloys in Barabil and the MIG factory at Sunabeda came up. Besides, a few others like the Co-operative Sugar Mills at Aska, the IDCOL's Kalinga Pig Iron Plant at Barbil, the Ferrochrome Plant at Jajpur road, the Cement Plant at Baragarh and the Rolling Mills and Allied Plants at Hirakud became functional. Small scale industries were confined to a few rice and oil mills and some sick Panchayat outfits. In the realm of tourism, there was not even a single luxury hotel. Most of the districts were bereft of industry. The poor condition of industrial progress even after 30 years of Independence has various reasons.

In the first place, the infrastructure in the State was inadequate. There was very limited demand for industrial products within the State and whatever market for such products existed were beyond Odisha's borders. While local entrepreneurs were almost nonexistent and had neither the capital nor the experience for industrial ventures, non-Odia businessmen had no zeal to invest capital in the State. In the absence of demand, industrial activities were confined to mining and mineral processing. Mine based industries were mega projects and beyond the reach of local entrepreneurs whose resources were limited. In those days, the scope for private investment was not as liberal as it is now. Development of industrial infrastructure and setting up of mine based industries were heavily dependent on Central initiative. In the absence of

a strong lobby at the Centre, Odisha could not get its rightful share of Central public sector projects. Outside investors were reluctant to set up industries in Odisha. The few that received licenses were lured away by the more enterprising states with promises of better incentives. As it was, the scope for industry in those days was narrow in the whole country as well. The few entrepreneurs who secured licenses for small, medium or heavy industries faced insurmountable difficulties in obtaining loan from the banks and other financial agencies. Bank loan was beyond the reach of local entrepreneurs. There was virtually no public awareness for setting up industries. Odias had little inclination for commerce or industry and self employment was an alien concept. The educated were interested only in government jobs. In such conditions, it was natural that Odisha lagged in industrial activity.

The transition since 1980 began with the State Government according top priority to industry in the State. The slogan, *One thousand days, one thousand crores and one thousand industries*, inspired the spirit of the youth. Many educated young men, especially young technocrats, gave up jobs in other states and came forward to set up industries in Odisha. Many private entrepreneurs also noticed the radical change in the industrial front and came forward to be a part of it. Many local investors made efforts to set up small and medium scale industries. On the whole, new hope and excitement was generated for industrial investment. It is an important land mark in the history of Odisha that for the first time, young middle class men and women ventured to become entrepreneurs. At that point of time, almost all contractors, builders, merchants and factory owners were from outside Odisha. But today, after more than 30 years of continuous effort, most of them are from the State of Odisha. The State Industrial Policy of 1980 explored new dimensions

and gave incentives to technocrats, women and backward class entrepreneurs. Steps were also taken to facilitate the purchase of local SSI products on a preferential basis. Hotel business was given the status of industry and was offered attractive incentives. Incentives were also offered in the backward districts. The IDCO (Infrastructure Development Corporation), the ELCO (Electronics Development Corporation), the OCAC (Odisha Computer Application Centre) and the Pollution Control Board were set up. Under the IDCO, industrial estates were set up in different districts throughout the State whereby land was given to large industries and sheds to small industries along with water and power supply. Consequently, large, medium and small scale industries sprang up in all districts between 1980 and 1990.

In those days, much was done to develop the infrastructure. States indulged in cut throat competition and put pressure on the Central Government to be given the lion's share of the budgetary provisions for major industrial projects or for building up the industrial infrastructure. The Talcher-Sambalpur rail connection, the Talcher Super Thermal Power Project and the Defense Ammunition factory in Saintala were the fruits of such long drawn struggles at Delhi. The same was the case with Koraput and Rayagada railway connections. Intensive efforts were made for more railway connections during this period.

There were opponents to the ambitious plan—*one thousand industries in one thousand days*. The critics attack the slogan on two fronts. Firstly, they say, *It did not succeed*. Secondly, they seek to point out that the industries initiated under this programme are either sick or closed. These criticisms are, of course, hollow.

Let us look at the major projects. There were the NALCO plants at Damanjodi and Angul, the spinning mills at Sonapur, Baripada, Sundargarh, Aska, Khurda, Tirtol, Dhenkanal and Athagarh and the sugar factories at Dhenkanal, Baramba, Nayagarh, Bolangir and Kalahandi. Vegetable oil factories had come up at Athgarh and Anandpur. The IMFA at Choudwar and the FACOR at Bhadrak were among the major projects. There were also the Charge Chrome factory set up by the Mining Corporation at Bamanipal, the Ispat Alloys at Balasore, Powmex at Titlagarh and the Sponge Iron plants at Joda/Barbil area (these are the first of their kind in India) set up by the Tatas. The Odisha Sponge Iron, Birla Tyres and Jaiswal Plastics at Balasore too had come up during this period of industrial growth. Phosphetic fertilizer plants at Paradip, Asbestos, Refractory, Fastener and Polyester Fibre plants in the Dhenkanal district, Mangalam Timbers in Koraput, Nicco Cables in Baripada, Sewa Paper (now Balarpur) in Jeypore and the Imami Paper Mills at Balasore are also some of the landmarks of Odisha's industrial history. Many medium scale industries also sprang up all over the State. Industrial Estates were set up in all the districts and thousands of small scale industries grew up. Tourism was accorded the status of industry. A large number of hotels were built in Puri, Bhubaneswar and other spots of tourist interest which gave a boost to the tourism industry. The Kalinga Studio was set up and film production was given the status of industry. With industrial incentive, rural and semi-urban cinema halls too came up. New engineering colleges were set up at Bhubaneswar, Sarang, Choudwar and Keonjhar. New ITIs and Polytechnics were set up in different districts of the State. One of the success stories of that era was the establishment of two front-line posts of modern technical

education, the National Informatics Centre and the Xavier Institute of Management at Bhubaneswar.

The Odisha Development Report of the Planning Commission (2002) has mentioned that industrial development in Odisha attained the fastest pace in the eighties.

It is true that some of the industries became sick in course of time. But most of them have changed ownership and are operating as an industry or service units. In the general process of growth, factories becoming sick are a natural phenomenon. But in the eighties, the rate of sickness was a bit higher because most of the local entrepreneurs of that time were green hands with little or no knowledge of industrial management. Freshly coming out of the confines of an agrarian mindset and job culture, these people were trying their luck for the first time in commerce and industry and thereby, committed some errors. In order to make a shift from a service mentality to a psyche of self employment, one has to pay a price. There is no doubt that the slogan *one thousand industries in one thousand days* in the eighties evoked dreams among local entrepreneurs and the foundation for industrial development was laid. Today, Odia entrepreneurs have dominated the hotel and restaurant industry, construction work and trade and commerce in the State.

During 1990-1995, several attempts were made to set up steel plants. The then Chief Minister Biju Patnaik made sincere endeavour in this direction. A vast stretch of land at Duburi near Jajpur road was acquired for the purpose and efforts were made for the setting up of steel plants. But the international steel market was not conducive to such ventures and nothing much materialized. However, between 1995 and 2000, the Nilachal Ispat and the MESCO could come up. Even in the second half of the nineties, many new plants were mooted. After being re-elected in 1995, Janaki Babu again placed emphasis on

industrial development. But during those days, the industrial climate was not as favourable as it is now. Winds of liberalization and globalization did not blow across the country or the states. Investment in mega projects was difficult. Unlike today, steel, aluminium and ferro-alloys did not have much market demand. Yet, sincere attempts were made to convert minerals into value added products for the growth of Odisha's economy. The ground work for mega projects undertaken during those days include the oil refinery and petrochemical complex of IOL at Paradip, two aluminium plants by the Birlas at Koraput and Rayagada, the aluminium plant by the Sterelite company at Lanjigarh, its aluminium smelter plant and thermal power plant at Jharsuguda, Nababharat ferro-alloys at Dhenkanal, steel plant by the Tatas at Gopalpur and new ports at Dhamra and Gopalpur. Opposition to land acquisition was an impediment to the growth of the Tata project. Other projects have taken shape in course of time.

During this period, the thermal power plant in the IB valley became operational. Indravati and Rengali hydel projects began supplying electricity and Odisha became a state with surplus energy. The era of load shedding and power cuts was over. Compared to the position of power supply in other states, it was a great achievement for Odisha. Another notable achievement in the late nineties was the establishment of high quality technical institutes under private management. Today, our State abounds in technical institutions but the origin of this expansion belongs to those times. The State entered a period of high tech revolution. Infosys, Satyam, Software Park and Fortune Tower were the gifts of that era. In a national seminar held in Kolkata, the then U.S. Secretary of Commerce said that Odisha was the best place for investment in the entire eastern region and its industrial progress was much ahead of others.



The Centre for Monitoring of Indian Economy also gave top honors to the State in the field of investment and industrial progress. Those were the pre-globalization days. As a result, most projects that were initiated or conceived could progress slowly. In the last seven years, economic growth has picked up and industrial growth has accelerated. Most projects that have taken shape in recent times, however, had been conceived then. The contribution of Janaki Ballav Patnaik to the industrial growth of Odisha is indeed impressive and will remain a part of history.

\* \* \*

## The Dream of the Eighties

Vivek Pattanayak ♦

**T**hose were the pre-mobile telephony days. There were no facsimile machines, no international or national direct dialing facilities, no fibre optic cables, no internet, no computers, not even electric typewriters, no daily direct flight from Delhi, no flight from Mumbai (then Bombay) or Kolkata (then Calcutta), no live television. And television? Well, only of the black and white variety existed.

That was the time when for every big project one had to get the license from the Centre, run to DGT, pace up and down in the corridors of Udyog Bhawan, or the Shastri Bhawan, the Krishi Bhawan and even in North Block. Files, after all, had to be moved from one table to another to obtain clearances. That was the time when, to get finance for industrial projects, one had to go to Bombay to persuade the IDBI, the ICICI,

---

♦ Vivek Pattanayak, IAS (retd), is former Chairman, IPICOL

the SBI and the LIC, GIC and the UTI, before proceeding to Delhi to convince the IFCI. That was also the time when foreign exchange reserves were under severe regulation because of its paucity. And then of course, import of capital goods and foreign technology was a Herculean task. That was the time when Odisha was known more for its art and culture than for its mines and minerals. That was the time when getting a telephone connection was a dream, to talk over telephone with someone in Delhi, Mumbai or Kolkata was a nightmare and talking with someone outside India was almost an illusion. That was the time when a teleprinter, telex or photocopier was considered highly modern.

Then came 1980, bringing with it a new Government under the leadership of J.B. Patnaik who gave a slogan—*thousand industries of a thousand crores in thousand days*. A team was cobbled up and made operational.

The IPICOL, OSFC, IDC, IDCO, ELCO, OSIC, OFDC, OMC, OMC Alloys, OTDC, the Directors of Industries, Textiles, Mines and Tourism and the Secretaries to the Government in the Departments of Industries, Mines, Forest and Agriculture, Cooperation and Tourism and even Revenue and Finance, all began to work in total unison. Nobody felt that there was any dividing line, any barrier or obstacle. All those mentioned worked tirelessly and ceaselessly without any fear or favour but with focused intent to establish new projects in their respective domain. Enthusiasm was matchless and historic. Such was the leadership of the Government at that time.

All this stupendous effort brought forth the Odisha Sponge Iron, the first commercial sponge iron plant in India, to supply feedstock to produce steel through electric arc furnace. The IPITATA (now called Tata Sponge), the first sponge iron plant based on the indigenous technology developed by the

pioneering and relentless endeavour of the brilliant metallurgist Dr. Amit Chatterjee, was also set up during this period. Then there was Ispat Alloys, now called Balasore Alloys and the Calcium Silicide Plant in a district which was in those days labeled *no industry district*. This plant, now producing Ferro Alloys, was set up by the pioneering industrialist M.L. Mittal, the father of the iconic Laxmi Mittal. Then came up the OMC Alloys and the Charge Chrome Plant. These were based on the technology of Ottocompu. The plants, now in the hands of the Tatas, were financed through external commercial borrowing arranged through the European Asian Bank because the IDBI had refused to fund a project of the Government. The IPIBEL, a joint venture of the IPICOL and the Belpahar Refractories Limited, producing refractory bricks, had also come up during the eighties. Now of course, ownership of the IPIBEL has changed hands.

The Odisha Synthetic, which is a polyester staple fibre plant based on the technology of Du Pont and now owned by the Ambani Group, and Sewa Paper, the first paper plant set up by an NRI in the backward, undivided district of Koraput had also been established during that period of industrialization in Odisha. Sewa Paper was, however, later taken over by the Thapars. Birla Tyres at Balasore, the Cooperative Sugar Industries at Nayagarh and Baramba, Utkal Asbestos in Dhenkanal, Emami Paper Factory in Balgopalpur and the LPG Cylinder factory of Balasore too emerged at that time.

Trailokya Mishra, a dynamic first-time entrepreneur of Odisha, had set up the LPG Cylinder factory at Balasore and had also taken over the sick Nayagarh Sugar Factory, demonstrating the success of a local entrepreneur. The LPG Cylinder project of late Tarakant Mahapatra, a brilliant technical entrepreneur who also expanded his field to TV cabinets and

other products as part of diversification, showed much success. Esskay Machinery was established during that time by Sitakanta Mohapatra, an engineer with a very focused mind who resigned from the comforts of the civil services to produce cranes, heavy machinery and engineering equipment. This was a true example of an ancillary industry. Esskay Machinery has since changed owners but the entrepreneur remains. There was also the birth of the firm BE Engineers which had expanded and diversified, although the original promoter Benu Mohapatra is no more. IPISTEEL, the first mini steel plant of Odisha, was promoted by a group of technical and professional entrepreneurs. Now, however, the plant is in the hands of a new group. Even a trader of Kataka had enthusiastically promoted the Central Odisha Straw Board in Jagatpur. The modern printing shop also emerged which produced, for the first time, a multi coloured daily newspaper.

Among other projects that materialized during the period were a film studio in joint venture, Paradip Oxygen, Odisha Oxygen, Anand Gas, Kalinga Engineers in Paradip and Kalinga Cement, the first vertical shaft cement plant in Odisha. All of these were promoted by technical entrepreneurs.

A number of first-generation entrepreneurs from the hospitality sector turned into successful hoteliers during this era. The hotels they had erected are the Oberoi Hotel (now renamed Trident), Swosthi Hotel, Anarkali Hotel, Konark Hotel (now New Kenilworth), Kesari Hotel, Nupur Hotel (later Garden Inn and now Hindustan International), Prachi (now Marion) and Meghdoot Hotel (now Triumph) in Bhubaneswar and Prachi Hotel (now Coco Beach), Holiday Resorts, Vijay International and Toshali Sands in Puri. Pantha Nivas in Puri and Bhubaneswar under the OTDC, perpetually

short of government funds, were financed by IPICOL under the refinance scheme of the IDBI.

The IPICOL promoted medium and large industries, while the IDCO constructed industrial sheds and developed industrial estates. The IDC and the Directorate of Textiles promoted labour intensive textile units and the OSFC financed small industries and sometimes also financed medium industries along with the IPICOL which got refinance from the IDBI. At times, the SBI and other commercial banks joined hands with the IPICOL and the OSFC in term financing. This method was new in Odisha. Financing of the IDCO to construct industrial sheds and to build industrial estates was done by the IPICOL by obtaining refinance facilities from the IDBI.

Coming to the electronic industry, the IPITRON Times emerged as a joint venture of the IPICOL and ELCO to produce electronic watches and TV sets under the banner of Konark TV. Then there was the JBS Capacitor which was set up by Kamalini Mohapatra under the seed capital funding scheme of the IDBI and also with term loans from the IPICOL and the OSFC. This project, which employed a large number of women, stood out as a mark of success. Mohapatra paid back all the liabilities before deciding to slow down. She had also received a number of national awards for her success.

Prafulla Kar, a local transporter and trader, set up a sophisticated metallurgical project based on aluminothermy route to produce Ferro-manganese, Ferro-Chrome, Ferro-tungsten, Ferro-molybdenum, Ferro-Titanium, Ferro-Vanadium as well as other similar products to pay all the liabilities before closing down the factory following fatal accidents. When he was at his peak, he used to attend national conferences on metallurgical industries, contributing significantly to the

deliberations based upon his practical experience, although he claimed no degree either in science or in engineering.

Biraja Mishra, a mechanical engineer from Pilani, gained considerable experience in India and abroad in setting up projects. Thus, based on the technology of Krupps Widia of Essen, Germany, he promoted Magnetix. It produced hard ferrite for the first time in the region with great success. Unfortunately, an unfavourable exchange rate fluctuation became a heavy burden on his foreign exchange loan. Elsewhere in Odisha, S.N. Fastener was promoted by a technical entrepreneur. He had based his project on the Japanese technology of Sakamura and showed promise at the start but later, with a change of hands, limped for several years before finally closing down.

Konark Asbestos and Cement (professional from UP), Konark Paper (promoted by a paper technologist who came from Kenya), Utkal Castings (promoted by an Engineer from Rourkela Engineering College), Krishna Cements (mini cement plant based on the indigenous technology developed by Shabbo) and Single Super Phosphate and Krebs and Cie ran their projects for some years. Solvent Extraction Units and Vanaspati Plants had demonstrated, for the first time, how to make value addition to forest produce. Tea plantations came up in the Bhuyanpirh and Juangpirh areas of Keonjhar. The plantation was done by a professional tea taster and his products showed great promise in the market, once they were ceremonially launched in 1986, under the brand name of Odisha Tea. The launch was done by Narayan Dutt Tewari, who was at the time the Central Minister of Commerce, in the presence of Chief Minister J.B. Patnaik.

The seventies and the early eighties were the years of socialism. Concentration of wealth was discouraged by the country's leaders. Hence, the objective was to raise a new class of business people who would bring about de-concentration. This

was the era of a new generation of professional entrepreneurs. The IFICI Risk Capital Foundation and the IDBI Seed Capital greatly facilitated to promote this group. The Government gave a clarion call to technical entrepreneurs to leave their executive positions and set up their projects in the medium and small sectors and sometimes even in the large sector. From the list of projects enumerated above, one could see a bevy of professionals and technical entrepreneurs who took the risk of setting up projects. What was significant was that local entrepreneurs of Odisha and mostly technical entrepreneurs came forward to take up the challenge.

The era produced a number of large and medium industries. New technology and new products were the novelty of the time. Hotels were a new addition to the industrial horizon. Industrial estates and sheds and government run tourist accommodations were financed in an innovative way. For the first time, captive power plants were established by industries.

Industrial houses came from different parts of the country to Odisha during this period. Tata, Birla, Singhanian and Mittal launched their new ventures here. While the FACOR and IMFA set up chrome plants, NALCO and Paradip Phosphate were the major attractions.

This, then, was undoubtedly the golden age of new hopes and great aspirations in which I had the privilege to serve the State.

\* \* \*



## Down Memory Lane

Binod Dash ♦

**T**he year was 1982 and I had just walked out of the portals of the university with a Master's degree in Science. While most of my friends chose to take up jobs, I decided to leave the beaten track and tread the unexplored path instead. I asked myself, *how would it be if I chose to give jobs rather than seek one?* The most important thing in life, and, therefore, the most difficult, is to take decisions. Coming from a middle class family, I had neither the training nor adequate resources to start an industry. The path to successful entrepreneurship is always full of risks, particularly for a young man without a business background. But I had taken my decision.

The industrial scenario in the State of Odisha prior to 1980 was not conducive to small entrepreneurs, it was rather hostile.

---

♦ Binod Dash is an Industrialist and former Vice-president of Utkal Chamber of Commerce

In most of the Government offices, entrepreneurs were not only unwelcome but also viewed with suspicion and mistrust. To get even a small thing sanctioned or done, they were made to run from pillar to post. Obstacles of all manners were hurled on to their path. The result in most cases was that one quickly got fed up and frustrated and abandoned one's dream. The atmosphere was absolutely unfriendly to entrepreneurs.

Then in 1980, J.B. Patnaik became the Chief Minister of Odisha and announced his new mantra of *one thousand industries of one thousand crores in one thousand days*. Though cynics ridiculed the idea, on many others this mantra had a magical effect. Young men and women who were desperately searching for an identity in society but kept getting alienated and marginalized, at last saw a ray of hope. There was a marked change in the attitude of the Government too. New entrepreneurs, instead of being shown the door, were provided with all possible support, encouragement and guidance by the Government agencies. This change in the attitude of the Government was at the behest of Chief Minister Patnaik.

The new generation of entrepreneurs had easy access to the Director of Industries, the Secretary Industries and even to the Chief Minister himself who gave a patient hearing to the budding industrialists and provide them with all possible help to solve their problems and clear various bottlenecks relating to land, finance and such other issues. Lots of incentives like subsidies and exemption from sales tax, electricity duty and Octroi were generously given. The O.S.F.C. and the IPICOL were no longer rigid on margin money. Gone were the days when small entrepreneurs had to cool their heels for hours along the corridors of power. Instead, Government agencies now openly came out to aid, advise and inspire the entrepreneurs who

wished to set up industries and business and create employment opportunities in the State.

Large industrial houses were roped in to help small scale industries. The Small Industries Service Institute (S.I.S.I) and the Director of Industries provided training to aspiring entrepreneurs to acquire basic knowledge for establishing an industry. A positive and protective ambience was created by the Government. As a result of this, industrial estates at Kataka, Bhubaneswar, Berhampur, Dhenkanal, Rourkela, Jharsuguda and a host of other places in the State came up. Energetic young men started hotels, purchased buses, taxis, trawlers etc. Micro, tiny, small and medium industries sprang up everywhere in the State. In fact, a revolution of small scale industries was heralded with the coming of J.B. Patnaik to power in 1980. Not only small scale but many big industries too came up during this period and for the first time, the Industrial Policy Resolution (IPR) 1980 was announced. The period from 1980 to 1990 was, indeed, a golden era of small scale industries in Odisha.

But just as a period of friendship is clouded by misunderstanding and accidents take place in the most well regulated families, so as time passed, some entrepreneurs met with failures and were forced to close business and shutdown industries. Subsequently, however, they tried their luck in some other ventures and their earlier work experience stood them in good stead. Some other small entrepreneurs also have made marked contributions to the development of the State. The attractive apartments and high rise buildings and the luxury-buses and taxis we see today are due to the rapid industrialization programme which started in the State during the regime of J.B. Patnaik.

## **Odisha Mission to Israel**

A high power Government delegation led by Chief Minister Patnaik visited Israel from 10 to 14 September 1995. A tiny country located on the edge of a desert belt, Israel has an area of only 21,594 square kilometers and the country always faces scarcity of water. But with courage and conviction, its resilient and hard working people have been able to carve out a niche in the map of the world. The official Odisha Mission went to Israel to learn from their experience and enlist their possible participation in the development of the State through technology transfer, joint venture and investment. The delegation included, among others, the then Deputy Chief Minister who was also the Finance Minister, the Minister of Industries, Secretary, Industries and Secretary, Water Resources, Secretary, Agriculture, C.M.D., IPICOL, Director, P.E. and others. The Business Delegation comprised, among others, Hari Sankar Singhania, Chairman of the J.K. Group, Vikram Thaper, J.M.D. of the Ballarpur Industry, A.P. Lohia of the Uniworth Group, M.P. Rungta of Rungta Irrigation, Manoj Saraf of FACOR, Baijayant Panda of IMFA, who is now a Member of the Lok Sabha and Munir Mohanty of Odisha Sponge Iron. I had the good fortune to have been included in this group. The chief aim of this mission was to open the mind set of politicians, bureaucrats and industrialists and to implement measures in our State for the development of agriculture and industry. It was a highly successful mission.

## **Revolution in Technical Education**

Prior to 1995, students from Odisha had to go to distant colleges in South India or North India for technical education.

There was only one private technical college in Odisha. But during the tenure of J.B. Patnaik, there was a major boost for ITI, Diploma and Degree level Engineering, MCA and MBA colleges and as a result of this, there is no dearth of technical manpower in the State now. Actually, technical education received its boost during Patnaik's third tenure as Chief Minister.

### **What I am Today**

After completing my Post Graduation in 1982, I was inspired to become an entrepreneur. Apart from encouragement from J.B. Patnaik, the then Chief Minister, I received ungrudging support from Ashok Kumar Mohapatra, I.A.S. He was from the Himachal Pradesh Cadre and was at that time the Director, S.I.S.I. There was also the unflinching support of Girish Patra, who was then the M.D., O.S.F.C. and a very broadminded officer. I also fondly remember the love, affection and indulgence of Sudhansu Bhusan Mishra, I.A.S., Ex-Chief Secretary of Odisha and Brig. K.P. Singh Deo, Ex-Minister, Government of India. During those days, small entrepreneurs like me did not have to run from one office to the other to get things done. The Chief Minister had left instructions with his departments for single-window-clearance for the speedy disposal of small problems. He regularly conducted open house discussions on various industrial areas and solved the matters then and there. Thus was created a friendly and healthy atmosphere for entrepreneurs.

Today, apart from managing two engineering colleges under the name of Synergy Group at Dhenkanal and Bhubaneswar and two small scale industries at Jagatpur Industrial Estate, Kataka, I am also the Honorary Secretary, Odisha Private Engineering College Association (OPECA), Honorary

Secretary, Odisha Association for Rowing and Sculling (OARS), Vice President, Ravenshaw Alumni Association, Vice President, Rowing Federation of India (RFI) and Vice President, Odisha State Badminton Association.

I have also the distinction of being Ex-Vice President and Ex-Honorary Secretary of Utkal Chamber of Commerce and Industries and today, I frankly admit that whatever I have achieved during my lifetime are due to the inspiration and guidance I received in the 1980s and the late 1990s.

Vision is the art of seeing the invisible. J.B. Patnaik felt that Odisha was desperately in need of a revolution in industry, without neglecting the agricultural sector. He also visualized that for the development of industry, Odisha was in need of technical manpower and for this a revolution in technical education was essential in the State. The rapid industrialization and advancement of technical education we see in Odisha today are due to the pioneering efforts of J.B. Patnaik.

Paying his homage to Roosevelt, Walter Lippmann<sup>1</sup> wrote: “The final test of a leader is that he leaves behind him in other men the conviction and the will to carry on”. J.B. Patnaik inspired a generation of young entrepreneurs. The ball he tossed 30 years back has rolled into the 21st century and gathered momentum.

\* \* \*

---

<sup>1</sup> Walter Lippmann, ‘Roosevelt Has Gone’, *New York Herald Tribune*, 14 April 1945

## Hotel Industry Makes a Beginning

J.K. Mohanty ♦

**W**hen Janaki Ballav Patnaik became the Chief Minister of Odisha in 1980 and had announced his programme for *a thousand industries in a thousand days*, what caught my attention was the hotel industry. Odisha was the first State in the country to have declared hotel as an industry and most of the hotels, which we find all over the State today, were built between 1980 and 1985. All of us were first generation entrepreneurs and while some of us were earnest, some others diverted loans and subsidies to the luxuries of life.

Since childhood, I wanted to put up a good hotel in Bhubaneswar because the best hotels those days were small basic hotels like the Raj Mahal and the Pushpak. When I met J.B. Patnaik for the first time and expressed my desire of putting

---

♦ J.K. Mohanty is president, Hotel and Restaurant Association, Odisha

up a hotel, he encouraged me a lot and pushed me to go ahead. According to the Government's new industrial policy, there was 30 per cent subsidy on capital investment, industrial tariff on electricity and exemption from payment of sales tax for five years. The entire bureaucracy was also very positive. With me there were other young entrepreneurs from Puri, Kataka, Dhenkanal, Rourkela, Sambalpur, Keonjhar, Koraput, Balangir, Phulbani, Balasore, Chandipur and many more places. We young entrepreneurs often met at the OSFC or at the IPICOL. Patnaik ensured that good hotels came up in every district of Odisha and at that time more than 150 hotels and lodges were financed by the OSFC and the IPICOL. As the hotel industry is a highly labour-oriented industry where each hotel room directly employs more than three people and indirectly employs five, employment for more than ten thousand people was created in the hotel sector in a span of five years, between 1980 and 1985. Besides, Patnaik also got the India Tourism Development Corporation (ITDC) to invest in two big hotels in Odisha, namely, Hotel Kalinga Ashok at Bhubaneswar and Hotel Neelachal Ashok at Puri.

In the year 1985, Patnaik sent a delegation of hoteliers along with S.M. Gani, Deputy Secretary, Department of Tourism, for a tourism promotion campaign to South East Asia. The results of the campaign were very encouraging. As per the figures of the Tourism Department, while we were receiving about 700 foreign tourists in 1981, the same number had gone up to 36,000 in 1988. This was possible due to the aggressive tourist promotion campaigns by the State Government in various international magazines and forums. Patnaik, along with a team of entrepreneurs, took tourism promotion and investment campaign to Thailand and Indonesia. He was accompanied by local entrepreneurs, including me. That was



the time when Patnaik and all of us went to Mittal's office in Indonesia and Patnaik requested them for putting up a steel plant in Odisha.

With L.I. Parija as Secretary, Industries, Vivek Patnaik as MD., IPICOL and Girish Patra as MD, OSFC, it was a golden period for building industries in Odisha.

Work progress was directly monitored from the Chief Minister's Office by S.B. Mishra, Secretary to the Chief Minister, and everything moved fast. In my case, when I went and requested J.B. Patnaik to lay the foundation stone of Hotel Swosti, he came with his entire team of Ministers including Niranjana Patnaik, Jugal Patnaik, Kishore Patel and Basant Biswal and laid the foundation stone. In those days I had the blessings and full support of my late father His Divine Grace Krushna Chandra Mohanty, who put his construction team to work in my project and I could get the project completed in just fourteen months.

Later, when I went to J.B. Patnaik to request him to inaugurate the hotel, he wondered how the project could be ready in just fourteen months and so directed Industries Secretary Parija to go and see if the project was actually completed or not. Parija reverted and the inauguration date was fixed for 3 March 1984 and thereafter, Hotel Swosti became a part of the hotel industry in Odisha.

The role of J.B. Patnaik did not end here. Most of the young entrepreneurs were of first generation and lacked technical knowledge to run hotels professionally. They did not have necessary financial and marketing expertise. All of us became defaulters and some of the hotels in Kataka, Bhubaneswar and Puri were locked up under section 29 by the OSFC.

It was during this period that all these hoteliers got together and formed the Hotel & Restaurant Association of

Odisha, basically to fight against the OSFC and the IPICOL. Sunil Patnaik, one of the most brilliant yet tough and merciless officers of the State, was determined to lock up the hotels as the OSFC also started to default with the SIDBI. It was during this period that all of us went and surrendered to J.B. Patnaik once again to bail us out. Patnaik was very upset and angry with all of us and had said, "How can I help you if you don't clear your loans on time? And if the OSFC does not pay back to the SIDBI, the OSFC too would be locked up." He dismissed all of us and said that we have to clear our loans on time and the Government cannot help defaulters.

But at the same time, he asked the OSFC and the IPICOL about the actual position of all of us and then took a decision that no industry would close and cleared all the pending subsidy amounts from the Government to the OSFC and directed the IPICOL and the OSFC to review the loan repayment status of all genuine hoteliers and to revive the industry. The State Government pumped in more funds into the IPICOL and the OSFC to save the entrepreneurs. They are today running their hotel business successfully.

Patnaik understood that unless tourism is improved, hotels could not survive. He, therefore, launched many campaigns in Delhi, Mumbai and even Srinagar to give a boost to the tourism sector in Odisha.

It was only during his period that the first Indian Airlines flight started operating, initially three times a week and then daily, between New Delhi and Bhubaneswar and later to Calcutta and Mumbai. The Nilachal Express too plied directly from Puri to New Delhi.

Under his direction, a 15-day Food Festival was organized at Hotel Samrat, New Delhi. Cooks from Odisha camped there for almost five days, inviting all the Embassy officials to take

Odia food, to take a look at Odisha handicrafts and to enjoy Odissi dance recitals held every evening. Janaki Ballav Patnaik even invited the President of India, R. Venkataraman, for lunch at Hotel Swosti, which was regarded as the best hotel in Odisha at that time.

The contribution of J.B. Patnaik to the hotel industry of Odisha has been of immense value and this attitude was responsible for producing a sizeable number of first generation entrepreneurs of the State.

\* \* \*

## A Dynamic Period of Growth and Development

Harishankar Singhaniania ♦

**J**anaki Ballav Patnaik took over as the Chief Minister of Odisha on 9 June 1980. And in the same year, he invited me to a public meeting at Soochana Bhawan in Bhubaneswar for the announcement of his new industrial policy. At the meeting, where I was present as a Guest of Honour, he launched the new industrial policy on a grand scale with the announcement to set up, *one thousand industries in one thousand days with the investment of one thousand crore of rupees*. This policy provided a number of subsidies, relaxation of bureaucratic procedures, easy loans and various other concessions to the new entrepreneurs.

This, in fact, created a very favourable climate for the State's industrialization. Along with this announcement, Chief

---

♦ Harishankar Singhaniania was former president, FICCI and eminent Industrialist

Minister Patnaik sought my help for meeting with the chambers of commerce in Mumbai, Kolkata, Delhi and other cities. Accordingly, I arranged a meeting for him with them.

He met prominent industrialists from different parts of the country and invited them to invest in Odisha. His fervent appeal did not go in vain. Top industrialists and business houses like the Birlas from Kolkata, FACOR's Ferro Alloys Plant, NICCO Cables and IPITATA, to name a few, made investments in Odisha. Our JK Group also substantially expanded its JK Paper Mills at Jaykaypur, Rayagada, besides setting up a Polyester Fibre Plant at Dhenkanal. The Government of India set up two large industrial units, namely NALCO and Paradeep Phosphates.

In his third term as Chief Minister in 1995, he continued his efforts towards industrializing Odisha and visited various countries like Israel, some of the Asian countries and the United States, inviting them to invest in Odisha. A number of industrialists accompanied him in such meetings and missions where Patnaik projected Odisha as a favourable destination with its rich mineral wealth and other natural resources and a favourable industrial climate and policy. I had the pleasure of accompanying him to Israel. He gave a lot of importance to the development of agriculture after seeing how Israelites, with very little annual rainfall, are not only self-reliant in agriculture but have also exported a lot of farm products on a large scale to Europe, USA and other countries.

It was, no doubt, a dynamic period for Odisha's growth and development.

\* \* \*

## Indradyumna Incarnate

Prasad Harichandan ♦

**R**ivers like the Daya, Luna, Malaguni, Rajua, Makara and several streams flow through the Kanasa area which is located on the north coast of the Chilka Lake. And during the rainy season when the water of these rivers and streams spill over to merge with the flood waters, the entire area resembles a sea. Also, because there are very few roads, people have to walk through the fields even during summers. They use boats wherever they are available to ferry themselves across. Otherwise, they remain confined because of all the water around them.

Then in 1957, Pandit Nilakantha Dash won the Satyabadi seat and became the Speaker of the Odisha Legislative Assembly.

---

♦ Prasad Harichandan is a member of Odisha Legislative Assembly from Satyabadi Constituency in Puri District. He is a leader of the Congress Party.

And when he was felicitated at Baku, people of the surrounding villages had told him about the lack of roads in the area. It was only then, due to his efforts and initiative, that a *kutch*a road had been laid from Nirakarpur to Srimukundapur or Oshana. However, this four kilometre road, known as the Nilakantha Sadak, remained incommutable during the rains. Whenever people from Kanasa had to go out they had to take a train from Nirakarpur. And adjacent to Nirakarpur was the Rameswar village which happened to be the birth place of Janaki Ballav Patnaik, the former Chief Minister of Odisha. So, since childhood, Janaki Babu had been seeing the people suffer due to lack of roads. He had also understood the associated problems.

However, opportunity arrived at Kanasa when Janaki Ballav Patnaik became the Chief Minister of Odisha. And when he became the Chief Minister for the second term in 1985, the opportunity turned even better. Kanasa Block is located midway between the National Highway No. 203, connecting Bhubaneswar and Puri, and National Highway No. 5, connecting Khurda and Berhampur. Janaki Babu planned not only to join these two roads but also to extend the road from Rameswar to Sarankul via Jankia. With that, the distance between Puri and south Odisha was expected to be reduced by 60 kilometres. Pilgrims coming to pay obeisance to Lord Jagannath could now take the 39 kilometre long road from Rameswar to reach the Jagannath Trunk Road or old Jagannath Sadak at Bira Pratappur which has now been renamed as National Highway No. 203. A route was opened where there was none before. Previously unreachable villages now got connected to the mainstream. Janaki Ballav built a new bridge in the flood prone area of Kanasa just as Lord Ramachandra had built a bridge on the high seas. And Kanasa no longer remained an obscure area.

Janaki Ballav, an ardent devotee of Lord Jagannath, named the road as the New Jagannath Sadak in 1986. The Kataka-Puri road had been started in 1811 and completed in 1823 under the supervision of Captain Sakville, an English engineer employed by the East India Company. No bridge, though, had been built across the large rivers at that time. Only a few bridges had been constructed across small streams and that too, by using stones from dilapidated temples and with a financial assistance of Rs 1.5 lakh donated by Raja Sukhamoy Ray, a generous man from Kolkata. The name of the road had earlier been changed from Pilgrim Road to Jagannath Trunk Road or Jagannath Sadak. Therefore now, Janaki Babu renamed the road as the New Jagannath Sadak. In Odisha, Lord Jagannath is the Lord and the Master. The pilgrim prays fervently, *Jagannathah, swami, nayana pathagami bhabatume!* Meaning, “Lord, manifest thyself in my eyes, give me salvation by showing me the path I should take.” Just as for the devotee, “every road leads to Sri Jagannath”, so it was for Janaki Ballav, the ultimate devotee. The Nabakalebara was held for the deities in 1996 and the newly laid New Jagannath Sadak was dedicated to the pilgrims on the occasion of the Nava Youvana Darshana. Numerous pilgrims from Ranpur, Nayagarh, Banpur, Berhampur, Koraput and such other places took the New Jagannath Sadak to witness the Nabakalebara Rath Yatra. Had Janaki Babu not named the road beforehand, people would have perhaps spontaneously named the road Janaki Ballav Sadak!

*Indradyumna had begged:*

*‘I would beg something if you want to grant a boon,*

*I should have no progenitors, O Lord!*

*Sons and grandsons would claim the temple to be theirs,*

*I would be known as an apostate if that comes to pass.’*

- Sishu Krushna Das



Janaki Ballav Patnaik dedicated the road to the Lord before anyone connected his name to it.

The construction of the said road started in 1986. The earth work had been undertaken by the Department of Village Development under the RLEGP Programme. Since ages, people had been ferrying across the Makara, Daya and Luna rivers on boats but now bridges were constructed across these rivers at Chupurangi, Jankia and Andarasingh respectively. It is said that the ferry *ghat* was earlier named Chaparangi but it later became Chupurangi as the sterns of the boats were coloured at the *ghat*. However, even as work on the road was progressing at a fast pace, the Government changed. The Janata Dal formed the new Government in 1990 and thereupon, all work on the road was stopped abruptly. Perhaps the new Government did not consider the construction of the road to be necessary. The New Jagannath Sadak was thus deleted from the list of the ongoing projects. Half-built bridges and roads remained as they were for a period of five years. So the people of the area implored Lord Jagannath to resolve the situation and as if in answer to their implorations, Janaki Babu became the Chief Minister again in 1995. His Government took a vow to complete the road within a year and work on the road was resumed. Accordingly, the Lendo Bridge, Makara Bridge, Daya Bridge, Ardinga Bridge, Luna Bridge, Banbarada Bridge and the Ratnachira Bridge were constructed. Money was provided by the NABARD under the RIDF Programme. Trees were also planted on both sides of the road. And because the construction of the road continued in tandem with the construction of the chariots for the Rath Yatra, the road was done by the time the chariots were completed.

And finally, on 15 July 1996, which remains a red letter day for the people of the Kanasa area, Chief Minister Janaki Babu dedicated the New Jagannath Sadak to the nation in the

presence of Deputy Chief Minister Basant Kumar Biswal, Works Minister Harihar Swain, and Lalatendu Bidyadhar Mohapatra, the MLA of Brahmagiri.

Without roads there can never be any progress. The Roman Empire too, had reached the zenith of its development only because of high quality roads. It is said that Rome crumbled when the roads in Rome did. Dwight D. Eisenhower had gone to Germany during the Second World War to fight as a soldier and there he had been amazed to see the autobahns. It took him 59 days, which was almost two months, to go from Washington to California on an army truck over the rocky terrain. Later, when Eisenhower became the President of the United States, he concentrated on building high quality roads. President Roosevelt had also built roads extensively under his 'New Deal'. Those roads are famous today as pathways and Pan-American Highways.

Similarly, roads, ports and railways have been given as much importance under the development model followed by Janaki Babu as was given to education, health, housing, food, agriculture, industry, tourism, science and textiles. Ribbon development takes place when high quality roads are provided and progress in agricultural economics too is witnessed. The same kind of development also took place on both sides of the New Jagannath Sadak. New branch roads were constructed from both the sides. Many new roads, such as the Ghantapur-Malisahi road, the Lendo-Kaduaghat road, the Chupurangi-Gadishagoda road, Bijipur-Karamala road, Bijipur-Janghara road and the Munida, Shukala-Indipur road, Shukala-Brahmagiri road and the Biranarasinghpur-Shiruli road were constructed. The farmer now carried his produce to towns to earn a fair return on his investment, fishermen could sell fish from the Chilka Lake and rivers at a decent price and students

from the area could commute to Khurda, Bhubaneswar and Puri everyday to undertake their studies. Moreover, the mahaprasad of Lord Jagannath could reach villages in far-off places without becoming stale. Growth centres came up at several places in Bira, Pratappur, Bhailapur, Shukala, Bijipur, Kotakana, Gadasahi, Jankia, Chupurangi, Rameswar and other places. There is no doubt that the progress would continue in the future.

It is an irony of fate that the New Jagannath Sadak has again fallen prey to the indifference of the government. Now there is virtually no maintenance of the road. Janaki Babu had built the road when he was in power and later as the Leader of the Opposition and the Chairman of the Public Accounts Committee, he had taken the committee members with him to show them the dilapidated condition of the road so as to influence the Government for its improvement. People of the area miss Janaki Babu, the charismatic leader. Fortunately, work is in progress for the first 10 kilometres of the road. The NABARD has agreed to finance the construction work from the 10th to the 16th kilometer, while the Central Government has sanctioned Rs.32 crore at the end of 2009 from the Central Road Fund for the construction of the road from the 16th to the 26th kilometre. People now await the day when the road will become a full-fledged, bitumened one. They await the day when plantation of trees on both sides of the road would be completed along with provision for drainage of water.

Time will tell when the wait would be over. But I, along with the people of the area, continue to pray to Lord Jagannath that Janaki Babu leads a long and healthy life.

He is Indradyumna incarnate for us!

## Building Bridges

G.C. Mitra ♦

*Roads in the USA are not great because the USA is great, but the USA is great because its roads are great –John F. Kennedy.*

**C**ontributions made by the visionary Janaki Ballav Patnaik are in context with this philosophy and it was pursued with great determination during his time.

Odisha was recognized as the outlet of water for large areas of Central India and of course, for itself as well. Precipitation here has, over millions of years, created a number of major rivers which divide Odisha into small fragments. During the monsoons, the northern parts of Odisha remain separated from the southern parts, thereby forcing people and goods to travel long distances unnecessarily. The cost of such travel, in terms of both money and time, is enormous.

---

♦ G.C. Mitra is Professor, IIT, Kharagpur and former Secretary, Works Department, Odisha

So to check such wastage of time and money, a large number of bridge-construction projects were planned and implemented. For example, the river Mahanadi hinders road communication for over six months every year. In its more than 400 kilometre long journey, it has over it only two bridges, one at Hirakud and the other at Kataka, 320 kilometres away. The Mundali Bridge was started as a part of the Mundali Barrage project during the fifties but work on it was left at half-raised pillars. It was only in the nineties that this bridge was completed and on 30 January 1996, it was inaugurated by the Chief Minister of Odisha. This has opened up communication with the Athgarh sub-division and has also shortened the distance to Sambalpur.

Similarly, funds from NABARD were arranged to resume work on the bridges which had been started long ago, across the Mahanadi at Boudh and Sonepur. Constructions picked up a great pace and finally, the bridges were completed in the early part of the twenty first century. The other most important bridge across the Mahanadi at Sidhamula near Daspalla was started in 1995 and was completed within a short time. This was possible with assistance from the NABARD and for which no mean effort was made by the Chief Minister. Besides, the Naraj Bridge across the Kathjodi River and the barrage-cum-bridge across the Mahanadi from Kataka to Chouduar were other important landmarks during that period. The above bridges are some of the longest bridges of the country, each exceeding 1.5 kilometres in length. Other major tributaries in the Mahanadi system, both in the western and the eastern parts of Odisha, also received full attention. Close to Kataka, construction of the Kuakhai Bridge was started with bank finance and it opened an alternate route to Kataka. The major tributaries of the Mahanadi, such as the Tel, Suktel and the

Ong in the western districts, created major communication problems. The bridge at Belgaon over Bolangir-Bhawanipatna road was also creating persistent problems because a hill that was jutting out like a spar had created eddies during high floods which destroyed a few spans of the already completed bridge. Prior to this, the same site had witnessed the washing away of the Mahatab Bridge. Therefore, this bridge had to be rebuilt with great care. Nevertheless, the bridge was completed and opened to traffic. Other major bridges, which were either newly taken up or resumed on frames already started a long time ago, were the Kandal Bridge on the Adaspur-Arisol road, the Jeera Bridge on the Godbhaga-Turum road, a few bridges on the Suktel river, bridges on Veden, Tikira, Safai and Tel on the Tusra-Gudvella road, the Udanti Bridge on the Khariar-Sinapalli road, the Uttei Bridge at Kalahandi, Kharastrota (Jajpur), Daya Bridge at Puri and the Bhargabi Bridge, again at Puri to name only a few. All these bridges were undertaken with borrowed finance from the NABARD.

Similarly, completion of the Brahmani Bridge was a major achievement in the Brahmani river system. Built on the Dhenkanal-Kamakhyanager road, it is the second longest bridge in the State. The bridges over the Sankha and the Koel rivers were also undertaken during this period to ease traffic in the Rourkela areas. In the district of Dhenkanal, the Ramial Bridge on the Dhenkanal-Kamakhyanager road provided all weather connectivity to the Sub-Divisional Headquarter of Kamakhyanager with the District Headquarter.

Even in the Subarnarekha river system, work for a bridge over the river Subarnarekha was started on the Kamarda-Baliapal road, along with a bridge on the river Kharkhai, close to Rairangpur. The road from Nuapada to Khadial was interspersed with a number of water channels which affected

communication in the district. To resolve this difficulty, all the channels were bridged. In the backward areas of Koraput and Kalahandi, a number of bridges, including Patala near Padua, were taken up. This resulted in an easier life for the people.

The six bridges, including Rushikulya and Badanadi bridges, were taken up in the Ganjam district after the devastating floods of 1990. These were soon completed, thereby putting an end to the people's miseries.

Apart from bridges across rivers, the Railway over-bridges at Kataka and Jajpur were also completed in record time with the assistance of the Indian Railways.

In short, bridge building got a boost during this period, with about 400 bridges having been completed over a period of 12 years. This included some of the major bridges in India.

In the realm of road construction, a major project named the New Jagannath Sadak was taken up, first with funds from the RLEGP and then with funds from the regular roads programme. This new 100 kilometer long road went from Chandanpur in Puri to Sarankul in the Nayagarh district. Many bridges were constructed over the rivers Malaguni, Daya and Luna and with the completion of this project, the distance between Puri and Berhampur was shortened by 40 kilometres. It also opened up large areas of Kanas, Satyabadi and Puri Sadar to easy communication.

The second National Highway project between Bhubaneswar and Kataka was initiated with land acquisition and was subsequently followed up. The GM Sambalpur-Rourkela section of the National Highway was made into a modern four lane road with assistance from the Asian Development Bank (ADB).

In the Kalahandi district, the completion of the Thuamul-Rampur road and other roads resulted in the shortening of

distances between various important towns of undivided Koraput and the district of Kalahandi.

Odisha has about 50,000 villages and the Government took a decision that all-weather connectivity to villages with population of 1500 and above and between 1000 and 1500 should be substantially increased. The target was achieved during this period and all-weather communication to the district headquarters from the block headquarters was made possible due to consistent planning and efforts.

Finally, in the realm of construction of buildings, mention may be made of two very impressive projects undertaken at Kataka. First, the Board of Revenue Building, which is eight storied and is the tallest Government Building in Kataka. Built on a ground which was earlier a pond, the building was completed within a period of two years and now houses most of the important offices at Kataka. Then there is the Jawaharlal Nehru Indoor Stadium which is a unique structure in the country. The roof of the structure is a 'coated' tabular steel space frame of about 65 metres in diameter, the largest one to be built in Asia till that date. Even now, it stands high in glory!

\* \* \*



## New Horizons in the Railway Sector

Romesh Roy ♦

**T**he invention of the steam engine led to the railway revolution in the eighteenth century. India, at that time, was a British colony and the East India Company considered construction of new ports and rail lines a profitable venture to ensure export of raw materials to Britain and import the finished products of their country for the sprawling consumer market in India. After the Mutiny of 1857, they emphasized more on the spread of railways, but this time round, it was for the quick movement of troops.

So in the nineteenth century, the British had initiated the development of the railway network for rapid transportation of soldiers and military hardware, to exercise administrative control and to consolidate their business interest all over India. Accordingly, the major cities of India like Kolkata, Delhi,

---

♦ Romesh Roy is an Indian Railway Service officer

Mumbai and Chennai were linked by railways. In order to connect Kolkata with Chennai, the British had to take the rail line through Odisha. Thus, Odisha just happened to be drawn into the network of the railways, without really being intended to.

Even in the present century, and lately, in recent times, the railways have played a vital role in the development of the nations. In England, America and the European countries, rapid growth of the railway network resulted in faster industrial expansion.

On 16 April 1853, the first train set out on rails between Mumbai and Pune. On 16 August 1854, the second train ran between Kolkata and Hoogly. Odisha's entry into the railway map came only with the setting up of the Bengal-Nagpur railways in 1887. During 1893-96, bridges were erected on the Bramhani, Birupa, Mahanadi, Kathjuri and Kuakhai rivers.

Gradually, in 1897, the Khurdah Road-Puri train service was introduced. Besides this, two meter gauge lines were made operational. One was the Paralakhemendi-Gunupur line under the patronage of the Maharaja of Paralakhemendi and the other was the Rupsa-Baripada line financed by the Maharaja of Mayurbhanj. However, at the dawn of Independence in 1947, Odisha was the most neglected province on the railway map of India.

Here, it is worthwhile to reflect on the efforts made after Independence on the railway front. In 1955, B.N. Railways was rechristened S.E. Railways, and in 1960, three railway projects were merged to form the D.B.K. Project. These three projects were (1) the Dandakaranya-Bolangir-Kiriburu railway project under the Kotagalasa-Koraput-Jeypore-Kirandul scheme, also known as the Dandakaranya project, (2) the Titlagarh-

Bolangir-Jharsuguda project and (3) the proposed Rourkela-Kiriburu project.

On 31 January 1962, India's Prime Minister Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru laid the foundation of the proposed Kataka-Paradip rail line. In 1971, the length of railway line per hundred sq. km in Odisha was not even half the national average.

This led Members of Parliament from Odisha to pointedly criticize the growing indifferent attitude of the Central Government towards the State on the railway front and demanded more railway projects for the region. The most important of them was the Banspani-Jakhapura line that would connect the coast with the mineral rich region of the Keonjhar district. When Janaki Ballav Patnaik was included in the Union Council of Ministers, he convinced Prime Minister Indira Gandhi about the importance of this project towards the development of the mining areas and requested her for its speedy implementation. The Prime Minister, while addressing a public meeting at Keonjhar, regretted the abject poverty prevailing in the former princely states and assured construction of the Daitari-Banspani railway line. In accordance with her declaration, the project was implemented in two phases, the Daitari-Jakhapura in the first phase and the Daitari-Banspani in the second.

Then in 1980, Janaki Ballav Patnaik assumed charge as Chief Minister of Odisha and continued in that position for 14 years with an interlude of five years in the early nineties. During this period, along with the Jakhapura-Banspani project, two more vital projects were taken up. These were the Koraput-Rayagada and Sambalpur-Talcher rail lines. On 9 June 1980, he inaugurated the Jakhapura-Daitari railway line as the first phase of the Jakhapura-Banspani railway project. But the Ministry of Railways was reluctant to invest further in the project

on the ground that rail transport of iron ore from Daitari to Paradip was costlier compared to road transport via the Express Highway. However, due to his importance and influence at the Centre, Patnaik prevailed upon the Ministry of Railways to continue with the project. This was a period of economic depression, hence private companies at home and abroad, who utilized the Paradip port for import and export trade in iron ores, were persuaded to invest in the rail project. Some Japanese and South Korean companies were part of this initiative. With the growing demand for more steel plants and the resultant necessity for more iron ore, the Indian Railways realized the urgency of a railway link to the mining areas of Keonjhar and stepped up construction of the same. The work was completed only in 2008.

But, back in 1980, the NALCO decided to set up an alumina refinery at Damanjodi near Koraput which made it necessary for the alumina to be brought to its smelter at Angul. Hence, the Koraput-Rayagada rail link gained priority. Chief Minister Patnaik laid special emphasis on construction of this 164 km rail link which otherwise connected remote tribal areas of southern Odisha. Some people in the Ministry of Railways argued that transport of alumina could easily be done through the nearby port of Visakhapatnam and there was no need for this new line. But the Chief Minister persisted and continued to exert pressure and work eventually began on the project. The project turned out to be an expensive one because it involved the construction of many bridges and long tunnels. Acquisition of land belonging to adivasis posed another problem. But the Chief Minister intervened personally and convinced the locals by offering them jobs in the Damanjodi Plant. Now this railway line not only serves the NALCO but also connects the vast

tribal hinterland with the coastal belt including Bhubaneswar, the capital city of Odisha.

To forge the cultural and emotional integration between western and coastal Odisha, the Sambalpur-Bhubaneswar rail link was of vital importance. It was a long standing demand of the State. During the time when Indira Gandhi led the Government at the Centre, the Minister of Railways, Abdul Ghani Khan Choudhury, was a good friend of Chief Minister Patnaik. So in 1984, in the presence of the Minister of Railways, the then General Secretary of the All India Congress Committee, Rajiv Gandhi, inaugurated the construction of the Talcher-Sambalpur rail link. At the same time, he also established a new Railway Division at Sambalpur. It was Odisha's second Railway Division after Khurda Road.

In 1998, during the third term of Janaki Babu, this 164 km long rail line was declared operational. Besides, construction of the Haridaspur-Paradip and the Sukinda-Talcher lines were taken up during his tenure. Meanwhile, the three important offices, of the Railways Service Selection Board, the Railways Claims Tribunal and the Chief Administrative Office of the Railways, were shifted to Bhubaneswar. As a result, no Odia had to go to distant Kolkata in search of railway jobs, no contractor had to go there to settle claims and no one had to commute for office work. Subsequently, when Bhubaneswar was declared a new railway zone, the task was easy because the infrastructure already existed in the city. Prime Minister Devegowda inaugurated the Zonal Headquarter at Bhubaneswar in the presence of Chief Minister Patnaik. To make matters easy, the Chief Minister offered a readymade housing complex and the Headquarter had an instant start in the state capital.

As the Railways Coordination Commissioner and Special Secretary in the Department of Commerce and Transport, I

had the opportunity to work with Janaki Ballav Patnaik and was greatly inspired by his unflinching commitment and effort to expand the railway network and facilities in the State.

Statistics here will set things in the right perspective. In the post Independence period till 1980, there was only 600 kilometres of railway lines in Odisha. During the tenure of Janaki Ballav Patnaik as Chief Minister, 525 kilometres of additional rail line was laid, along with the establishment of the Divisional Headquarter in Sambalpur and the Zonal Headquarter in Bhubaneswar.

Janaki Ballav Patnaik certainly was instrumental in ushering a new era of the railways in the State.

\* \* \*

## Building of the Dhamra Port

Sidhartha Pradhan ♦

**H**olding on to an age-old tradition, millions of coastal people of Odisha set assail small boats of either wood, plastic or paper on the day of Kartik Purnima, to commemorate the Bali Yatra of yore. This has been a symbolic commemoration of the fact that every year for more than 2000 years, ships laden with goods from India, and more particularly from Odisha, used to set out on their journey from Odisha Ports for various countries in South East Asia such as modern day Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia, Cambodia, Thailand Sri Lanka etc. Thus, Odisha has a long history of trade relationship with many countries of South East Asia. Many an old port dot Odisha's 480 kilometre long coastline which starts from the district of Balasore in the north to Ganjam in the south. Little

---

♦ Sidhartha Pradhan is Senior Officer, Finance Department and Additional Secretary, Department of Commerce, Government of Odisha

wonder then, that the coastal people of Odisha were sea farers for more than 2300 years. Since the third Century BC, people from Odisha have carried out trade and commerce with various countries of South East Asia and Sri Lanka.

History across the world tells us that the development of important ports has led to the development of the country. In modern times, Hong Kong, Singapore, Rotterdam, London, New York etc. are some of the examples where development of the Port has led to the development of the hinterland and the country. Likewise, Biju Patnaik put his energy and will in developing the Paradeep Port as a major port of India. Thus, development of the Paradeep Port was started by the Government of Odisha with its own resources. After more than 40 years of development, Paradeep today is one of the most important ports in the country dealing with bulk cargo like coal, iron ore and other commodities.

However, after the development of the Paradeep Port, no systematic planning was undertaken to develop other ports in the State. When J.B. Patnaik became the Chief Minister of Odisha for the third time in 1995, he too, like Biju Patnaik, had a vision to develop the port sector in Odisha in a big way. Thereby, development of Gopalpur as an important port was initiated by J.B. Patnaik. During his first tenure, this port was developed as a minor port with an investment of Rs.27 crore. At the time of inaugurating the port, Rajiv Gandhi, who was then the Prime Minister, had highly commended the efforts of the State Government for developing this port with their own resources. Then in 1995, during his third tenure, when the port sector was opening up for private investment, the Chief Minister envisioned the conversion of the Gopalpur Port into a major all-weather port. As the Mega Steel Plant of Tata Steel was being planned at Gopalpur, the Tatas were keen to develop



this port for the import of coking coal and the export of finished products. So the State Government prepared a project report through RITES, and the MMTC, a premier Central Government Undertaking, came forward to invest in the port venture in collaboration with Tata Steel. Although the dream of creating a major port at Gopalpur could not materialize at that time due to a worldwide recession, the efforts of the Chief Minister prepared the ground for this venture. At present, the port is slowly developing under the private sector. It is hoped that Gopalpur will develop into an all-weather major port in the eastern region in the years to come. In fact, he identified port development as a thrust sector and entrusted the IIT Madras to undertake a preliminary study to identify suitable locations along the coast of Odisha for development of ports. With the Chief Minister's active cooperation, it was decided that a number of ports in Odisha should be developed.

The IIT furnished its report to the State Government in 1996, in which they had identified the following locations for developing ports in Odisha. Starting from Northern Odisha to Ganjam district in the South, the locations identified for development of ports were: Kirtania, Babalapur, Budhabalanga-Chandipur, Inchuri, Chudamani, Dhamra, the mouth of Honshua at Barunei (near Jambu), Devimouth at Astaranga, Baliharachandi near Puri, Palur, just South of Chilika Lake, Gopalpur, and the mouth of Bahuda river at Sonapur.

Thus, besides Paradeep, 12 other locations were identified to develop modern ports along the coast line. The coast line of Odisha is very convenient for developing ports which can act as a magnet for the hinterland which extends right up to Uttar Pradesh, Delhi and beyond. On the east coast, Odisha is the northern most state where major deep ports could be developed because of the availability of the required draught, as compared

with West Bengal, where silting is a big problem, particularly in Kolkata and Haldia.

Among all the ports identified by IIT, Madras, the Dhamra Port had the biggest draught of more than 18 metres. This is a very old port and has been in operation since 1821. In fact, had it not been beset with environmental, ecological and infrastructural difficulties, the Dhamra location would have been suitable for development of a large port as it is located about a hundred kilometres north of Paradeep. The many difficulties that lay in developing Dhamra as a major port are discussed below.

- i) It is located near the high security Defence Zone at Wheeler Island where the Agni missile is fired for testing (Wheeler Island is only 10 kms. from Dhamra).
- ii) Though Dhamra port has the right depth, a channel of about 7 to 10 kms had to be dredged for large vessels to enter the port.
- iii) Environmentally, it is located in a sensitive zone where mangroves are widely prevalent and other rare species also grow.
- iv) The Olive Ridley turtle, which is an endangered species, comes to lay eggs at the coast line near Dhamra every year.

In spite of all these difficulties, the Chief Minister took it as a challenge to get all the clearance from the concerned central authorities. The question uppermost in the mind of the Chief Minister was how to build the port, whether through organizations of the State Government or Central Government,

whether through private as well as public participation or through the private sector alone. Since the State Government did not have adequate resources of its own and it was not feasible for the State Government to mobilize public resources of the order required for the development of ports, there was no viable alternative to the development of ports other than through private investment.

The Chief Minister, the Deputy Chief Minister and the Minister, Industries, had visited the countries in the Far East and South East Asia in the latter half of October 1996 along with senior officials of the State to invite foreign investment into key infrastructure sectors for building ports and highways. The G. Premjee Group of Thailand, controlled by Kirit C. Shah, had met the delegation in Bangkok and had expressed interest in developing ports in Odisha. The Group had also promised to bring up a complete proposal before the State Government in this regard as soon as possible.

Within three months of the meeting in Bangkok, on 7 and 8 January 1997, senior representatives of the G. Premjee Group visited Bhubaneswar. U.N. Behera, MD, IDCO, accompanied the representatives to Gopalpur on 7 January 1997 and to Dhamra on 8 January 1997, to study the prospects of developing ports in the area. The representatives were very impressed with the location of Dhamra, mainly due to its deep draught of more than 18 metres. They visualized that the Dhamra site could be developed as one of the most important deep-water ports in India for receiving capsized vessels of 1,50,000 DWT because there was hardly any port in India which could receive capsized vessels in the harbour. Only the outer harbour of Vizag can receive capsized vessels.

On 2 February 1997, the G. Premjee Group submitted a formal proposal to the State Government to undertake the

development of a green-field port at Dhamra through MoU, on the basis of BOOST. Both the concepts of the MoU and BOOST, which stood for Build, Own, Operate, Share and Transfer, were very new at that time. In their presentation, they proposed to develop Dhamra into a major port which would handle a capacity of four million metric tonnes in the first phase and later could go up to six million metric tonnes from the seventh year and to 10 million metric tonnes from the 12th year. Although other types of cargo would also be handled, the initial cargo would be mainly coal and iron ore.

The nearest rail line from Dhamra was more than 60 kilometres away at Bhadrak. The company agreed to construct a 60 kilometre rail link between Bhadrak and Dhamra at a cost of about Rs. 110 crore. The first phase capital cost of the port, including the rail link, would be Rs. 478 crore. They proposed to sign the MoU with the State Government so that they could undertake a detailed feasibility study at their own cost for the development of the port. They also suggested that they would pay up to Rs. 25 lakh towards the cost of Consultants appointed by the State Government to assist the State's interaction with the proposed company, the International Seal Ports Limited (ISPL), for the development of the project. The major shareholders of the ISPL were Precious Shipping Public Company, Bangkok (a G. Premjee Group Company), Larsen & Toubro Ltd. and Stevedoring Services of America (SSA) of Seattle, USA. The G. Premjee Group further proposed that after the project report was prepared, the State Government should entrust the ISPL with the construction and operation of the port on the basis of BOOST for a period of thirty years, on certain terms and conditions to be finalized by the State Government.

Soon the proposal of the ISPL was put forward to the Chief Minister who ordered that all expeditious actions should

be initiated so that the Government could take a firm decision to develop Dhamra into a major port. He further ordered that a Consultant be appointed to advise the State Government regarding the privatization of ports, as the State was lacking expertise in this regard. Under the Chief Minister's direction, I was selected to look after the Dhamra port project as Special Secretary, Commerce, in addition to my charge as Secretary, Public Enterprises Department.

As the Chief Minister had directed that a Consultant should be appointed, it was decided to appoint RITES, a Government of India PSU, as Consultants to advise the State Government regarding the development of ports in Odisha through private investment. RITES had the appropriate expertise in the area as they were also the Consultants to the Governments of Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh regarding privatization of ports and thus had substantial experience in this regard. RITES was requested to have detailed discussions with the ISPL and to examine the scope of the development of the Dhamra port which was to be undertaken by the ISPL.

RITES had a number of meetings with the ISPL and the State Government before submitting an initial report on 5 March 1997, relating to the development of the Dhamra port. They had stated in the report that they were the Consultants to the Government of Andhra Pradesh on privatization of ports in that State and that Andhra Pradesh had offered 11 ports for development through private investment through the route of ICB but that nine of them had received no takers. For the remaining two ports, only one reasonably acceptable proposal for each was received. And yet, the whole process of selection took about three long years. This would indicate that investment in ports is not very attractive due to various reasons.

The RITES had further stated in their report that Dhamra was difficult as a port project due to the following reasons:

- i) It was completely a Greenfield project.
- ii) Substantial capital investment was required for connecting rail and road links up to 60 km. with the national system.
- iii) The 18 meter contour line was at a distance of 6 to 7 kilometres from the shoreline, which would call for heavy dredging for maintaining the channel.
- iv) The cargo was not definite.

Considering the high cost of developing a port at Dhamra for reasons indicated above and owing to uncertain prospects, the RITES concluded that the Government of Odisha should, however, not lose the opportunity of taking advantage of the offer made by ISPL. Based on the experience of Andhra Pradesh and the problems of development of a port at Dhamra, the RITES was also of the view that no better terms were likely to be offered even if the ICB route was followed. They further observed that substantial time could instead be saved by opting for the process of a MoU and the spinoff effect could take root much faster than going through the bidding process.

In the opinion of RITES, the capabilities of the ISPL consortium of partners for undertaking the development of the Dhamra Port was very good and that they had therefore been short listed by the Andhra Pradesh Government for the Port projects in that State. They also said that the consortium had just the right mix of expertise. While the construction company L&T was renowned for its experience in manufacture of cargo

handling system, the SSA was a port operator with world wide experience and M/s. Precious Shipping Company Ltd. (PSC) was a trading house which can guarantee cargo for Dhamra Port. The financial standing of all the three parties was very good and they had, in fact, stated that each of the party was sound enough to develop the Dhamra Port on its own strength. They finally stated that the consortium had a very good chance of successfully constructing and operating the port in the shortest time. Therefore, they strongly recommended that the Odisha Government should not lose any time in entering into a MoU with the ISPL for developing the Dhamra Port. In their briefing, the RITES informed the State Government that the ISPL was taking part in various ICB bids in different States and if the decision for Dhamra was delayed, they might divert their attention to other states.

Further, in the annexure to their letter, they compared the agreement entered into by the Andhra Pradesh Government for the development of the Krishnapatnam Port with the draft MoU which the RITES had negotiated with the ISPL for the development of the Dhamra Port. The comparison clearly showed that the ISPL's offer to the Government of Odisha was more favourable on some of the points embedded in the agreement signed by the Andhra Pradesh Government and was nowhere less favourable in respect of the other terms and conditions.

In effect, they stated that the terms and conditions in the MoU were comparable to the agreement entered into by the Andhra Pradesh Government for the Krishnapatnam Port and certain other terms and conditions were more favourable than the ones agreed to by the Government of Andhra Pradesh. The comparison is as stated below:

	A.P.	Odisha
i) Period of lease	35 years	30 years
ii) Payment by party	For first 5 years the party has got waiver (not to pay)	No waiver agreed.

The ISPL had approached the State Government on the basis of the Chief Minister and his team's visit to Thailand in October 1996 and the interest shown by one of the Thai Companies for developing ports in Odisha. It was, therefore, decided to seek a report on the credentials of the G. Premjee Group from the Indian Ambassador in Bangkok. The Ambassador, in his report to the Government of Odisha dated 3 March 1997, had stated that the G. Premjee Group is a very strong business group in Thailand and owns the largest shipping company in Thailand by the name of M/s Precious Shipping Company Ltd., with a total DWT of 767.856 and a fleet strength of 38 vessels. The Ambassador also strongly recommended the G. Premjee Group to be considered for the project in the Port Development Sector in Odisha.

The Government deliberated on the proposal of the ISPL and having regard to the report submitted by the RITES, was of the view that the ISPL seemed to be a sound consortium of reputed parties which includes firms like the L & T, which is not only one of the largest construction companies in India but was also putting up various plants in the State. As the offer of the ISPL was in response to the visit of a high level team from Odisha led by the Chief Minister, the MoU with this group will demonstrate the State Government's earnest intention for inviting foreign investment to the State.

The Government also noted that the India Infrastructure Report (popularly known as the Rakesh Mohan Committee



Report) prepared by the Government of India recommends adoption of the process of MoU for port development. On page 47 of volume-I of the Report, (relating to port development) it has been stated that “a tendering approach also fails to effectively tackle green field projects or innovative proposals. These are concepts prepared at considerable costs by entrepreneurs and in some cases, are patented intellectual property. In such cases, negotiated projects of the concept, within the specified parameters, through a Committee should be considered for development of ports.”

The Government deliberated on the draft MoU furnished by the RITES and recognized, as analyzed by Consultant RITES, that the terms and conditions imbedded in the draft MoU were comparable with the agreement signed by the Andhra Pradesh Government for the development of the Krishnapatnam Port through the competitive route and in fact, may be even better in some aspects. Besides, the State Government will receive certain percentage of the gross turnover as share and lease rental on the land which would be given to the ISPL for the development of the Port. In fact, all the benchmarks negotiated by the Government of Andhra Pradesh in the Krishnapatnam agreement, which was decided through the ICB, were there in the MoU.

In consideration of the aforesaid reasons, the Government felt that it would be advantageous to adopt the process of MoU for the development of the Dhamra Port, in association with the ISPL. True to the assurances given by the Chief Minister in his October 1996 visit to Bangkok, he directed the official machinery to move rapidly to anchor the MoU. The offer of the ISPL was accepted and after obtaining the approval of the Cabinet on 16 March 1997, one MoU was entered into on 31

March 1997. The Cabinet had stipulated that the final agreement for awarding the project shall be formulated and entered into by the two parties on the basis that the terms and conditions shall not be inferior to those in respect of the Krishnapatnam Port, which was recently settled by the Government of Andhra Pradesh. Thus, within a period of 82 days from the visit of the G. Premjee representative to the location, selection and finalization of the terms and conditions were arrived at. Thus a stupendous decision was taken at a rapid speed to develop Dhamra as a major deep water port with the utmost modern infrastructural facilities.

The company prepared a Detailed Project Report (DPR) showing an estimated cost of Rs. 20 crore and submitted four copies of the report to the State Government within the stipulated time line mentioned in the MoU on 3 July 1997.

Then, as was sought by the Government of Odisha, the ISPL, vide its letter dated 20 September 1997, had forwarded the draft Dhamra agreement for consensus of the Government. The agreement for Dhamra Port was to be finalized by 1 October 1997, as stipulated in the MoU.

The Government has formed a dedicated team to negotiate the draft Agreement headed by me and two other officers from Finance and Law, namely P.K. Nayak, Additional Secretary, and Sudershan Nayak, Joint Secretary, respectively.

The Agreement was negotiated in great detail, clause by clause. This Agreement was the first of its kind in India on the basis of BOOST. The Agreement was vetted and concurred by the Departments of Law and Finance. Only after that was it put up to the Cabinet, on 16 March 1998. The Agreement was finally signed on 2 April 1998, exactly as per plan.

### Some of the key features of the Agreement

- i) It was the first BOOST Concession in the country.
- ii) It was the first concession in the country that offered a revenue share which remains the highest till date, a weighted average of 9.8 per cent of the Gross Annual Income over the thirty year period.
- iii) It was a unique achievement for the State Government that the Operator agreed to share revenue out of the Gross Annual Income on the following basis:
  - a) 1-5 years – 5 % gross revenue to State Govt.
  - b) 5-10 years – 8 % gross revenue to State Govt.
  - c) 10-15 years – 10 % gross revenue to State Govt.
  - d) 15-30 years – 12 % gross revenue to State Govt.
- iv) Compared to Gujarat and Maharashtra, the revenue sharing with the port operator was out of the net revenue, which was not more than 3 to 5 per cent.
- v) This Concession Agreement became a standard format for many other Concession Agreements subsequently entered into by other maritime states and the Government of India.

One of the biggest challenges faced by the Dhamra Port during its development was Environment Clearance from the Government of India. The false and misrepresentations made by some NGOs on the adverse impact which the port would have on the Olive Ridley Turtles and their Rookeries had their effect on the commencement of the construction of the port. Obtaining the Environment Clearance did bring up some real tense moments due to false and misleading propaganda but all these were finally cleared in the hearing conducted at the site

of the port by Justice Venkatachala, formerly of the Supreme Court but at that time the Chairman, National Environment Appellate Authority and all of the Appellate Authority's eight members. The articulation of the genuine facts on behalf of the Government and its commitment to an environment-friendly approach to development in front of the Judge by me, was a path breaker to Dhamra. The Authority, through a public order, cleared the port project from all environmental angles because we could furnish all the necessary proofs, from the archives in London, showing that it was a functioning Port since 1821 with wide operational jurisdiction and area.

The other major support received was from A.P.J. Abdul Kalam, former President of India, who was then the Defence Advisor to the Government of India. The defence clearance for the port was vital due to its proximity to the Wheeler Islands, a critical defence installation of the country. However, Abdul Kalam was very cooperative on the defence issue and was equally supportive of the development of the port, and thereby, necessary defence clearance was also obtained.

The key persons who played a pivotal role in the development of this Greenfield port at Dhamra, without whose support, dedication and commitment the Port would not have reached where it is today, were J.B. Patnaik, S.B. Mishra, IAS, then Chief Secretary, Government of Odisha, and P.K. Mishra, IAS, then Additional Chief Secretary, Government of Odisha.

Unfortunately, due to the prevailing international economic recession, the ISPL later backed out from investment in the Dhamra Port. As a result, L&T, the other partner, adopted Tata Steel as a new partner for the development of the Dhamra Port on the line already decided upon.

The long struggle in getting all relevant clearances have at last borne fruit as the first phase of the port is now being

constructed at a rapid speed. It has since become operational, with proper train and road connectivity. I am certain that, in the years to come, Dhamra will become one of the most important deep water ports of India. This only shows how clear vision and direction of a leader can help surmount any barrier, paving the way for the execution of major projects in our country.

\* \* \*

## An Era of Development for Adivasis and Dalits

Sura Sethy ♦

**A** state can actually develop only when the under-developed people there, commonly described as ‘backward people’, could be developed economically and in such vital fields as education. In Odisha, about 38 per cent of the population, which amounts to 1.5 crore people, belong to the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes. Development of Odisha is, therefore, linked to the development of these people.

I would like to present an account here to show how neglected they were before 1980. There were 1,200 officers in the Odisha Administrative Service (OAS) at the time but only 12 of them belonged to Dalits and Adivasis. That was just one per cent. Though the Reservation Act had been made

---

♦ Sura Sethy is former MLA, General Secretary, SC and ST, Legislators’ Council

applicable in 1975, the people of these categories did not get proportional benefits in getting jobs because of some loopholes in the law. These were later rectified in 1982 and provision was made in the Act to reserve 38 per cent of all promotional posts for these people. The law was strictly adhered to in case of their appointments and promotions in all Boards, Corporations, Municipalities, Universities and such other institutions. Because the officers in charge of administration often disregarded the law, provisions were also made to draw criminal proceedings against the defaulting administrators and impose a fine of up to Rs. 1,000 on them. Thus, when the Act was enforced properly, more than 500 officers of the OAS, the Odisha Forest Service and the Odisha Education Service, more than 600 doctors, more than 600 engineers and thousands of Class III and Class IV employees were appointed in government and semi-government organizations. Besides, several promotions were made to Class II and Class I categories.

The then Government under the leadership of Janaki Ballav Patnaik had taken many important steps for educational, cultural, social, economic and political uplift of the Adivasis and the Dalits, besides enforcing the reservation policy. Emphasis was laid on all levels of education. It was quite obvious that people belonging to these categories could equal others only through proper education. Boarding schools were established to impart primary education in every Gram Panchayat in the tribal areas. Apart from education, the children were provided with free boarding and lodging in these schools. Initially, 1200 such schools were started and another 1200 schools came up in the second phase. Separate hostels were provided for boys and girls and the monthly stipend of these children was increased from Rs. 60 to Rs. 100. Scholarship amounts had also been raised substantially. Twenty per cent of the seats in medicine

and engineering were also reserved for people belonging to these categories. For example, in the MBBS course, 64 seats had been reserved out of a total of 320 seats. Earlier, it was not possible for even one or two students from the scheduled categories to get admission in this stream. Similarly, seats had also been reserved in other institutions of higher learning.

The number of sevashrams, ashram schools and kanyashrams was also increased substantially. Boarding, lodging, clothes and reading materials were provided free in these places. Midday meals were also introduced in the primary schools throughout the State in 1995. As a result, tribal boys and girls could get at least one square meal a day and they had the opportunity to attend school with other poor children.

Odisha has a total of 143 ITDP and DPAP (tribal majority) blocks and in each of these blocks, rice was provided at Rs. 2 per kilogram. Many other essential commodities like wheat, jaggery, kerosene, salt, dhoti and towels too were provided through the Department of Civil Supplies. Cashew plantation was taken up on barren government land and two acres of such land was allotted in favour of each harijan and tribal family. A large number of such families have benefited financially because of these programmes and many such families are financially comfortable enough now to provide proper education to their children.

Janaki Ballav Patnaik, the then Chief Minister, had evolved a special scheme with an eye on the poorest sections of the society. Known as the Economic Rehabilitation of the Rural Poor (ERRP), loans of up to 80 per cent and in some cases, up to 100 per cent, were provided under this scheme at concessional rates for small businesses like tea stalls, betel shops, poultry and goat farming, production of honey, fishing and selling vegetables and rice in village markets. At times, sums of



even up to Rs. 10,000 were provided to a single family under the scheme. Margin money was provided through the Harijan and Tribal Cooperative Corporation for planning of irrigation, fishing, weaving and similar work. Funds were provided at extremely low rates of interest through this organization for the purchase of auto rickshaws, trekkers and tractors. Moreover, because most of the Harijan families did not have their own homestead, three lakh impoverished families including Harijan families were given homesteads within a period of one year.

Then there were these people who belonged to a particular scheduled caste and who earned their livelihood by playing drums. Hundred per cent subsidy was provided to enable them to buy drums and other musical instruments, as well as appropriate coloured costumes so that they may form bands. This led to an increase in the number of music bands in the rural areas. Another major change came over when the system of carrying excrements on the head like any other load, which was prevalent in municipalities and NACs, was totally banned and the people involved in such labour were rehabilitated elsewhere.

A high power State Level Committee was set up to look into the complaints of Harijans regarding various kinds of repressions like untouchability, exploitation, arson and looting. The departmental director and a special police DIG were members of this Committee, led by Gajadhar Majhi, a senior Member of the Legislative Assembly, who later went on to become a minister. Majhi was the first Chairman of this Committee which had investigated various incidents and complaints and submitted its report to the Government. As a follow up measure, stringent action had been taken under the Prevention of Untouchability Act. This led to a drastic reduction in the occurrence of such incidents.

Though there is proportional representation for scheduled castes and scheduled tribes in state legislatures and the Lok Sabha, this is not applicable to the Rajya Sabha. However, the then Congress Government in Odisha had made an unwritten rule that at least four out of the ten Rajya Sabha seats earmarked for Odisha would be filled from people belonging to these categories. This rule was also adhered to while Patnaik formed his Council of Ministers.

Another longstanding demand was that of the fishermen who sought to be included in the category of scheduled castes. Chief Minister Patnaik had agreed to this and had enforced it at the government level. Outboard motors and inboard engines were provided to mechanize fishing boats. Giving effect to the programme of the Central Government, fishermen were provided with financial assistance for that part of the year when they had to sit idle at home. About 600 families had benefited as a result.

The Santhals of Mayurbhanj had a longstanding demand that primary education should be given to them in the 'Olchiki' language. The Government took a decision to give effect to this and a statue of Pandit Raghunath Murmu, the author of this script, was installed at Rairangpur.

Since ages, tribal people in Odisha had been collecting fire wood, sal leaves and sabai grass from the jungles for a livelihood. So to benefit lakhs of these tribals, sales tax from sal leaf plates and ropes made from sabai grass was abolished. Besides, these people also collected sal seeds. Earlier, this process was being auctioned off to businessmen who exploited the tribals. But soon the government nationalized the business of collection of sal seeds so that the tribals would receive a fair price. A prominent sal seed merchant went to the Supreme Court against this decision of the Government and even involved the

Chief Minister with a cooked up allegation to no effect, though, because the Apex Court rejected the case.

Odisha was the first state in India which had introduced a radical forest policy according to which the ownership of the forest area adjacent to a village would be jointly vested in the name of the village and the forest department, after demarcation by the concerned DFO and the tehsildar. Thousands of tribals had benefitted because of this policy, since most of the forests were in the tribal districts. Laws were amended to ensure that non-tribals could not buy land from the tribals. As a result, purchase of land from the tribals at throwaway prices was stopped to a great extent.

Moneylenders in districts like Koraput exploited the innocent, illiterate tribals by lending money at high rates of interest. These money lenders took the thumb impressions of the gullible tribals on agreements by which they were later required to work as their slaves, meaning bonded labour. This abominable practice called *bethi* was abolished by a law enacted for the purpose and the business of money-lending was declared illegal. Lakhs of tribals benefitted in the process.

Apart from legal and Constitutional changes, other changes, too, were brought in to improve the lot of the Adivasis and the Harijans. For instance, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's statue had been installed at a prominent place in Bhubaneswar. Also, to keep the memory of Shahid Laxman Nayak alive, the required land and funds were provided to a Trust. Moreover, a Type VI quarter was allotted to house the office of the Odisha Tribal and Harijan Legislators' committee.

About 10 lakh tribal families and eight lakh Harijan families were benefitted by various poverty alleviation programmes. While 23 per cent of Odisha's population was accounted for by tribals, 30 per cent of the total State budget was

spent on the development of the tribal areas. Provision had been made for construction of roads, reservoirs, schools and hospitals for the tribals. The tribal cooperatives too were strengthened as a result of which, the tribals got proper marketing facilities for goods produced by them. Loans of up to Rs. 250 taken by the tribals from the cooperative banks were waived. Preference was given to Harijan villages in the rural electrification programmes and the Kutir Jyoti programme of the Central Government was properly implemented.

Most of the programmes listed above were discontinued later under the non-Congress Government. The period from 1980 to 1990 and again from 1995 to 2000 may well be described as an era of development for Tribals and Harijans in the State, thanks to the visionary and pioneering leadership of Janaki Ballav Patnaik.

\* \* \*

## State's Rich Culture Gets New Look

Dr. Sitakant Mahapatra ♦

**B**ureaucrats have their own highs and lows. But, one of the most satisfying periods of my career was the time when I looked after Education, Culture and Tribal Development in Odisha and had felt that I could help achieve something for the State. This, I thought, was possible because of the positive attitude and direction of the State Government under the stewardship of Chief Minister Janaki Ballav Patnaik.

The year was 1975 and I had taken a two-year sabbatical for my research on the nature of transformation of the tribal societies of North Odisha, in particular the Santhals, on a Homi Bhaba Fellowship. However, two months before my research was to complete, I was asked to come back and take charge as the Home Secretary. I continued in that post till 1980 and along

---

♦ Dr. Sitakant Mahapatra is a Jnanpith and Padma Bibhushan Awardee, eminent Poet and Writer

with it, I also handled the Department of Information & Culture for a long time. Thereafter, I was Education Commissioner for nearly four years and Tribal Development Commissioner for about three years before proceeding to Delhi in 1989 on deputation.

During this entire period of nearly a decade, I had the privilege of working under Chief Minister Patnaik. Apart from being the Chief Minister, Patnaik was also a man of learning, deeply interested in education and literature. Greatly interested in culture, he himself was a writer with profound knowledge of Sanskrit. In fact, he was one of those rare politicians fluent in Sanskrit and could give lectures in that language. Later in life, as we all know, he had translated *Bhartruhari* and the complete works of Bankim Chandra into Odia and had also written several learned volumes on Sanskrit classics, apart from his own poetry.

I was happy to notice that the culture and cultural profile of Odisha, including tribal culture, were treated with as much importance as physical infrastructure for the State's overall development like roads and railways. This approach, by itself, was much appreciated by all officers engaged in the task in various ways. Some of the main areas where noticeable achievement could be reached were the development of the State Museum, the multi-faced approach to the documentation and preservation of tribal lifestyles, and streamlining of the pattern of educational administration.

New colleges were opened in the disadvantaged areas of the State, linking them to schools in the vicinity. Attention was no doubt given to tribals' education, but a much greater attention was given to the larger enrolment of tribal girls, by starting new Kanyashrams. Most importantly, the Jagannath Sanskrit University was founded at Puri. I recall with pleasure

the personal interest Patnaik took in this matter right from the selection of the location for the University to the entire blue-print of its future development. He wanted the library of the University to be one of the largest in the country and the University to be a centre of excellence. We tried and persuaded learned Sanskrit scholar and Professor of Sanskrit, Dr. Satya Vrat Shastri of the Delhi University to come as the Vice Chancellor. Incidentally, Dr. Shastri was the first to have been awarded the Bharatiya Jnanpith, in Sanskrit language.

It is well-known that the Odisha Museum has the largest collection of *pothis* or palm-leaf manuscripts in the country. They are of diverse themes and belong to various historical periods, some illustrated in black and white, and others in colour. They had been collected from various sources and their proper preservation was of paramount importance. The Ford Foundation, after a discussion, extended suitable help in this direction and the State Government initiated follow-up steps. Proper editing and publication of the manuscripts gathered steam under the able leadership of Pandit Nilamani Mishra and Dukhishyam Patnaik and their team of efficient officers. Quite a few of these *pothis* had earlier been edited and published. I myself had the privilege of translating and editing two of them. These were the *Ushavilas* and the *Amarusatakam*. The work was followed up by bringing out a publication in 1984, called the Illustrated Palm-leaf Manuscripts of Odisha from the State Museum. The Director, Rietberg Museum, Dr. Eberhard Fischer, Dr. Dinanath Pathy and I collaborated in bringing out a major volume in German titled *Orissa-Kunst Und Kultur in Nordost-Indien*, which introduced Odisha and its art and culture to Europe. Later, A.N. Tiwari also took great interest in the subject. It was, however, sad that he could not manage to arrange for its English version as the original was a Rietberg

Museum production. It is a matter of satisfaction though that later, a systematic drive for further collection of *pothis* available with private individuals and institutions was launched. This was important for the proper preservation, editing and publication of the *pothis*.

Development of the scheduled tribes and the designated areas was, no doubt, of great importance and the policy continued to be implemented through ITDAs and other institutional frames. But now, a systematic programme too was initiated to document patterns of tribal culture. Realization had come that with economic development, many of their cultural profiles were getting distorted and even destroyed, at times forgotten even by the tribal groups themselves. It is also well-known that the non-tribal people of the State know precious little of such cultures. It was thus felt necessary to try and document their cultural profiles as authentically as possible, fully keeping in view that they were a living reality and not a forgotten past and that the disappearance of these unique ethnic profiles would lead to the loss of a massive chunk of Odisha's rich cultural mosaic.

Some of the steps taken in this direction can be briefly mentioned :

Five tribal dwelling houses belonging to five selected groups like the Kondhs and the Santhals were put up in the Tribal Research Institute premises. These houses were meant to be authentic representations of the dwelling houses of these communities in their actual locale, just that they were made bigger and more stable. They were to be complete dwellings, with everything that one normally finds in such houses in the fields. They were built on location by the concerned tribal people who were also entrusted with the maintenance of the houses. Of course, the tribal people were provided with technical knowledge and support. Simultaneously, a small book on the



Patterns of Tribal Housing was published. The larger objective was to build a Museum of Tribal Lifestyles and not merely of tribal art, complete with adequate documentation, collection, cataloging and profiling. In fact, a full-fledged blue-print was drawn up with appropriate design and mechanism for the proper collection of various artefacts from musical instruments to jewelry and other items of tribal life. Each of the objects was to be named, its use outlined and a comprehensive catalogue to be published.

In this context, it was proposed to the State Government that each ITDA would contribute some funds out of its unspent balance and the State Government would provide the additional funds. The essence here was that the houses would not be like any other glass-and-concrete structure but would instead be in the line of tribal simplicity and grace. In fact, collection of artefacts had already been started. I remember calling on Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik to give directions for its early completion and I was happy that he took necessary steps towards that end.

A fine documentary film on the Dongria Kondhs, for which I had done the script, was produced with financial assistance from the State Government. It went on to win an award in the International Film Festival of India held at Hyderabad. A beginning was also made in the direction of documenting and presenting the songs of the Dongria Kondhs, with the production of *Song of the Hills*. However, this yet remains an area which calls for further expansion in a big way, with the latest technical expertise. The ATDC had also produced a large number of introductory volumes of Tribal Dictionaries highlighting the languages of the different tribal groups, outlining the terms, their usage and such other aspects.

Non-Government Organizations and scholars were encouraged to work in related areas so that all the essential

elements of tribal culture, their ethnology, ethno-poetry and ethno-music, along with their artefacts and lifestyle, were properly documented. The objective was to present them as a part of the rich mosaic of Odisha's composite culture, as much as the classical arts such as the sculptures, *pothis*, monuments and other features were. I recall the warm commitment, assistance and direction of the State Government to achieve all of these objectives.

\* \* \*

## Adivasi Culture and Janaki Ballav

Dr. Khageshwar Mohapatra ♦

“**Y**ou could help our government by doing the same work as you are doing now, working for the Adivasis, even by staying outside the State.” The leader of the masses who said this to me was more concerned about the tribals than about me! He was Janaki Ballav Patnaik, the then Chief Minister of Odisha. The Additional Chief Secretary who was present there at that moment commented immediately, “He might decide to come if we give him a formal appointment.”

And that was it. The request letter of the Government of Odisha had, in fact, reached the authorities at Viswa Bharati within 15 days of this conversation. Accordingly, my services would be placed with the Government of Odisha for a period of five years on deputation and I would work as the Director of the

---

♦ Dr. Khageshwar Mohapatra is former Professor, Odia Department, Viswabharati, Shantiniketan

almost defunct Adivasi Language and Culture Academy. I gave my consent to Viswa Bharati and came to Odisha about four months later. Once in Odisha, we were able to carry out several programmes successfully and could even convert the Academy into a national level organization in a short time because of the inspiration and confidence of Chief Minister Janaki Ballav Patnaik. The Academy, which had been established in 1978, started work on a vigorous scale only from 1988 and was able to create a feeling of self-esteem among the tribals of Odisha. I believe that my success was not Janaki Ballav's gift to me. Rather, it was his contribution to the tribal society of Odisha.

We had introduced several new programmes through the Adivasi Academy and through the advice and approval of Janaki Babu. What we had achieved included the following:

Firstly, monetary award was introduced as an incentive to learn and attain efficiency in Adivasi languages. This incentive was offered to the Sevashram teachers who were engaged in primary schools in tribal areas and to other employees engaged in developmental work

Secondly, books relating to grammar, dictionaries and folklore in 25 Adivasi languages were published in order to facilitate the process of learning the languages.

Thirdly, books on folklore, poetry, dance, music, musical instruments, fine arts and handicrafts were compiled for the preservation, growth and advancement of the Adivasi culture.

Fourthly, biographies were written and statues were installed of famous Adivasi personalities.

Fifth, every year, seven prominent Adivasis were felicitated to give them due recognition.

Sixthly, state and national level exhibitions were organized.

Seventh, documentaries on the lifestyles of Adivasis to be telecast on Doordarshan were produced.

Eighth, exhibition marquees were constructed for the display of paintings.

Finally, an annual research journal named *Banaja* was published.

Within a year of my joining the Government of Odisha, the first Director of the Harijan & Adivasi Research and Training Institute had retired. And noticing the sincerity with which I involved myself in the programmes relating to the tribals, I was given additional responsibilities as the Director of this Institute as well. I could sense that J.B. wanted me to take charge of the Institute to reactivate it. So to start with, we embarked upon some important work that had long been held up. As a result, noticeable improvement was brought about during the course of a year. The foundation stone for the Adivasi Museum was also laid. A tome titled *The Tribes of Orissa* too was published. This publication contained details of all the tribals of Odisha accompanied by pictures. Moreover, the customary laws prevalent in the Adivasi societies were compiled in the form of a book. Under the auspices of the Integrated Tribal Development Scheme, a workshop was also organized to create consciousness among the tribals and the Adivasis about their constitutional and other rights. All these programmes had been extremely attractive and effective. As a result, the plan of the State Government for the development of the tribals had been successful to a great extent. A bright picture of Odisha had been painted on the tribal map of India. Needless to say, J.B.'s good wishes and compassionate attitude were behind everything that I and my colleagues had achieved towards the development and emancipation of the tribals of Odisha.

Today as I look back, I recall my first meeting with J.B. at Delhi in the seventies. A few intellectuals of Delhi, including me, had set up an organization called the Mahanadi Circle. J.B. was a Central Minister at the time. We had invited him to attend one of our meetings and immediately, we received a reply in an inland letter, in his own handwriting, inviting us to hold the meeting at his residence. Barrister Govind Das, Bighnaraj Patel, J.P. Das, Dr. Prashant Patnaik, Dr. Manoranjan Mohanty, Giribala Mohanty, Jivan Pani, Bijay Dash and of course me were overwhelmed with his love for the Odias as well as his courtesy. It was indeed exceptional on the part of a Central Minister to get involved on an initiative immediately. Since then, he was intimately involved with the Mahanadi Circle. In the process, I got introduced to him and since then, we have maintained a very warm and cordial association.

Let me present a few facts along with my personal experiences, to substantiate my feelings for J.B. I came to Viswa Bharati in 1978 from Delhi University. In 1986, the friends of the Odisha Writers' Forum wanted that a conference of the Forum should be held in Shantiniketan. And Janaki Babu, by then Chief Minister of Odisha, would also be one of the participants. So I set about organizing the conference. Arrangements were made in Uttarayan, the residence of Kavi guru Rabindranath, under the chairmanship of Annada Shankar Ray. Nimai Sadhan Bose, the then Vice Chancellor, provided full support for the programme wherein J.B. delivered a long lecture in English. He discussed the foundation and progress of Indian literature, quoting extensively from Kalidas and Rabindranath. There was a large gathering but no one in that gathering had imagined that a politician could talk so authoritatively on literature. In his welcome address, the Vice Chancellor said, "One has to pay a fee or *dakshina* when one comes to the house of a guru or a

teacher.” The Chief Minister replied quoting a Sanskrit phrase, “Even though the Vice Chancellor’s expectation is somewhat high, it will be met as a mark of respect to him. The order of the guru should be carried out without hesitation.” Consequently, he declared a grant of seven lakh rupees then and there, as his *dakshina*. I can recall the comment of the Chief Engineer of the University, “Khageshwar Da, whatever people may say, your Chief Minister is indeed an extraordinary person.”

Another such incident took place in Durgapur where J.B. was the chief speaker at the annual function of Pravasi Banga Sahitya Sammilani. That day, something unusual had taken place. An aristocratic, middle-aged person came to me and asked in a soft voice, “You have drafted the lecture for him, haven’t you?” I could immediately sense the significance of such a comment. I smiled at him and answered, “I’m just an ordinary professor. But he is the professor of professors.” The man was convinced and he admitted, “Your Chief Minister is indeed a learned person.” I did not have the time to have a prolonged discussion with him after that, for Pranab Mukherjee, the President of the Conference, shook hands with J.B. and led him off to the Pannagarh airport.

J.B. knew just precisely how to speak at a gathering. I’ll give an example to substantiate my statement. The Bengali translation of his collection of poetry titled *Sindhu Upatyaka* was being released at Kolkata. On one side, a Congress Chief Minister had barged into the Communist land and on the other, an Odia poet was making his presence felt in the world of Bengali poetry. I was apprehensive that something untoward might happen. However, the presence of a large number of Marxist Bengali writers put our misgivings at rest with regard to the first issue. As for the second issue, J.B.’s skills at speech-making came to the fore. He started his lecture thus, “Bengali

poetry is blessed indeed. Baghdevi always smiles upon it. Being an ordinary author in Odia, I do not have the audacity of contributing anything to the enrichment of Bengali literature. This poetry collection is only a small offering of mine at the feet of Bangla Baghdevi.” The applause that followed seemed to continue forever. He didn’t have to say anything more in his defense.

It was a case of vini, vidi, vici !

\* \* \*



## Agriculture University, Engineering College and a Research Centre

Dr. Baidyanath Mishra ♦

**I**t was 1980. Janaki Ballav Patnaik took over as the Chief Minister of Odisha, and a year later, I joined as the Vice Chancellor (VC) of the Odisha University of Agriculture and Technology (OUAT). Unlike other Universities, the OUAT had no regular selection committee to make recommendation for the appointment of the VC, which means the Government is empowered to pick its own choice for the post. At that time, the Chief Minister's image was so high that there was none to dare his authority. And when someone with such authority selected me for the post of the VC, he perhaps did it for two reasons. First, I had worked many years at the OUAT as professor and Dean and so it was expected that I had acquired some working knowledge about the functioning of the University. Second, the

---

♦ Dr. Baidyanath Mishra is former Vice Chancellor, Utkal Sanskruti Viswavidyalaya

Chief Minister was my friend and associate and we had worked together for sometime in the past, at the village level. However, soon after I assumed charge as Vice Chancellor, I wished to convey my gratitude to him telephonically but he urged me instead to be present in person at his office with a blueprint of my agenda and a timetable for the development work I proposed to undertake. This was the beginning of a series of changes that were to happen in the University campus during my term of office.

So I went and saw the Chief Minister at the appointed hour and placed my proposals before him, backed by strong reasons for opening three technical colleges. One agriculture college at Chipilima, one fishery college and one home science college, both to be located at Bhubaneswar. My intention behind narrating all these is to put on record how keen the Chief Minister was to see the University grow into a first class centre of technical education. He examined my proposals thoroughly and read them aloud to his officials, including the Chief Secretary, who were present there.

The bureaucrats, however, in their customary fashion, stiffly opposed my views on grounds too flimsy to withstand the test of logic. Their resistance rested on the arguments that there is no resource to finance a new agriculture college, that there are no jobs in the Department of Fishery and most importantly, a home science college will be a constant headache for the Government as it would turn out to be a breeding ground of indiscipline. I was first stunned by these frivolous objections. When asked to clear my position in this regard, I made my humble submission that there will be no resource crunch as funds could be raised by knocking at the doors of the ICAR which, I believe, shall bend to my prodding. As regards the presence of girls being a source of trouble, the point seems too

simplistic to convince. If that be the case, education for women can be totally stopped in our State. I do not like to dilate upon here the many things that I spoke in that meeting out of anger and disgust, but I must admit that the Chief Minister saved me from further embarrassment by tenaciously persuading his aides to support my views. His persuasions were, of course, based on sound reasoning. From this incident, I knew for the first time how different the Chief Minister's style of administration was. He believes in getting things done not by force or coercion but in winning over his subordinates with patient persuasion and amiable reasoning. It is these qualities that succeed in dissolving all opposition and in cobbling up cooperation that would make his work easy. People might view this trait as a sign of his weakness. But the Chief Minister knows well that this method is the shortest and surest route to success in a system where bureaucrats are in the habit of negating anything that does not suit their interest, by raising roadblocks at every step.

I still vividly remember what transpired that day in the meeting. "People complain that the OUAT is not doing any meaningful job. But this time round, we have appointed a very energetic and enthusiastic person who has begun his work with a positive attitude and honest intention. He should get full support from all quarters. He is in close touch with the ICAR which has promised generous grants. Why should we oppose and resist all his moves?" These words of the Chief Minister instantly silenced all opposition to my programme and this naturally doubled my interest.

Though I engaged wholeheartedly in the task of building these colleges and tapped at every step the support of different Government departments, I had to stumble on one hurdle. I wished to start a fishery college at Bhubaneswar on the ground that the Central Fish Research Centre already existed at Dhuli

and its Director promised to open all facilities available at their organization for use by students of the proposed fishery college. But surprisingly, the Chief Minister declared at Ganjam that a fishery college would be set up in that district. I had no courage to differ with the Chief Minister and thus, to implement his will, I had to search for a suitable site at Chhatrapur, Gopalpur or Berhampur but a good site was not to be found. Incidentally, just around that time, I came upon a farmers' training centre at Rangeilunda. It was in a dilapidated state as the office had been shifted from there to Berhampur five years ago. When word got around that the VC of the OUAT was keen to house his proposed fishery college in that abandoned centre, the Director of Agriculture hastily arranged for some chairs and files along with a few clerks to be brought to the centre to give it a functional look so as to prevent its use as a prospective place for the fishery college. The Agriculture Minister was wary about displeasing the Director and requested me to look out for another site. When the Chief Minister was made aware of these developments he at once ordered the Director of Agriculture, over telephone, to vacate the premises forthwith so that he could inaugurate the fishery college right there within a week. Thus, with just one telephone call, the decks were cleared and the premises were made ready for the Chief Minister to inaugurate the proposed college on the appointed day. The Agriculture College at Chipilima too came up at the same stroke. My purpose of describing these details is to show that without the Chief Minister's proactive initiative, the said colleges would not have seen the light of day.

After these two colleges were started, I impressed upon the Chief Minister the need for another engineering college since there was only one or two in the State during that time. The Chief Minister lent a patient ear to my proposal and

promptly called the officials concerned for a meeting to sort out matters. The next Saturday being a holiday, the Chief Secretary visited the campus of the OUAT with his brigade of 20 officials and we all searched every nook and corner of Bhubaneswar, up to Nandankanan, in a site-hunting mission. Though the Chief Secretary had outwardly endorsed my proposal, in reality he had dithered about giving approval for any particular site on the pretext that we should rather take some more time to search for a good location so that we can build a decent college with an investment of about 5-6 crores. This was indication enough that the Chief Secretary was hesitant about implementing my suggestion and even the Utkal University was not in favour of having another undergraduate engineering college. When I informed the Chief Minister about the skewed attitude of the Chief Secretary and the negative response from the Utkal University, he immediately fixed a time to visit the OUAT campus in a private programme to assess ground realities for himself. So as per plans, the Chief Minister came and discussed the matter with all the Deans present. I showed him the workshop of the agriculture college where the engineering students could take their practical lessons and the theory classes could be held on the third floor of the said building, till such time as a new college would come up in a suitable place. I needed only Rs 20,00,000 to start with, which can be refunded from the ICAR grant meant for constructing a hostel.

The same day the Chief Minister consulted the Secretary, Industries, S.M. Mishra, to ascertain if he could spare Rs 20,00,000 for a loan. And when Mishra gave his nod, we all fervently set about building this engineering college. It is a matter of pride for me that all these colleges were inaugurated by the Chief Minister during my term in office. I spotted a large plot of land of two hundred acres, earmarked for a live

stock farm, from which a hundred acres could be easily spared for building the engineering college. The Chief Minister was agreeable to my plan but I regret that no initiative could be taken in this direction after I quit my post. The said college now stands as Biju Engineering College on a spacious site. The name of the college has changed, the place has changed and people have forgotten J.B. Patnaik's contributions but time has not razed those memories which still remain vivid in my mind.

There was another problem that stood on my way. According to the prevalent practice at the time, it was always someone from outside the University who was made Chairperson of the Selection Committee. The procedure was laid down by a proposal given to the Chancellor. However, when the Chancellor came to know about the practice followed by other Universities at the time, he scraped the existing practice at his level without involving the Chief Minister in the matter. Another deviation was that the Agriculture Minister was acting as the Chairman of the Board of Management. Many teachers wanted the present practice to continue and prevented, by all means, the transfer of this power from the Minister to the VC. The other Vice Chancellors also did not like to arrogate upon themselves the power vested in the Agriculture Minister, who stiffly resisted any move to dent his authority. The then Central Minister for Agriculture, Rao Birendra Singh, had requested the Chief Minister through a letter to effect this change in order to put the system at par with all other Universities of the country. The Director, ICAR, O.P. Gautam, personally requested the Chief Minister to bring about this change by exerting his power. The Chief Minister had then passed an order to that effect but his order could never jump the red tape. The officers did not give it the due importance it deserved, probably because they did not like to displease the Agriculture Minister. The Director,

ICAR, threatened to stop all grants to the University if this deviated practice was not stopped. He pointed out that because of this deviation, the University would lose ten crores of rupees for each project. Is Odisha so rich that it did not wish to avail of this opportunity and could afford to lose this huge grant, I wondered. When I made the Chief Minister aware of what was happening behind the scene, he realized the gravity of the situation and convinced the Agriculture Minister to shed the burden of heading the Board of Management because he should get ample time to address more urgent matters of the entire State than bother about the problems of just one University. He should remain content as Pro-Chancellor and leave the Chairmanship of the University to the VC, minimizing political interference in the administration of the University. Thus, through this diktat of the Chief Minister, a 21-year-old rule suddenly changed and the University at last got the opportunity to have research norms, each in different places. The Agriculture Minister and the Agriculture Director both initially objected to this move but when they felt that the Chief Minister was really earnest about improving the academic standard of the University, they not only withdrew their objection but also extended their full cooperation to me in all my endeavors. In the process, I was able to raise more funds from the ICAR.

For now however, I shall put a stop to matters relating to the OUAT. After I retired as the VC, I was made the Deputy Chairman of the State Planning Commission. I wished to set up a Research Centre and with that end in view, established contact with the ICSS. They told me that a Research Centre for Odisha had been on the cards for the last ten years but somehow, for one reason or the other, it has been kept on hold. The file has been moving in a circuitous route. I brought this matter to the

notice of the Education Minister and the Secretary, Education.

The Secretary, Education, assured me of his help on condition that I head this organization as its Director. However, the Education Minister had someone else in his mind for this post. I myself wanted to keep away from all this politics. The crisis was solved only when the Chief Minister finally decided that I become the Director of the Research Centre while continuing as the Deputy Chairman of the State Planning Commission. Although a hardcore politician, the Chief Minister was a learned man who understood the meaning of research. With his support and with the help of the Secretary, Education, the Research Centre came up easily. The institution received liberal help from many commercial concerns and the ICLR and the Education Department readily paid their dues. The organization is now known as the Nabakrushna Chaudhury Centre for Development Studies. Many officers have made liberal contributions towards the growth of the Research Centre and these contributions were not confined to money alone. And for this, the credit ultimately goes to J.B. Patnaik.

\* \* \*



## Patnaik & A Sanskrit University

Prof. Harekrushna Satpathy ♦

**A**mid numerous ups and downs over the centuries, Sanskrit education has been a continuous phenomenon in Odisha. It is evident from historical studies that the Ganga and the Surya dynasties had ruled Odisha for 500 years—from the coronation of Ananta Burma Chodagangadev to the death of Gajapati Prataprudra Dev. This period of rule had scaled dizzy heights of glory in art, architecture, literature, religion and economy and catapulted Sanskrit to its peak of unprecedented excellence. No wonder then, that this period may be called the Golden Period for Sanskrit. The kings of the Ganga and the Surya dynasties were not only generous patrons of poets and pundits of Sanskrit but had themselves achieved great distinction as writers and

---

♦ Prof. Harekrushna Satpathy is eminent Sanskritist, Sahitya Akademi Puraskar Awardee, Vice Chancellor, Tirupati Sanskrit Vidyapitha.

cultural icons of a high order. Specific mention may be made of Chodagangdev, who founded Sri Jagannath Temple, Bhanudev II, Kapilendradev and Prataprudradev, all of whom had glorified their names as noted poets in Sanskrit. It is evident from copper and stone edicts that these kings had used Sanskrit as a medium of administrative and princely affairs.

After the conclusion of this famed rule of five centuries in 1550, Odisha came periodically under the dominion of the Marathas, the Muslims and the British, bringing in its wake political instability which not only weakened an established culture but also demeaned the quality and standard of Sanskrit education. Momentous changes were perpetrated during the 200 year British rule. A new system of education was introduced to replace the age old one, destroying the bastion of Sanskrit that had so long stood as a bulwark against any assault from outside.

Though some British scholars had shown great respect for and deep interest in Indian culture by translating many Sanskrit classics into English language and placing them on the high pedestal of world literature, the fact remains that the radically bold policy of Macaulay and the vigorous campaign with which he enforced it had left no room for indigenous literature to grow and flourish. Some Indian intellectuals and patriots had apparently protested, though deep within their hearts they had yearned for the Western ways and manners as symbols of status and progress. Dazzled by the glitter and shine of this new elitism, they forgot their own identity and the unseemly haste with which they absorbed and assimilated with the new culture resulted in a total eclipse of Sanskrit. The extent of this eclipse was such that by the time India was free from British rule, the European mentality had taken deep root in Indian thoughts, habits and practices even as Sanskrit was reduced to its last legs, hopelessly fighting a lost cause.

It is true that though the British had physically left India bringing an end to their 200 year ignoble rule, in reality they had perpetuated their presence in this country not only by making deeper inroads into the Indian psyche but by leaving the virus of their language, system and ways in all the vital organs of our body politic. When our native culture was languishing out in the cold under British assault, a section of the Indian think-tank thought of taking strong measures to stem the rot and reverse the trend. But the greatest roadblock on their path was the so-called elite class of the Indian society which, basking under the magical spell of an imported culture, secretly resisted any upsurge in favour of the old order. As a result of this paradoxical situation, it was Hindi that became a national language instead of Sanskrit and English was made a medium of administration.

It was during these trying times that the two Sanskrit zealots, the erstwhile Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh Sampurnanada and the former king of Darbhanga Kameswar Singh, in their iron resolve to rehabilitate Sanskrit, ventured to establish two Sanskrit Universities, one each in their respective region. These Universities were named after them ostensibly to commemorate their pioneering work. Sampurnananda Sanskrit University at Kashi and Kameswar Singh Sanskrit University at Darbhanga now stand as two leading centres for Sanskrit studies. But no tangible effort has since been made to expand Sanskrit culture in the logical lines of development at Kashi and Darbhanga. Nevertheless, many self-conscious Maharajas and leaders did their bit to bring about a thaw in the stalemate, as a result of which Sanskrit still holds its head high in the country. Sanskrit has always had its secret reserves that come to its rescue in times of crisis, never really letting it die away.

There have been different ways to support and stimulate Sanskrit, the most effective and powerful of them being the

enactment of a law to ensure its invigoration and expansion under legal compulsions. Odisha is a peaceful State and its people are imbued with a consciousness for Jagannath, with its corollary of high respect for Sanskrit-based traditions and customs. These people, though meek and humble, had once changed the blood thirsty king Chandashoka into a peace loving and pious Dharmashoka. This event is a miracle without a parallel in the history of the world.

Puridham, the sacred abode of Lord Jagannath, remains the melting pot that dissolves all religions and ideologies into a vast reservoir of humanity, an ocean of universal brotherhood. Apart from a hundred thousand pilgrims that flock here every year, countless leaders, teachers and preachers from different religions around the world also make a beeline to Puri. They not only merge their religious differences in the crucible of the Jagannath cult as integral to all faiths but also quench the deeper cravings of their heart by embracing the Lord as the final destination of their journey.

In 1954-55, when Nabakrushna Chaudhury was the Chief Minister of Odisha, a University for eastern studies at Puri was proposed and accordingly, with the cooperation of the then Education Minister, late Dr. Radhanath Ratha, a committee was formed under the Chairmanship of Jagatguru Sankaracharya of Gobardhan Pitha, Sri Bharatikrushna Tirtha Maharaj. Pandit Nilkantha Das was Deputy Chairman and the Director of Public instruction, Balabhadra Prasad, was made Secretary of that committee which gave a favourable report for the establishment of the University. But in the meantime, the Nabakrushna Chaudhury ministry fell and the committee report slipped into cold storage. Then on, Dr. Harekrushna Mahatab took over as Chief Minister with former Chief Justice of the Orissa High Court, Lingaraj Panigrahi, as his Education

Minister. Dearth of political will on one hand and dominance of western mentality on the other served as the two major deterrents in the implementation of the Bharatikrushna report. Many culture-lovers and the intelligentsia which favoured Sanskrit, including Bharatikrushna and Radhanath, must have been deeply hurt by this step-motherly attitude shown to a worthy and ambitious project.

There is a popular belief that nothing happens at Puridham without the wish of Sri Jagannath. Jajatikeshari, Ananta Burma Chodagangadeb or his grandson Ananga Bhima Deb, all had engaged in temple construction under His behest. By the same logic, it was the Lord's wish that Chief Minister Janaki Ballav Patnaik be instrumental in building a Sanskrit University at Puridham for the spread of Indian culture, literature and for the expansion of consciousness towards Jagannath. The foundation of the Sanskrit University was laid by Janaki Ballav Patnaik on 7 July 1981. As it was built as per the Lord's commandment, Patnaik thought it right to name it Sri Jagannath Sanskrit University. Otherwise he could have tagged his own name to this institution on the same precedent as set by Sampurnanada and Kameswar Singh. A committee constituting members such as Dr. Ramkaran Sharma, Kameswar Singh, Professor Prahallad Pradhan and Mahendra Kumar Raut recommended that this citadel of culture be named Janaki Ballav Sanskrit University. But Janaki Ballav Patnaik, who is himself a great devotee of Jagannath, humbly declined the offer and instead dedicated the University to Lord Jagannath.

To say that Sri Jagannath Sanskrit University is a milestone in the history of our culture is just to repeat a truism. The need for expanding Sanskrit is as vital for the preservation of the Indian identity, propagation of the Jagannath cult, revitalization of the Odia language, building of moral character

and conservation of the environment as for research on regional languages and literature. The Sanskrit schools and pathshalas which were spread out through the length and breadth of the country for hundreds of years were in a state of utter disarray for a dearth of leadership and direction. Now of course, these have been better organized and regulated under the able stewardship of the Sanskrit University.

After J.B. Patnaik took over the reins of the State as Chief Minister, he paid his maiden visit to Puri on 7 March 1980 as the Chief Guest for a function organized to unveil the statue of Mahamahopadhyaya Sadashiv Mishra. The editor of *Samaj*, Dr. Radhanath Rath and former Chief Minister Dr. Harekrushna Mahatab were also present in that meeting. Perhaps it was God's wish that one of his devotees be inclined to do a job of great spiritual significance not only in the interest of Odisha but in the larger welfare of the country as a whole. Perhaps this divine will had been building up all along within J.B. Patnaik in the form of his flickering political will to build a Sanskrit University which, though, could not get a proper outlet for expression on some plea or the other. The Puri meeting was actually a magical moment that gave form and shape to his long cherished dream. When Dr. Radhanath Ratha expressed the desire that the Chief Minister build a Sanskrit University at Puri, J.B. Patnaik, in his speech, promptly declared his resolve to have the desired University within a year. True to his declaration in letter and spirit, he laid the foundation of the building on 7 July 1981 on the same day as promised in the year before. The Governor of Odisha, C.M. Poonacha, inaugurated it in a glittering function in the midst of a host of dignitaries and a large crowd. The aims and objectives of the University were clearly stated in the Sanskrit University Statute of 1981.

In the radio broadcast of the speech he had delivered on the occasion of the inaugural function, the Chief Minister had clearly spelt out the real purpose behind his labour, which was to spread the ennobling visions and ideals embedded in the Sanskrit culture across the whole world through Sri Jagannath Sanskrit University. Sanskrit is the nerve centre of Indian life, a conduit through which the nation's spirit flows. Patnaik, in his speech, had highlighted the need to include Sanskrit as an inalienable ingredient in national reconstruction programmes and to give it pride of place for representing Indian values and for embodying the very uniqueness that Indian society is distinguished by. To have a Sanskrit University for strengthening Indian culture and for research on eastern studies was a long felt need and that need was met by this organization at Puri, which was the fruit of Patnaik's tireless labour.

Besides the one at Puri, there are only two Sanskrit Universities in the whole country. For many reasons Sanskrit was in the doldrums and Sanskrit pundits were on their way out. There is a steady decline of interest among the people as regards Sanskrit. Somehow, an idea has gained ground in the minds of the people that Sanskrit means incomprehensible grammar which only added to students' dread and some impenetrable *slokas* to be chanted by Brahmins at marriages, homes and death rituals. People have almost forgotten the fact that Sanskrit literature is the carrier of Indian ethos, the mother of many languages. Once upon a time, Buddhism originated in this country, expanded to different parts of the world but ironically though, within a short period it hastened to die in the place of its birth. Should Sanskrit also come to the same sorry pass? For the lovers of Sanskrit and patrons of Indian values this is a wakeup call to realize that it is their sacred duty to fruitfully use Sanskrit in the task of nation building, to protect and promote all that is

good, useful and desirable and all that is best and beautiful in our culture, lest disaster write the nation's obituary.

When William Jones translated Kalidas's *Shakuntala* into English in 1789, the translation was the first of its kind in Western literature and so it quickly caught the European imagination. For the first time, a new horizon opened for Greek, Italian, German, Baltic and Scandinavian literatures to explore Sanskrit and Western literary traditions with their respective treasures. McDonald has mentioned in his History of Sanskrit literature that the excitement that was galvanized in the Western mind by Sanskrit literature far surpassed the wonder and awe that was generated by any single earth-shaking phenomenon, barring the Renaissance.

In a free India no particular language could replace Sanskrit as the national medium. Sanskrit is neither North Indian nor South Indian. Even though scripted in Devanagri, Sanskrit is pliable to the alphabet of any Indian language and so the people of the North, South, East or the West have equal right over it. When we talk about India's unity in diversity, we usually do so with Sanskrit in view. English or Hindi may be used as link languages but it is actually Sanskrit which is the life-blood of the Indian nation. When we read Vyasa and Valmiki, we feel an amazing bond with everything around us that meets the eye and we magically feel related to the rivers, mountains, forests and all the bounties that nature has lavished on us. We feel deeply connected to the teeming millions of Indians through an inner link that never snaps. In the pages of Kalidas, the hills, streams, greeneries, hamlets and cities are described with an intimate aura of beauty that heals and cheers. Again, the majesty of the dazzling white Himalayan peaks is difficult to capture in words. The stories of Dandi and Somadev tingle our nerves with the thrills of travel abroad, through Bishnu Sharma we can grasp



insights into practical life and politics and similarly, through Manu we learn ethics, through Kautilya, economics, through Vatsayana, sexology, through the Geeta, the Upanishads and through Brahmasutra, we begin to probe and understand the deeper meaning of Artha, Kama, Dharma and Mokshya as forming the core of the Indian philosophy. The poet Joydev, carving out visions of a comprehensive totality of the human existence in his *Geeta Govinda*, dwells on the limitless blessings of Sanskrit as a repository of wisdom trickling from the ancient minds to make life complete, be it on levels spiritual, artistic or material.

The main purpose of the Sanskrit University at Puri is to stimulate passion and interest for Sanskrit studies. This is no ordinary University. It is a celebrated centre of learning with multiple programmes to popularize Sanskrit, to simplify methods of teaching Sanskrit, to modernize the curriculum, to boost linguistic research, to open new departments at the University level and above all, to transfuse new energy into a moribund culture by reorganizing its profile.

I am using this opportunity to thank all those who have served the cause of Sanskrit with their whole hearts, minds and souls. The Pundits have kept the fire of Sanskrit blazing through their hardship and poverty which could not defeat the labour of their love. When we think of their misery and misfortune, we are instantly reminded of the beautiful words in Bishnu Sharma's Netralav stories, *He that hath made the ducks white, parrots green and peacocks picturesque shall provide for me*. It is our utmost duty to do everything that needs to be done in order to improve the condition of the people who have spent their whole lives in caring for Sanskrit and in trying to keep it alive with their toil and sweat. It is a reason to be proud of that Odisha's first and the country's third Sanskrit University has come up on the sacred

soil of Puri. In the meanwhile, the University has celebrated the silver jubilee of its existence. It is for history to keep a record of what the University has so far done in the direction of fulfilling those noble objectives clearly articulated in the declaration of its founders.

Though many decades had passed since Kashipitha and Darbhanga, the stalemate continued due to the absence of a proper climate for the growth and development of Sanskrit, till Janaki Babu took the historic step that awoke many political leaders from their slumber and the result is that the number of Sanskrit Universities in the country has now reached 14. By choosing his teacher and mentor late Prahallad Pradhan for the post of Vice-Chancellor, J.B. Patnaik not only repaid his debt to his famed Guru but also made sure his dream project is safe in the hands of a man who himself was the very image of wisdom and a Buddhist scholar of the first order.

After the establishment of Sri Jagannath Sanskrit University at Puri, the editor of *Samaj*, Dr. Radhanath Ratha, wrote in his editorial column, "The Purushottam Kshetra is the world's most renowned religious centre where diverse religions merge into an indistinguishable whole and all languages, civilizations and cultures are woven together into a golden thread of unity." We express our deep sense of gratitude to the then Chief Minister of Odisha, Janaki Ballav Patnaik, for building a Sanskrit University on this sacred *dham* and hope that this infant institution rises from success to success and reaches out to new heights of nobility and glory amid ups and downs, irrespective of the rise and fall of political parties. Eventually, it must grow into a world famous centre for Sanskrit education and research on Aryan values, ideals and ideologies.

Today, customary Sanskrit education is better organized under the aegis of the University. Before the Sanskrit University

came into being, Prathama and Madhayma courses for schools and Shastri and Acharya courses for colleges were designed by the Utkal Sanskrit Samiti and the degrees were awarded by a registered body under the aegis of this Samiti. As the Shastri and the Acharya levels of studies were qualitatively inferior to those of the post graduate or graduate levels of the traditional system, they had lost respectability in the eyes of the University and the Government. As a result of this discrepancy, the students coming out of these institutes were at best employed as teachers in high schools. But now, the Jagannath Sanskrit University has modernized and upgraded the courses of studies to maintain parity with other Universities. There is also provision for the posts of Acharya Ph.D. (Bidyabarida) and D.Litt. (Dibya Bachaspati) research programmes. Employment scopes, too, have widened for the students with degrees from Sanskrit Universities recognized by the UGC.

Needless to say, the pass outs of Jagannath Sanskrit University are now being considered suitable for appointment as lecturers in different colleges and universities of the country. In short, Sri Jagannath Sanskrit University has given a fresh lease of life to the Sanskrit language and a great boost to Sanskrit lovers and youths qualified in Sanskrit.

A remarkable change brought about under this arrangement is examination reforms and a thorough overhauling of the syllabus. Now, Prathama, Madhyama, Upashastri, Shastri and Acharya Examinations are conducted through correct and fair means and courses are reoriented keeping in view the uniqueness of the Indian culture which needs to be preserved and patronized at all cost. In this changed atmosphere of positivity and awareness, all the 155 Sanskrit schools and 100 colleges are on their road to rapid progress under the alert supervision and inspiring leadership of Sri Jagannath Sanskrit University.

When the Sanskrit University was founded in 1981 at Puri, I was teaching at the Ravenshaw College as a lecturer in Sanskrit. The good news from Puri cheered every one and had sent ripples of thrill into the hearts of the culture lovers of Odisha. I was a part of this stimulating atmosphere, distributing chocolates out of joy to whomsoever I met that day and heard these fervent words ringing in the air in a rare show of passion, “Janaki Babu shall live long and will be remembered by the grateful people for all times to come!” Dr. Mahendra Kumar Rout, the flamboyant Principal of Ravenshaw College, persuaded me time and again to join the new University at once, to contribute my humble share towards its development. My friends and colleagues also prevailed upon me to join as early as possible lest I lose my seniority at the new station. But it was not easy for me to sever all ties with Ravenshaw College, shaking off an affectionate bond. Moreover, it was especially difficult to abruptly detach from an endearing Principal. I had an honest conviction that no matter when I join, my seniority at the new University shall remain untouched. My conviction proved right. I joined Sri Jagannath Sanskrit University as a Reader and became Head of the Department in the absence of a Professor. I was soon made Professor, then P.G. Council Chairman and eventually, the first insider Vice-Chancellor of the University. Nowhere was my seniority hurt on any count.

No matter what position I held, I always held J.B. Patnaik in high esteem. Late Padma Charan Patnaik, one time classmate of J.B. Patnaik, paid him high tribute in words of deep feelings, “There is no parallel to J.B.’s patriotism. The life of Mahatma Gandhi is his ideal and the foresight and statesmanship of Jawaharlal Nehru is his mantra.” Many attempts were made in the past to raise a Sanskrit University which had ended in dust and smoke. Perhaps God willed that it be done by J.B. Patnaik

alone. The divine will is thus fulfilled. J.B. Patnaik had cleared his debt at three levels, debt to his parents, debt to God and debt to the saints, all at one go. This pious action shall shed light on his future years and lead him higher and higher on the path of glory. J.B. Patnaik has been able to carve out a niche in the hearts of the people not only because he was the Chief Minister or a Central Minister but mostly because he is a wise man and a noble soul who is nourished and nurtured in Indian values, and an undisputed authority in the world of letters. His knowledge of Sanskrit is wide and deep. I believe there is no one like him in the whole political class who has addressed as many Sanskrit conferences or spoken extempore for hours in fluent Sanskrit as Patnaik has done. He has high respect for Vedic Pundits because through them he could reach out to the ancient Rishis and saints.

A Vedic conference was held at Puri on 1 June 1981 and J.B. Patnaik was invited to inaugurate it. At that meeting he spoke fluently and without break for 40 minutes, the theme of his speech being the relevance of the Veda at present times. He also distributed costly clothes, shawls and Mahaprasad among the Pundits present there. The Pandits, in turn, were so overwhelmed by the humanism, sagacity and magnanimity of J.B. Patnaik that they showered profuse blessings on him.

When Jagatguru Niranjan Tirthaswamy was the Shankaracharya of Gobardhan Pitha, a convocation ceremony was held under the aegis of the Utkal Sanskrit Samiti where Shankaracharya and J.B. Patnaik were present. After Patnaik finished his speech in Sanskrit, a dazed Shankaracharya spoke out, "I have travelled all across India from one corner to the other, talked with several politicians, leaders, Chief Ministers, Central Ministers and prominent personalities but I have not as yet met nor perhaps in future shall meet one who can

“speak in Sanskrit so naturally and forcefully for long hours to the amazement of such a mammoth gathering.” To put it in a nutshell, J.B. Patnaik’s period of Chief Ministership was a golden chapter for Sanskrit studies, for Sanskrit institutions, Sanskrit teachers and the Sanskrit loving people.

\* \* \*

## Spread of Education in Odisha

Dr. Bimalendu Mohanty ♦

**O**disha has seen several chief ministers since independence, but Janaki Ballav Patnaik stands out among them all. Joining active politics in 1971, he soon caught the attention of Indira Gandhi and went on to become the Deputy Minister, Defence, and then the Minister of State for Defence in her government. In 1980, he became Union Minister of Tourism and Civil Aviation and Minister of Labour. He was very close to Indira Gandhi and was the first Chief Minister of Odisha who brought political stability to the State and prepared a blueprint for the State's overall development.

Patnaik headed the Government in Odisha for nine consecutive years, beginning in 1980. And today, he is

---

♦ Dr. Bimalendu Mohanty is former Vice Chancellor, Utkal Sanskruti Viswavidyalaya

remembered by the people for the extraordinary steps he took towards the development of education in Odisha. He could appreciate the need to spread education as he himself was a brilliant student and hailed from a family of teachers and had great respect for the teaching community. He was the chief architect of the adult education mission. During his tenure, the cause of education turned into a movement. With a view to eradicating illiteracy from the State, mass education centres were opened. He was able to get more grants from the Centre with which he could implement his programmes.

During his chief ministership, it was decided, in principle, that there would be at least one primary school in every village and primary school teachers were declared government servants. Once, addressing a gathering of one lakh primary school teachers in Bhubaneswar, Patnaik said that by declaring primary school teachers as government servants, he was only partially repaying his debt to his own father who was his guru. During his tenure, the number of primary and upper primary schools went up to 36,000. Side by side, he also encouraged the establishment of non-government higher secondary schools at the Panchayat level and made provisions of government grants for them.

Due to his cordial relationship with the Ministry of Human Resource Development, he was able to open Navodaya Vidyalayas in all the districts of the State and was also able to start a number of Central Schools. During his tenure, more than seven hundred schools for girls were established in the State.

He also did his best for the spread of women's education at all levels. At least one government women's college was established in every district. Besides, with grants from the government, many private women's colleges also came up. Some law colleges were also established during that period. A new college of Agriculture was set up at Chiplima in the



district of Sambalpur and a college of fishery was established at Gopalpur.

He also had great interest in Sanskrit language and learning and the establishment of Sri Jagannath Sanskrit University at Puri is his major contribution in this realm. He had a dream to establish a Sanskrit University in the State. So after he became Chief Minister in 1980, he saw to it that the dream was transformed into a reality. It was on 7 July 1981, the auspicious day of Herapanchami, that the founding stone of the Sri Jagannath Sanskrit University was laid. This is a testimony of his love for the Sanskrit language, Jagannath culture and most of all, the Indian culture.

In the field of technical education as well, his Government witnessed new engineering colleges, management institutions and ITIs. Expanding the Odisha University of Agriculture & Technology, he instituted in it an engineering college, the first college of fishery and the first college of Home Science. He is the founder of the Xavier's Institute of Management at Bhubaneswar. He also initiated a rural management educational centre, modeled after Dr. Kurien's Indian Rural Management University in Gujarat.

Patnaik took oath as Chief Minister for the first time on 10 June 1980. And the oath had been administered by C. M. Punacha, the then Governor of Odisha. In all his three tenures of chief ministership, he laid much emphasis on the spread of education in the State because only a learned man like him could visualize the importance of education in life. A special Directorate of Education was started during his period. MBA, MCA, PGDCA and such other courses were opened in 24 institutes.

Janaki Ballav Patnaik's period as Chief Minister of Odisha, in fact, will be remembered as the golden age of

education in the State. During this period, a lot of schools, colleges and technological institutes were opened all over the State. In order to popularize the language of the minority community, he had established the Urdu Academy under the Department of Culture. This gave an opportunity to non-Urdu speaking students to learn Urdu. Subsequently, 36 private Urdu institutes came up in different parts of the State. Receiving such incentives from the State as government grants and free books from Raja Ramamohun Library, at least 3,000 new libraries too came up.

During his tenure, importance was also given to women's education. He laid emphasis on reservation for women in the field of education, especially for the employment of lady teachers in the primary schools. It was he who introduced free education for women up to the post-graduation level. Legal provisions were initiated for the reservation of 33 per cent of women representatives in the Panchayat level elections.

Reasons are many to consider Janaki Ballav Patnaik as a successful leader of the decade. He was acquainted with different problems of the State right from the days when he was a student. Besides, his early involvement in literature, culture and heritage of the State as editor, writer, a member of the senate of the Utkal University and a member of the executive of the State Sahitya Academy gave him an edge in preparing and executing well-planned programmes in those fields. What was earlier a mere six per cent allocation from the State budget for education became, during his time, a decent 22 per cent.

He had realized from the very beginning what Madhubabu and other great sons of Utkal had emphasized, that if an intense love for one's mother tongue is not developed among the people, the State cannot make progress. In order to realize this dream, he worked towards improving the Odia language. Consequently

on 1 April 1985, a government order was issued to use Odia as the official language. Prior to it, a Language Administrative Committee was constituted in 1982 to prepare a complete administrative glossary and this had indeed demonstrated his foresight and planning.

After coming to power for the third time in 1995, Janaki Ballav Patnaik introduced mid-day meals in primary schools. That was a great impetus to primary education. Due to this programme, more and more students in the tribal regions were attracted to primary schools. Parents were also motivated to send their children to school. In Odisha, this programme was given effect from 1 April 1995. Due to this programme, nearly 83,000 hapless women, including widows, got employment as cooks and helpers in schools. Besides Tamil Nadu, Odisha was the only other state in the country which had introduced this programme at that time. In subsequent years, all other states introduced this programme as per the direction and help of the Union Government.

Patnaik has not neglected any aspect of education. His contribution to the fields of art, culture and film industry, too, is immense. During the first decade of his administration, the Odisha Film Development Corporation achieved memorable success. Right from the starting of a studio with latest technological facilities to the opening up of cinema halls in rural areas through liberal incentives, the production of Odia films was greatly encouraged through loans and subsidies. Film festivals were held each year. The International Children's Film Festival was also held in the Jawaharlal Nehru Indoor Stadium at Kataka. Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi came to inaugurate it at a spectacular function where classical Odissi dance and various folk dances of the State were presented by children. All

this was possible due to Patnaik's tireless efforts and love for art and culture.

He had realized that education was the wealth of a nation without which the nation could not prosper. Through his efforts, the Institute of Physics became a National Institute with the approval of the Union Cabinet. The Nabakrishna Choudhury Centre for Development Studies and the Plant Resource Centre (Ekamra Kanan) were established as centres for higher research. He instituted the Odissi Research Centre for research and helped in the propagation of classical Odissi song and dance.

As a mark of respect towards renowned scholars of the state, Patnaik had appointed the famous Professor of Economics, Dr. Vaidyanath Mishra, as the Vice-Chairman of the State Planning Board. He had also sent well known historian and scholar, Prof. Manmathnath Das, to the Rajya Sabha.

Here I am reminded of the statement of Madhusudan Das who had compared the life of a nation with the ocean of service and sacrifice by dedicated individuals in one of his famous Odia poems. Janaki Ballav Patnaik is one of those devoted souls. He will be ever remembered for his significant contribution to the overall development of the State during his three tenures as Chief Minister of Odisha.

\* \* \*

## Education in Odisha: The Forward Leap

Abani Kumar Baral ♦

**A**s Chief Minister, Janaki Ballav Patnaik initiated significant steps to give education a sound foundation in Odisha. The education system was democratized, rapid progress was made in the fields of primary and upper primary education, and a large number of colleges were established. All these took place mostly between 1980 and 1999. Salaries were paid at par with central government scales for all classes of employees and teachers during this period. The revised UGC scale of pay was made applicable for college teachers with effect from 1 April 1989. Unfortunately, this was not extended later.

Retirement benefits except for gratuity, family pension and general provident fund facilities at par with government employees were introduced for teachers in private schools and

---

♦ Abani Kumar Baral is an eminent Educationist

colleges during the Congress' tenure. Three thousand private high schools and 40,000 private primary schools were taken over by the government during this period and revised central scales were implemented in 1996. Revised pension was also made applicable. Grants for schools and direct payment to teachers were also introduced by the Congress government in 1995. The State Selection Board was established for selecting meritorious teachers and the State Educational Tribunal was set up for resolution of disputes.

Earlier, there were uncertainties with regard to the payment of salary to teachers in private schools and colleges. The same was the case with their service conditions. Teachers and sikshyakarmis working in primary, lower primary and M.E. schools as also in private colleges had jointly submitted a demand letter to Banamali Patnaik, the then Education Minister of the Jana Congress government. Their letter listed the following demands:

- (i) Legally-binding service conditions should be made applicable to all classes of teachers, lecturers and sikshyakarmis
- (ii) The difference in the pay scales of teachers and lecturers working in government and private schools and colleges should be removed and they should be paid salary at a uniform rate
- (iii) Retirement benefits should be provided to teachers and sikshyakarmis and
- (iv) The recommendations of the Kothari Commission should be implemented for the planned development of education in Odisha.

Agitations were held for about two months from 16 August 1969. As a result, the Odisha Education Act, 1969, was promulgated in 1969. A committee was constituted under the chairmanship of Dr. Pranakrishna Parija, the distinguished educationist, to deliberate on equal pay scales, retirement benefits and other related concerns.

Though it was decided to bring about uniformity in pay scales in 1972, it was not implemented till 1974 when it was published in the gazette during the Congress ministry headed by Nandini Satapathy. Service conditions under the Education Act were approved in the Legislative Assembly after extensive agitation and this was published in the gazette. Salaries were paid directly to teachers, lecturers and sikshyakarmis. This is known as direct payment of full teaching cost.

The Teachers' Federation, comprising the unions of teachers and sikshyakarmis, D.M. School Teachers' Union, Union of Teachers Working in Schools for the Blind, Deaf and Mute, Steel Plant Teachers' Union and Union of Elementary Teachers was constituted in 1970. Better service conditions and direct payment of salaries brought about a huge change in the lifestyle of teachers and lecturers. Though the managing committees did their best to oppose the move, the Congress government overcame all hurdles and went ahead with the implementation of these changes.

The Teachers' Federation was initiated to ratify the services of teachers and lecturers under the Education Act in order to give effect to direct payment of salaries and service conditions, to open their service books and to frame regulations for managing committees and governing bodies. The direct payment system was also introduced for the teachers working in madrasas all over the State as was applicable to other teachers. Stagnation increment was paid to private teachers. Earlier,

teachers of government colleges were appointed as principals of private colleges on deputation. This system was scrapped and instead, a system of appointing principals in private colleges from among private cadres on seniority basis was brought into existence. Different regulations were framed for unaided and aided schools. Similarly, different regulations were also framed for aided and unaided colleges. All these were implemented in 1980-81, by which time the Congress ministry had already been formed.

The staffing pattern for three types of high schools was determined on 18 December 1980, to decide how many teachers or sikshyakarmis would be appointed in each kind of school. For this purpose, high schools were divided into three categories. In the first category were those schools having classes VIII - X, in the second, those having classes VI-X and in the third, those with classes IV-X. It was decided that there would be four trained graduates apart from the headmaster in schools having three classes. There would be eight teachers in such schools including one teacher having Physics, Chemistry and Mathematics as his or her subjects, one having Chemistry, Botany and Zoology, one Sanskrit teacher, one Hindi teacher and one teacher for physical training. In schools having five classes, there would be one additional trained intermediate teacher apart from the above. In schools having seven classes, three more trained matriculate teachers would be appointed besides four Class IV employees and a clerk. This was made mandatory. Moreover, Gangadhar Mohapatra, the then Education Minister, came out with a directive on the instruction of Janaki Ballav Patnaik, the Chief Minister. According to this directive, if a school had appointed more teachers than what was stipulated under the staffing pattern, their retrenchment orders were to be revoked.



They would be paid salaries until they were transferred to other schools.

The rules regarding retirement benefits were published in the gazette on 7 December 1981. The rules were later revised too. Teachers, lecturers and employees of private schools and colleges were made eligible to get a pension which was decided to be fifty per cent of the last pay drawn. It was also decided to pay seven and a half months' salary, on the basis of the last pay drawn, as gratuity to all. General provident fund rules as applicable to government servants were made applicable to them too.

Trained graduate headmasters of M.E. schools were paid salaries at the scale applicable to trained graduates with effect from 8 July 1980. Earlier, they used to get salary in the scale applicable to matriculate teachers. Additional sections were opened in high schools and teachers were appointed on the very date of the opening of these sections. Services of teachers appointed earlier for this purpose were regularized and salaries were paid to them accordingly.

A special order was passed on 4 April 1981 to revise pay scales from 1974 and to remove anomalies in this regard. Another important step that had been taken in 1981 was the enactment of a law to regularize the appointment or services of teachers and lecturers. It was decided to regularize the services of all teachers and lecturers who had been appointed by managing committees or governing bodies as convenors and who had completed one year of service by 1 March 1981. On 3 January 1981, it was directed that Readers in private colleges should be paid salary as per the U.G.C. scale. Posts were created for Hindi teachers in high schools that year to ensure that they did not lose their jobs. Rules relating to managing committees of schools were revised twice that year, on 9 September and 15

December. Rules under the Education Act were also revised on 7 December 1981 to constitute the State Selection Board for the appointment of teachers and lecturers in private schools and colleges.

These were some of the constructive steps taken in the field of education during 1980-81, when Janaki Ballav Patnaik was the Chief Minister. The 10 + 2 + 3 system of education was introduced in 1982 and it was directed that both 11-year and 10-year matriculate systems would run concurrently that year. So the matriculation examination that year was held once in February-March for the students studying under the 11-year system and once again in April-May, for those studying under the new 10-year system.

On 15 March 1983, the Education Minister and the Chief Minister declared in the State Assembly that salaries would be paid henceforth through banks. Provision was also made to pay salaries directly to those minority institutions which were until now not being paid salaries directly.

Rules relating to retirement benefits of teachers and employees of private colleges were approved in the State Assembly in 1983 and general provident fund facilities were extended to them as well. Study leave or extraordinary leave for long period availed by teachers, lecturers and employees was allowed to be counted towards increments. This directive was published in the gazette of 30 May 1984, during the tenure of Janaki Ballav Patnaik as the Chief Minister. During this period, the government had also decided to pay salaries directly to all teachers and employees working in all eligible private schools and colleges established before 1979. Also, it had been decided that free education would be provided to all children up to the tenth standard.

In 1989, the Chief Minister had ordered the implementation of the revised UGC scale of pay for government and private college teachers in the first instance and for University teachers immediately afterwards. This was made effective from 1 April 1989. Simultaneously, the new revised central pay scales were made applicable for all employees and teachers of the State with effect from 1 May 1989. In fact, all employees and teachers of the State government received the central pay scale during the Congress government headed by Janaki Ballav Patnaik. Another important decision of the Congress government was to declare primary school teachers as government servants. All primary school teachers of the State were declared to be government servants on 26 September 1989. Similarly, all private high schools were taken over by the government in September 1994. Janaki Babu assumed charge as the Chief Minister for the third time on 15 March 1995 and soon after, on 22 March 1995, a notification was made in the gazette that all private educational institutions would be eligible to receive grant-in-aid. All plus two and degree colleges as well as all high schools came under its purview. Family pension rules were published for the employees of all aided schools and colleges in 1996.

Thus in this manner, several momentous decisions had been taken for the betterment of education during the 14-year tenure of Janaki Ballav Patnaik as the Chief Minister.

\* \* \*

## Science, Technology & Environment

Dr. Sadananda Torasia ♦

**W**hen Janaki Ballav Patnaik took over the reins of the state of Odisha as its Chief Minister, there was not much progressive activity in the fields of science and technology, nor were there any programmes on environment worth the name. What existed in the name of science and technology was some amount of money earmarked to fund a few science projects under the Industries Department. It was only during the Sixth Five Year Plan (1980-85) that the first solid steps were taken by the Planning Commission to allocate specific resources for activities in the states through the Department of Science and Technology, Government of India.

Realizing the importance of promoting programmes on science, technology and environment in the State, the Department

---

♦ Dr. Sadananda Torasia is a Scientist and Former Professor of Physics, Ravenshaw College

of Science, Technology and Environment (DSTE) was created on 9 December 1982 following the guidelines recommended by the Government of India. The State Council of Science, Technology and Environment (SCSTE), Odisha, was created in September 1983 with the Chief Minister as its Chairman. It is the highest policy making body on science, technology and environment in the State. Environment scientists with expertise in different fields have been drawn to this Council from various institutions in India. Senior officers and scientists from research departments have also been members of the Council.

The Council constituted eight social panels in different areas like engineering, agricultural science, engineering and agriculture, population, health, sanitation and medicine, physical science, life science, natural resources management and planning, ecology and environment.

The programmes approved by the State Council were broadly divided into three sections:

1. Promotion of Science & Technology
2. Development of Renewable Energy
3. Environmental Protection and Conservation Measures

To implement the various programmes under the SCSTE, the following organizations were established:

1. Odisha Remote Sensing Application Centre (ORSAC)
2. Odisha Computer Application Centre (OCAC)
3. Odisha Renewable Energy Development Agency (OREDA)

4. SPCPB

5. RPRC

6. CES

### **Promotion of Science & Technology**

The activities under this sector involved supporting and promoting scientific research and development, popularization of science and undertaking activities for application of technology.

### **Funding of Research Projects**

In order to encourage application-oriented research and transfer of appropriate technology, the State Council created a fund. A scheme was also introduced to extend support to R&D projects, which are application-oriented and relevant to Odisha. The State Council sanctioned about 64 research projects in two phases to scientists of different colleges, universities and research institutes. It extended support to scientists, by way of partial travel grants, thus enabling them to participate in National and International conferences, workshops etc.

### **Setting up of Research Institutes**

Within the scope of S&T promotion, decision was taken to establish institutes to undertake in-depth research in the frontier areas of Life Sciences and Materials Science. The two institutes set up were:

1. Institute of Life Sciences (ILS)
2. Institute of Materials Science (IMS)

The ILS carried on research on identification of cancer protocol, ageing process, environmental research etc.

### **Odisha Remote Sensing Application Centre (ORSAC)**

ORSAC is the nodal agency for the implementation of all programmes based on remote sensing. These programmes included forest mapping and density study, flood mapping and demarcating of flood plain zones, crop production, forecasting, mapping of ground water, drought monitoring and environmental study of the Chilika lake. Within a short span (two and half years) of its formation, the Odisha Remote Sensing Application Centre (OSARC), promoted by the Department of Science, Technology and Environment, made its impact as a service organization.

There has been an increasing realization among the User Departments for organizing a comprehensive approach to remote sensing technology as an input for the resource planners which can provide timely and reliable information on the natural resources. In addition, ORSAC has taken up a number of R & D projects of its own.

During the Seventh Plan Period, the Government of India identified monitoring, survey and management of natural resources as a major thrust area in national development. With the objective in view, the Department of Space (DOS) had drawn up various programmes. The ORSAC participated in National programmes like the NNRMS, NRDMS and the IRS-UP. The ORSAC also took up wetland mapping and drinking water technology missions besides setting up the Oceanic Remote Sensing Centre for the east coast.

## **Odisha Computer Application Centre (OCAC)**

After consultation with the Department of Electronics, Government of India, the OCAC was established as the nodal agency for implementing programmes on computerization of the departments in the State Government. During the visit of the Commissioner, Electronics, to Bhubaneswar, the Government of Odisha had a detailed discussion which resulted in the opening of new vistas in the fields of information technology and computer application. It was then decided to set up the National Information Centre for the Eastern Region (NIC-ER). Without wasting any time, the building along with the equipment, power and machinery were set up and allotted to NIC (ER). And thus, the NIC started functioning. The NEC (1000) super computer was also set up. At the same time, NICs were set up in all the district headquarters and an efficient network was established. Consequently, the district authorities were able to establish uninterrupted connectivity with all the departments of the government at the State headquarter. Through the NIC, a major programme was taken up to train personnel from government departments including heads of departments and also personnel from district headquarters in computer application. Large software packages were developed for this purpose by the NIC. At a later stage, a software technology park was set up to encourage software development among entrepreneurs.

## **Pathani Samanta Planetarium**

In order to popularize science in general and astronomy and astrophysics in particular, the Government of Odisha decided to set up a planetarium at Bhubaneswar which was a long felt need



and aspiration of the people of the State. The planetarium was named Pathani Samanta Planetarium, after Odisha's eminent astronomer of the yesteryears, of the Siddhanta Darpan fame. Monetary aid for this project was received from the TISCO, the IDC and the OMC. The meticulous construction which was thus undertaken by the IDCO was highly appreciated by the Japanese engineers who installed the sophisticated GOTO planetarium equipments.

### **Odisha Bigyan Academy**

In April 1981, the Odisha Bigyan Academy was formed by a group of enthusiastic scientists, doctors, engineers and other like minded people to cultivate and promote science and technology and to do away with superstitious beliefs. Some of the main objectives of the Academy are:

- (i) To act as a body of scientists of eminence for the promotion and safeguard of the interests of scientists in the State and to project their research works, talent, scientific contribution etc., across the community, the country and the world
- (ii) To promote and maintain liaison between scientists of different specializations and different scientific disciplines, acting as a coordinating body and encouraging scientists and the scientific pursuits
- (iii) To organise and arrange for conferences, seminars, lectures, and symposia at different places in Odisha
- (iv) To commemorate and felicitate scientists and persons who have made significant contributions in

various fields of science, technology and scientific literature

Keeping in view the objectives and programmes of the Academy, the Government of Odisha in the DSTE decided on 22 March 1985 to adopt the Academy and extend financial support, appoint officers and members of the executive council. Thus the Academy became a constituent body of DSTE. It was entrusted with the activities of popularization of Science and Technology, removal of superstition and spread of scientific temper.

In 1985, three awards were instituted to appreciate and encourage scientists for their excellence in research in the fields of physical sciences, life sciences and engineering and technology. These awards were named after Samanta Chandra Sekhar, the famous astronomer of Odisha.

Then came the Mass Education Programme for the benefit of common masses, choosing themes on location specific problems.

### **Odisha Renewable Energy Development Agency (OREDA)**

Considering the importance of renewable energy in meeting the growing needs of development, the Odisha Renewable Energy Development Agency was set up in the State. The agency laid stress on the development, popularization and propagation of renewable energy systems and had successfully set up a number of biogas plants, solar technical systems, wind pumps, photo voltaic cells and many other installations that worked on renewed energy from the time of its establishment up to 1989.

The achievements under this programmes up to December 1989 are as follows:

**Biogas Plants Installed**

Family Type	30769
Community Type	005
Institutional Type	006
Improved Chullhas	1,84,320

**Solar Thermal Systems**

Solar cooker	796
Industrial Water Heating Systems	48

**Photo Voltaic Systems**

Street Lighting Systems	259
Water Pumping Systems	64
Community Lighting Systems	25

**Wind Energy Installations**

Wind Pump	278
Battery Charger	001
Wind Farm	001

A team consisting of very senior scientists from BHEL were invited, who toured some interior Blocks in Dhenkanal district for on the spot survey to plan implementation of Renewable Energy Systems.

The Council for Appropriate Rural Technology (CART) under OREDA took up programmes to popularize and strengthen rural communities which serve as instruments of sustainable rural development by applying scientific and technological knowledge.

Within the scope of promoting science and technology, it was also decided to establish institutes to undertake in-depth research in the areas of life science and material science. Thus, the Institute of Life Sciences (ILS) and the Institute of Material Sciences (IMS) were established. However, due to limited resources, only the ILS received State funds at an initial stage

and carried on significant research on identification of cancer protocol agency process and such other relevant processes. The institute has now been taken over by the Department of Bio Technology, (DBT) Government of India.

The Department of Science, Technology and Environment took up a major programme to popularize science by extending support to schools, colleges, voluntary agencies, universities and other institutions to organize talks, seminars and exhibitions and also to organize workshops in the fields of science, technology and environment. The department collaborated with the National Council For Science and Technology Communication (NCSTC), Government of India, for coordinating and implementing various national level programmes like the National Science Day, Bharatiya Jana Vigyan Jatha (BJVT), etc. The BJVT was a key programme designed to popularize science and create a scientific frame of mind among young children and common folks. Taking up a nationwide activity, the BJVT started from the eastern part of India and passed through different parts of Odisha. Special groups and committees were formed which participated in the programmes of the BJVT to explain and propagate the significance of science. Being encouraged by the activities as well as by the response to the programmes, these groups continued to pursue science related programmes and made the BJVT a yearly event.

### **State Council for Science, Technology and Environment**

The State Council for Science, Technology and Environment (SCSTE) functioned with a team of multi-disciplinary scientists who maintained a balance between science, technology and environment programs. The Odisha SCSTE

participated in the annual science and technology workshops organized by the SCSTEs of other states and union territories. These workshops were also attended by the representatives of the DSTE, Government of India. The workshops were held under different themes and in different places in India like Pondicherry, Guwahati, Bhubaneswar, Chandigarh and Pune to name a few.

### **Other Activities**

One of the strong points of the DSTE in initiating and implementing various schemes and programmes lay in its close coordination with the DSI and other departments of the Government of India. The department played a laudable role in organizing Entrepreneurship Awareness Camps and in setting up a school for the training of entrepreneurs at the REC, Rourkela. A Science and Technology Entrepreneurship Development (STED) project for industrially backward districts was also set up at Baleswar with full support from the DSTE. The annual workshops were held with different themes at different places in India like Pondicherry, Guwahati, Bhubaneswar, Chandigarh, Pune etc.

### **Library-cum- documentation Centre**

One of the unique aspects introduced by the DSTE was the setting up of a library of its own where selected books and periodicals were kept for the use of scientists of the department as well as for other visitors. The library is equipped with a small conference room with facilities for audio visual presentations and documentations. The DSTE undertook the publication of a newsletter called *Resources* as part of its information guide regarding activities and programmes of the department.

## Research and Development Projects

A scheme was introduced to extend support for research and development projects which were application oriented and relevant to Odisha. The State council sanctioned about 64 such projects to scientists of different universities and research institutes of the State. This helped them in research studies which further enabled them to avail grants from the national funding agencies at a later stage. Similarly, support was extended to scientists by way of partial grants to enable them to participate in international workshops and seminars. In order to help and educate the NGOs of the area in socio-economic development, a major workshop was organized with support from the DSTE.

The department was aware of the problems arising from natural calamities in Odisha. It is well known that floods, cyclones and drought ravage Odisha and to make matters worse, sometimes all the three occur in the same year. Keeping this in view, a centre for research in Atmospheric Science and Disaster Mitigation was proposed to be set up. A steering committee was formed and on its recommendation a detailed project report too was drafted. However, the project could not take off due to lack of funds.

Thus, remarkable progress in the fields of science and technology were made in Odisha with the setting up of the Department of Science, Technology and Environment. The department sought to create a scientific environment not just directly through itself but at times also indirectly, by granting aids to other organizations in the form of resources and technical know-how, thereby bringing Odisha to the notice of the world of science and technology.

During his period of administration, Janaki Babu took personal interest in all programmes and monitored them

under his direct supervision. On the occasion of dedicating the Regional Science Centre to the nation on 18 September 1987, he viewed the exhibits with great interest. As the focal theme of the Centre was the Sun, a symbol of the Sun God was put up at the entrance. Pleased, he advised putting up a Shloka on the Sun God near the symbol.

Similarly, while approving the Planetarium project, he himself wrote on the note sheet to name it Pathani Samanta Planetarium. On another occasion, he learnt about the importance of a particular plant which produces oil seeds, and advised to name it "Maha Taila" in Odia.

All the institutes in the field of Science and Technology which were set up with much care and meticulous planning during the tenure of Janaki Babu, developed and acquired fame in the later period. ORSAC continues to be named as ORSAC, but its activities now span to space programmes, instead of confining to Remote Sensing. The Institute of Life Sciences has been declared as a Centre of Excellence and taken over by DOBT, Government of India.

The Department of Science & Technology which started with a budget of only Rs. 50 lakhs in 1983-1984 had reached a budget of about Rs. 100 lakhs in 1989-1990 and is still expanding.

Development and application of Science & Technology is highly essential for the socio-economic development of a country or a state. Starting with a virgin ground and a small budget, only a visionary could think of starting institutes, programmes and activities, which have far reaching impact on solving the problems of the State and helping in its economic development. The achievements during these years have proved that this period was a golden era of Odisha administration.

## The Xavier Institute of Management

Fr. Joseph ♦

Since the early eighties, Odisha, a land of rich mineral and natural resources, had been desperately looking for a business school which would cater to the much needed support in terms of managerial manpower to the growing industries in the State. It was the time when the political leadership was bringing about industrial development for Odisha. The need for a business school which should be able to stand up to national and international standards was greatly felt. The Government of Odisha was headed in the mid-eighties by a political stalwart, Janaki Ballav Patnaik, a visionary and a statesman. During that period, the Government of Odisha invited Fr. Romuald D'Souza, the Director of XLRI, Jamshedpur, to manage a Business School which the Government of Odisha was proposing to build on a 20 acre campus near the Utkal University.

---

♦ Fr. Joseph is Director, Xavier Institute of Management, Bhubaneswar



## Evolution of XIMB

On 15 May 1985, Fr. P.D. Thomas and Fr. Romuald D'Souza met Chief Minister Patnaik. The Chief Minister was extremely positive and generous and assured them of all assistance with regard to land and even finances. The XLRI, Jamshedpur, was expected to present the Project Proposal to the Government by 10 June 1985. On Saturday, 13 July 1985, Fr. P.D. Thomas and Fr. Romuald D'Souza had a pleasant meeting with the additional Secretary for Industries. And, on 1 February 1986, the Xavier Society and the Government of Odisha signed the Memorandum of Agreement (MoA) to start the Xavier Institute of Management.

### Salient features of the MoA between Government of Odisha and Xavier Society

1. That the Government of Odisha will allot 20 acres of land in the institutional area of Bhubaneswar and also provide an access road to the said land for the establishment of a Post Graduate Institute of Management.
2. That the Government of Odisha, through its department of Industries, will invest Rs. three crore in providing infrastructural facilities for the new institute. These facilities would include academic building, hostels, staff quarters, roads, electricity, water supply, furniture and equipment according to the specifications supplied by the Director of XLRI, Jamshedpur. The cost estimates of each of

these buildings and facilities will be finalized in consultation with the Director, XLRI.

3. That the Government of Odisha will transfer the said land and buildings and other infrastructural facilities to a new Society to be registered for this purpose in Odisha at Bhubaneswar under the Societies Registration Act, 1860, here in-after to be called the new society, which will manage the Institute.

Unfortunately, the land is still in the possession of the Industries Department as of 23 July 2009 and all efforts to get it transferred to XIMB have failed.

4. That the Post-Graduate Institute established by the Society will provide a two-year Diploma Course in Business Management, admitting every year 120 students who will be accommodated in two classes of 60 students each. The total students' strength for the two-year programme will be 240. Other courses will be introduced in this Institute in due course as may be decided by the Governing Body of the new society from time to time. Of these 240 students, 80 students every year will be students from Odisha.
5. That the new Society will enjoy complete freedom to prescribe the requirements for admission, for the students' continuing in the programme or course and for the award of Diplomas.

The Xavier Institute of Management, Bhubaneswar, was finally registered on 18 March 1987, in the chamber of S.B. Mishra, IAS, Secretary for Industries, Government of Odisha.

The first meeting of the Board of Directors was held during which the name of Fr. Romuald D'Souza S.J. was proposed by the President of the Odisha Jesuit Society, as its first Director. The proposal was accepted and the Board appointed him as the first Director. The Government of Odisha recognized XIMB as a Registered Society and so an account could be opened in a bank in the name of the Institute and funds could be made available for capital expenses to start classes. It was decided to commence classes on 12 October 1987 with 60 students. Decisions about the staff, curriculum etc. would be left to the discretion of the Director Fr. Romuald D'Souza, who at that time was the Director of XLRI, Jamshedpur.

Attending the Board meeting were the three Odisha Government nominees, namely S.B. Mishra, Secretary for Industries, A.K. Mishra, Director of Industries and R.N. Pujari, Director of Technical Education and Training. There were four Jesuits, namely, Fr. P.O. Thomas, the Jamshedpur Provincial, Fr. F. D'Souza, Mike Bogaert and John Guidera. The Board, however, was supposed to be made up of 15 members and of the eight remaining members, one would be an appointee of the Government of India and the rest would be leading industrialists. Names were proposed for these memberships but they were not announced till the consent of the proposed individuals was obtained. Russi Mody's name was suggested as the probable Chairman. He appointed Fr. Abraham Enthemkuzhy as Dean of the XIMB and Fr. George Cheradayil as Administrator and Financial Controller. They came here on July 1987 to set up the institute with the purpose of beginning classes by October. The admission test and the interviews were held in the meantime, with the help of XLRI and classes began on 12 October 1987.

Later on, in recognition of the vision and initiative of J.B. Patnaik, Father D'Souza installed a plaque at the entrance of the administrative building.

The Xavier Institute of Management, Bhubaneswar, was founded in the year 1987 with a vision to achieve excellence in Management education and socio-economic development. Since the early years of its existence, XIMB has strived not only to achieve excellence in education but also to contribute to social and economic development. The fundamental values of the institution have contributed to its great success in becoming one among the finest institutions. This success is reflected in the consistent growth in the number of applications for admission, placement statistics, strong alumni network worldwide and corporate credentials. So far as the courses are concerned, the XIMB offers a full time Post Graduate Programme in Management for graduates who aspire for management and leadership careers in the corporate or public sector. To facilitate the education and training of working executives, the XIMB offers a three year part-time Post Graduate Programme in Management. In addition, to cater to the growing needs of the rural sector, the XIMB offers a two-year full time Post Graduate Programme in Rural Management. Recently, the XIMB has launched a Doctoral Programme aimed at students who aspire to build a career in academics and research. The Institute also conducts short term Management Development Programmes and undertakes projects on research and consultation.

The state-of-the-art infrastructure of the XIMB includes its verdant campus which is spread over an area of 20 acres. The library and computer facilities, hostels, classrooms, audiovisual aid, Management Development Centre, Auditorium and the Sports and Recreation facilities provide an excellent environment for learning and contribute to the overall

development of the students. The XIMB is committed to the continuous development of its capital resources, human resources, knowledge resources and infrastructure to achieve excellence in Management education and contribute to the socio-economic development of the country.

## **Vision, Mission and Values**

### **XIMB's Vision**

Inspired by the Jesuits' spirit of the 'Magis', the XIMB strives to be a premier institute globally recognized for management education, training, research and consulting that help build a just and humane society.

### **XIMB's Mission**

We shall continue to be an institute with a difference by developing competent, committed and compassionate leaders through management education, knowledge generation and dissemination, capacity building, technology enabled learning and organizational development.

### **XIMB's Values**

1. Integrity and Honesty
2. Respect for Individuals
3. Transparency and Accountability
4. Commitment and Dedication
5. Concern for Quality
6. Passion for Innovation and Performance
7. Social, Ecological and Ethical Sensitivity

## **Infrastructural Development**

The XIMB started in 1987 with one administrative building, the classroom and the library complex along with one hostel and faculty quarters. But subsequently, the XIMB has been adding substantial infrastructure over the past two decades. It has built the Rural Management hostel, the girls' hostel, a new boys' hostel for 100 students, another new girls' hostel for 100 students, the CENDERET Building, the Management Development Centre and the gymnasium. In addition to all these, the XIMB has also built one of the most beautiful buildings in Odisha in the form of the new academic block which is known as the Tata Centenary Learning Centre. This building has seven floors and 16 classrooms along with 24 faculty offices, faculty lounge, Board Room, small conference hall and staff offices. The XIMB is also constructing a new Studio Apartments building for the students of the upcoming programme in Executive Post Graduate Management, a course of 15 months duration.

## **Faculty and Staff Members**

Starting with a modest number of faculty members, today the XIMB has 47 full time faculty members, three adjunct faculty and more than 30 visiting and part time faculty. Apart from this, the XIMB has more than 140 administrative staff who undertake functions and roles for the sustenance of educational activities in the institute and also help the faculty members in content delivery of lectures and other academic and institutional activities.

## **Placements**

The XIMB has the unique reputation of being one of the few business schools in India to have a hundred per cent placement record even in 2009 when the global recession and economic melt-down happened. When the students in other business schools were still looking for any opening available, the XIMB had already placed all its students from the PGDM and PGDM (RM) batch. However, the XIMB does not provide any placement support to the PGDM (PT) programme students.

## **Training and Consulting**

The XIMB undertakes various research and consulting projects from the Government of India, Government of Odisha, other Government agencies, multinational and national companies, intending investors in Odisha and international donor agencies like the UNDP, World Bank, UNICEF and the likes.

## **Centre for Development Research and Training (CENDERET)**

Way back in the year 1988, the CENDERET started its operation with action research to study the ground realities of the social and economic situation of Odisha. These research studies brought the CENDERET into a natural networking with NGOs and GOs working for the development of Odisha. In view of its growing network with various agencies, in 1990, besides research, the CENDERET got into the training of development players to improve their effectiveness in managing development projects.

In the same year, foreign donor agencies began drawing on the strength of the CENDERET to monitor and evaluate the projects that they funded to NGOs of Odisha. Soon, the CENDERET grew to be a full-fledged development partner to a consortium of European donor agencies and its services constituted of conceptualization of project ideas, developing broad framework conditions based on socio-economic, political and environmental setup, available institutional mechanism, collaborative and partnership modes, prefunding appraisals and also monitoring and evaluation of projects implemented by NGOs.

The CENDERET, with its professional potentiality, offered various developmental training programmes and in due course, development training became a regular feature and one of the thrust areas and expertise of the CENDERET. After 1993, it started taking strides into the execution of various field projects like Education for All in Keonjhar, Capacity Building of NGOs in KBK districts, Joint Forest Management in Mayurbhanj district and NGO Networking all over the State. In 1995-96, the CENDERET launched a one-year academic programme in rural development, which later developed into a two-year full-fledged academic programme in rural management.

In 1999, the Centre for Micro-finance was set up with support from NABARD to strengthen the self-help movement in Odisha. In the following year, the CENDERET launched a need-based five-year project on Women Empowerment through Self Help (WETSH Project) with support from the EU, the CORDAID and the DIAKONIA, on the basis of the findings of the research study conducted on "Status of Women in Odisha".

The XIMB has been on the forefront of providing management education to the best of its ability and has become



a strong brand in the management education sector. Odisha has witnessed the step-by-step growth of the XIMB to its present status though there are still many more obstacles to be crossed and many battles to be won. The XIMB is now looking towards the future with a dream to start a second campus which is slowly but steadily becoming a reality. There are many new programmes being introduced, new faculty members being inducted, older faculty members being promoted and retained and the level of management education and research being raised. The 21st century would be the right time for Odisha to show the world its managerial process and the institute leading this change would be the XIMB.

### **Alumni Strength of XIMB**

The total alumni passed out of the XIMB as on 1 April 2009 is 3782. Out of them, 3003 are boys and 779 girls. Of them, 184 are working abroad and the rest are engaged in various parts of the Country.

The Outlook Magazine has ranked the XIMB among the best management institutes of the Country. In the last four years it has ranked 8th (2005, 2006, 2008) and 6th (in 2007).

Thus, the Xavier Institute of Management, Bhubaneswar, has stood up as an institute that has made every Odia and every Indian proud!

\* \* \*

## Kalinga and Southeast Asia: The Foundation of a Research Institute

Prof. Hermann Kulke ♦

**K**alinga, since ancient times, is known for its great maritime activities and cultural contacts with Southeast Asia. In his *Raghuvamsa*, Kalidasa praised the king of Kalinga as ‘Great Lord of the Ocean’ (mahodadhipati) and the Buddhist text *Manjusri Mulakalpa* refers to the ‘Kalinga Sea’ (Kalingodadhi). In the second century AD, the Greek geographer Ptolemy mentions Palur, near the Chilka lake, as an internationally important emporium, and nearby Apheterion, the ‘point of departure’ for ships to Chryse, the ‘Golden Land’ of Southeast Asia, known in India as Suvarnabhumi. Hiuen-tsang, the famous Chinese Buddhist pilgrim, informs us in the 7th century about the hitherto not yet finally identified Odia harbour Che-li-ta-lo (Charitra): “From here merchants depart

---

♦ Prof. Hermann Kulke teaches in Kiel University, Germany, and is a historian of international repute

for distant countries and strangers come and go from here on their way to various destinations. The walls of the city are strong and lofty. Here are found all sorts of rare and precious articles.” In the 9th and 10th centuries, ‘Klings’ or Kalingas are placed at the top of the list of Indian people in Central Javanese inscriptions and during the 13th and 14th centuries, several Kalinganagaras, most likely trading centres of merchants from Kalinga, have been evident in East Javanese inscriptions. But it was not trade alone which brought Kalinga in contact with Southeast Asia. Its Buddhist and Hindu art and architecture too are known to have influenced the culture of Southeast Asia, for instance, in Burma and Java. However, due to the strong position of the Universities of Madras and Calcutta since the 19th century, research on India’s cultural relation with Southeast Asia focused primarily on the influence of the Pallava and Chola Dynasties of South India and of the Buddhist Pala dynasty of Bengal whereas ancient Kalinga’s trans-cultural contributions did not receive their due importance.

It was under these circumstances that Janaki Ballav Patnaik made up his mind to promote research on Odisha’s relations with Southeast Asia through a Government-sponsored research project and finally, by establishing a research institute.

It is a pleasure for me to have this opportunity to report about this project as well as about the foundation of the Odishan Institute of Maritime and Southeast Asian Studies at Bhubaneswar. More than thirty years ago, in 1978-79, when late Professor M.N. Das had invited me as visiting professor to deliver a lecture on ‘Kalinga and Southeast Asia’ at the Department of History, Utkal University, I was honoured by the visit of J.B. Patnaik to my then residence which was off Lewis Road, for a talk about my research on Jagannath as well as on India’s cultural relationship with Southeast Asia.

On 20 March 1984, during a visit to Bhubaneswar, I was invited to a meeting to be held in the Chief Minister's Conference Room in the Secretariat as the Government was contemplating to undertake one "Odisha-Southeast Asian Project" pertaining to possible research concerning the ancient socio-economic-cultural links of Odisha with Southeast Asia. The meeting was presided over by J.B. Patnaik and attended by eminent scholars like Prof. K.S. Behera, Prof. N.K. Sahu, Prof. Satyananda Acharya, Dr. Satyanarayan Rajguru, Dr. Lotika Varadarajan (Delhi) and by the principal officers of the Department of Culture, A.N. Tiwari, S.B. Mishra, S. Pani, Dr. A. Joshi and S.M. Routray. The short introductory reports by the scholars and the debate that followed provided an excellent brainstorming of various subjects to be taken up by the proposed project.

In view of Kalinga's rather unexplored maritime history until now, I emphasized the need to trace new evidence and sources for its study and suggested strong international cooperation, particularly with scholars of Southeast Asian epigraphy and archaeology. At the end, J.B. Patnaik rightly emphasized the need for research on both sides of the Bay of Bengal regarding sea ports, trade routes, evaluations in inscriptions, study of art and architecture and of developing theoretical concepts of cultural exchange between Kalinga and Southeast Asia. He then asked me to become Director of the project but I strongly recommended Prof. K.S. Behera instead. It was then decided to constitute a committee with Prof. K.S. Behera as Director and Dr. Lotika Varadarajan, Prof. N.K. Sahu, Prof. S. Acharya and the Vice Chancellor of Sri Jagannath Sanskrit University, Puri, Dr. Satyabrata Sastri, as members. The committee was to be constituted under the Chairmanship of the Chief Minister and I was asked to be associated with it in an

advisory capacity as Associate Director. This meeting, initiated by J.B. Patnaik, was the first major step in Odisha towards the institutionalization of research on Kalinga's maritime history and its relationship with Southeast Asia.

Due to the enduring interest of the Chief Minister in the promotion of the Odisha-Southeast Asian Project, the Government extended its plans considerably in the following months. In a letter dated 4 October 1984, I was informed by S.M. Patnaik, Secretary of Education, that the State Government has a proposal under its consideration to establish an institute which would devote itself specifically to the studies of Odia history and culture, and that the proposed institute should have a Department of South East Asian Studies which would provide facilities for the study of culture, languages and literature of the Southeast region at a post-masters level.

Within a few weeks, on 25 October, a high power Committee was constituted with the Chief Minister as the Chairman, to oversee the working of the project from time to time. The 13 members of the Committee included the Secretaries of the departments of Finance, Culture and Science, Additional Chief Secretary, Director of Culture, the Vice Chancellors of the Utkal and the Sanskrit Universities, the Director General of the Archaeological Survey of India and Prof. K.S. Behera, Prof. N.K. Sahoo and Prof. Varadarajan.

However, despite this very promising beginning and the great support of the Chief Minister and several Secretaries, various bureaucratic hurdles delayed the project and it took a considerably long time for the project to be able to finally start work after it was established in early 1987 as the Odishan Institute of Maritime and Southeast Asian Studies. During this time, I had the honour of attending two more committee meetings under the Chairmanship of J.B. Patnaik at his residence in

October 1986 and September 1987. During these meetings, I was again deeply impressed not only by his determination to realize his plans but also by his great knowledge on Odisha's relations with Southeast Asia. In 1988, I drafted a brochure which was published by the Executive Board of the Institute for free distribution among the public.<sup>1</sup>

During the next few years, the Institute was slowly able to begin work under its Director Prof. K.S. Behera and with the strong support of Dr. H.C. Das, Superintendent of the Odisha State Museum, as its Secretary. But unfortunately, the appointments of Dr. (now Prof.) S.K. Panda and Dr. B.K. Rath, who had already been selected as senior research scholars of the Institute, did not materialize. The same happened to the plan to organize an international seminar on Odisha's relations with Southeast Asia. Therefore, a series of national level seminars on *Kalingas in the Indian Ocean and Maritime Heritage of India*, held by Prof. Karuna Sagar Behera at the Utkal University in 1992-93, have to be regarded as particularly important outcomes of the activities of the Institute during these years. These lectures, edited by Prof. Behera in 1999, throw light on the broad spectrum of different subjects connected with Odisha's maritime history.<sup>2</sup>

The greatest achievement of the Odishan Institute of Maritime and Southeast Asian Studies during these early years was certainly its discovery and excavation of Manikapatana at the Chilka Lake since February 1989. The excavated findings of several small scale excavations in 1989-90 and 1992-93, like the Roman roulette and knobbed ware, a shard with Kharoshti script, coins from Puri, Kushana and Sri Lanka, ceramics from Burma, China and Arabia and such other evidences corroborate the fact that Manikapatana was a flourishing port since many a century, until the beginning of the Mughal period. Even

today, these are the most important archaeological evidences of Kalinga's great maritime history. But since the entire region of Manikapatna has an immense archaeological potential, it is rightly pointed out in the excavation report that, "It is imperative to carry out a large scale horizontal excavation at Manikapatana by employing interdisciplinary approaches which would bring to light more information on this significant aspect of Odisha's past."<sup>3</sup>

Considering its promising start under the Chairmanship of J.B. Patnaik, I wish the Odishan Institute of Maritime and Southeast Asian Studies great success in discovering more evidence of Odisha's maritime history.

### *References*

1. *Orissan Institute of Maritime and Southeast Asian Studies*, printed by DIPS, Bhubaneswar, 1988
2. K.S. Behera (ed.), *Maritime Heritage of India*, Delhi 1999.
3. Debaraj Pradhan, Pradeep Mohanty & Jitu Mishra, *Manikapatana: An Ancient and Medieval Port on the Coast of Orissa*, in: Kishor K. Basa & Pradeep Mohanty (ed.), *Archaeology of Orissa*, Delhi 2000, pp. 473-94.

\* \* \*

## Odishan Institute of Maritime & Southeast Asian Studies

Dr. H.C. Das ♦

**I**t was in 1987 that Chief Minister Janaki Ballav Patnaik initiated and set up the Odishan Institute of Maritime and Southeast Asian Studies under the Department of Culture to delve into the past and retrace Odisha's or ancient Kalinga's maritime linkages with Southeast Asia. In a meeting attended by a team of very learned scholars, senior bureaucrats, and Dr. H. Kulke from the Heidelberg University, Germany, it was decided to establish such an Institute for detailed studies of the history of maritime heritage, particularly of eastern India and its close commercial and cultural linkage with the Southeast Asian countries. I volunteered to hold the office in the initial stage in the State Museum and manage its activities with the staff of the Museum. Everybody in the meeting accepted the proposal and suggested that Prof. H. Kulke, Prof. K.S. Behera and I

---

♦ Dr. Haris Chandra Das is a Historian and Archaeologist



would prepare the modalities for the Institute and also prepare a constitution for registration under the Societies Registration Act.

It is known from literary and stray archaeological evidences as well as from folklores that the ancient Kingdom of Kalinga, though changing its boundaries from time to time but basically forming the deltaic region from the Ganges in the north to the Godavari in the south, maintained commercial and cultural relations for centuries with Southeast Asian countries.

It may be noted here that the mutual relations and contacts between ancient Odisha and Southeast Asia continued at least from the 4th century B.C. till the medieval times. Situated on the shore of the Bay of Bengal, ancient Odisha comprised the coastal regions of modern Odisha, the hinterland and the adjacent coastal districts of Andhra Pradesh and West Bengal. Owing to its location between the two great East Indian deltaic regions of the Ganges and the Krishna and Godavari rivers, Kalinga itself had two distinctly historical core areas, in the delta regions of the Mahanadi in Central Odisha and further to the southeast, of the Rishikulya and Vamsadhara rivers in southern Odisha and northern Andhra Pradesh. In ancient times, almost all the trade centres (ancient ports) are said to have been located in these coastal areas of Southeastern India and controlled by the Kalinga people. The earlier name of the present Bay of Bengal was Kalinga sea.

The favourable geographical position of Kalinga along the shore of the Bay of Bengal provided an excellent opportunity for its seafaring inhabitants to venture into maritime trade. The entire hinterland has a net of several big and small rivers which finally fall into the Bay of Bengal. The mouths of most of these rivers were dotted with ports, right from the Ganges to the Vamsadhara. The meandering coastline,

along with environmental conditions, instinctively made the local population adventurous seafarers. This was reflected in literature, sculptured panels and in other archaeological evidences. The Buddhist as well as Jain texts, Greek writings, Hieun Tsang's accounts as well as the accounts of Arab writers refer to Odisha's sea-borne trade with the outside world through a number of ports situated on the coast of Kalinga.

Ptolemy, in the 2nd century A.D., refers to a port named Palura. According to him, the point of departure (apheterion) for ships bound for Khryse (Land of Southeast Asia) was immediately to the south of a town in the territory on the Gangetic Gulf called Palura. Hieun Tsang, in the 7th century A.D., mentions an important port called Che-li-ta-lo. The Arab and the Persian writers of the 9th and 10th centuries A.D. also inform us about the sea ports of Odisha as Kalinganagara, Ganjam-Keylkan and Nubin. However, these ports, except Kalinganagar as Kalingapatnam and Ganjam, are yet to be properly identified. According to them, Nubin was situated on the frontiers of the Bhauma Kingdom and the name of Sarandip (Suvarna Dvipa) came from this town. They refer to the products of Odisha such as huge quantities of pepper, good cotton, textile and white conch shells (*Terbinala pirum*) and also large elephants as the commodities of trade in the past.

Several port towns flourished on the coast of Odisha and these served as outlets for external trade. Ancient Odisha's geographical boundary, covering a major part of Eastern India, had a distinct political identity from time to time and were called Kalinga, Odra, Utkala, Kangoda and Odisha. The most important, however, was Kalinga. The 7th century Chinese pilgrim refers to Odra (Wu-Cha) and Kangoda and also to a number of port towns. In the early medieval period, under the Bhaumakaras and the Somavamsis, the coastal region from

Midnapur to Puri was known as Utkala or Odra. Hence, the ports located from the mouth of the river Ganga to the mouth of the river Godavari were directly responsible for the trans-Asian maritime trade.

Historically, Kalinga has been famous from the time of Ashoka. The vast and famous territorial unit assumed the status of an empire from the time of Cholaganga (elsewhere spelt as Chodaganga) Deva (1078 A.D), the founder of the Kalinga Empire of the imperial Ganga dynasty and the empire lasted till the end of the Gajapati period (1545 A.D.). This long span of about 500 years witnessed the highest standards of art and architecture, great military achievements, economic affluence, maritime exuberance, literary upsurge, music and dance and several other facets of culture and religious activity with Vaisnavism, the pivot of which is Lord Jagannath. Both literary and archaeological sources refer to inland and overseas trade of Odisha. Its overseas clientele were spread all over Burma, Malaysia, Java, Sumatra, Borneo, Bali, Ceylon and China and after the 9th century, the clientele spread out to Arabia, Greece and even some countries of western Africa.

The above noted sources were essential to be substantiated by archaeological evidences through the survey of ancient and medieval port sites with trial trenching wherever necessary. Simultaneously, the commercial and cultural interactions of the Southeast Asian countries and their connection with Kalinga were considered enviable. The Institute was established to study in detail these past maritime activities and cultural relations. The following aims and objectives of the Institute were formulated.

### **Aims and Objectives of the Institute**

1. Study the past cultural links between Odisha (Ancient Utkal/Kalinga) and Southeast Asian countries

2. Study the maritime connection that continued for a long time between the people of this land and of the Southeast Asian countries.
3. Take up archaeological survey and exploration of the important port sites stretching from Tamralipti to Kalingapatanam, the then coastal line of the Kalingan empire, for reviving cultural materials of significance which may be invaluable for an in-depth study of the cultural and economic links maintained by Odisha with those overseas countries.
4. Excavate the important archaeological sites of the coastal belt and to trace out archaeological treasures which will constitute the primary source of information.
5. Take up oceanographic study of the Indian Ocean.
6. Liaison between the allied Institutes established in India and the countries of Southeast Asia
7. Take up the study of documented and undocumented folklore prevalent in coastal Eastern India and in the Southeast Asian countries.
8. Study the evolution of art and architecture in Odisha and in those countries.
9. Take up the study of the performing arts of Odisha and of those countries.
10. Take up an in-depth study of textile and other materials preserved in the Museums of the countries of Southeast Asia with a view to establishing linkages.
11. Organize lectures, symposia, national and international seminars with wider participation of scholars particularly from the Southeast Asian countries.

12. Publish reports, research papers and books based on primary sources.
13. Establish a Museum of Marine History.
14. Take up such other activities as may be required to widen the aims and objectives of the Institute

### **A Survey of the Ancient and Medieval Port Sites**

Taking into consideration the aims and objectives of the Institute, Prof. K.S. Behera, Director of the Institute and I undertook a survey of the ancient ports in the coastal belt stretching from the mouth of the river Suvarnarekha to the mouths of the rivers Risikulya and Vamsadhara in the Ganjam district. The mouths of almost all the rivers which fell into the Bay of Bengal were spotted with harbours of different magnitude. Our first survey was conducted at the mouth of the river Suvarnarekha and it was traced that in the middle of 16th century A.D., the Portuguese had established the port of Pipli at the mouth of the river Suvarnarekha. By now, the river has receded by about 5 km to the south and at the mouth of the river's new course, the Mughal emperor Shahjahan had built the port of Sahabandar. However, the ports of both the Portuguese as well as the Mughals have submerged into the river, leaving no trace of the port settlements. The two villages near Dahamunda on Suvarnarekha, known as Saru Pippal and Jhard Pippal, were originally the port of Pipli.

The next maritime survey was conducted at the mouth of the small river Jalaka which fell into the Bay of Bengal near Bahabalpur. The three small ports of Sanua, Sartha and Kasaphal developed here during the early days of the British rule. Big boats and ships used to harbour here for exporting

rice and forest products to different parts of India as well as to the Southeast Asian countries. Now these ports have been converted into fishing ports having several fishing jetties.

After visiting the mouths of the Suvarnarekha and the Jalaka, the Portuguese traders shifted their port establishments to the old Balasore Town which is now known as Olandaz Sahi and is located to the north of the Barabati Girls' High School, on the bank of a deep canal connecting the Luniajuri and Burhabalang rivers. Boats used to ply from this place earlier. A startling discovery was made during the survey—that of a big Portuguese boat lying buried on the bank of the canal. Some potsherds recovered from the surface of the area point to the Portuguese time of the last part of the 16th century. Then onwards, one after another, the Danes, the French and finally the British traders shifted their trade establishments to Balasore. Adjacent to the Olandazsahi is situated the Danes' establishment, locally known as the Dinamar Dinga. The French settlement on the bank of the Burhabalang river is known as Farasi Dinga. Some old buildings are stated to have been built with small burnt bricks by the French traders themselves.

The excavation of the buried Portuguese boat was entrusted to Dr. C.B. Patel, the then Curator of the Odisha State Archaeology. He dug out the boat to a great extent but had to stop due to floods in the Burhabalanga river submerging the area. Unfortunately, the work was not completed. This has resulted in the theft of planks from the exposed boat by the local people for their household use.

The mouth of the rivers Vaitarani and Brahmani at Chandbali came up as important ports during the British period. The old port of Paradeep at the mouth of the river Mahanadi contains some relics of the past, including the remnants of a British light house. The attention of the surveyors

was concentrated on the discovery of the famous port of Chelitalo which was first noted by Hieun Tsang. Surveys were also conducted at the mouths of the distributaries and tributaries of the Mahanadi, like the Luna, Devi, Kusabhadra and the Chitrapola. In the course of these surveys, the port of Chelitalo, which later on came to be known as Charitrapur, was tentatively identified by Prof. Behera and me at Chitreswari. This point was situated at the confluence of the Devi and the Luna rivers near Chitreswari, located at a distance of about seven kilometres by road from the Sun Temple at Konark. The remains of a British light house located on a sand dune by the river reveal the continuity of the port till the British period. However, the identified sites need excavation. An image of the four-armed Goddess Manasa, also known as Chitreswari, and the ruins of the temple of Sankateswara stand as mute witness of the maritime glory of an ancient past.

While surveying the southern bank of the Chilka Lake, Prof. Behera and I discovered the port of Manikapatana with its share of Gupta potsherds and terracotta figurines, a few Puri-Kushana coins and other tell-tale remains. The pottery pieces we had collected from the area point to the establishment of the port around the early centuries of the Christian era. With the permission and decision of the Chief Minister J.B. Patnaik, we conducted excavations of some trenches in the villages of Sanapatana and Manikapatna which were attached to the famous Bhaabamundaleswar temple, built during the Ganga period. The temple is very much connected with the Kanei Kaveri legend coined during the reign of Gajapati Purosottammadeva.

The excavation continued for two seasons in 1989-90 and 1990-91. After my retirement in 1993, D.R. Pradhan continued to excavate more trenches at Manikapatna. The important finds from the site are roulette ware, amphorae, black-slipped ware,

northern black polished ware, Roman bulla, porcelain, Celadon (Muslim and Mughal period) and graveyards of the Muslims and the Mughals. Trench-excavation taken up in a residential area of Manikapatna exposed the structural remains of some houses made of laterite stone blocks. The port of Manikapatna was not confined to the area selected for excavation alone but spread to as far as the original mouth of the Chilka at Arkhakuda. Huge quantities of pottery from different periods were found here. There is a proposal to conduct excavation at some other viable sites of Manikapatna which will further add to the dimension of the port. This much can be said here that the port of Manikapatna was the biggest port establishment in eastern India. A book on Manikapatna port will be completed soon after a few more trenches are dug up.

In the next trip, the famous port of Palura, of the early Christian era, was surveyed thoroughly from the village of Vardhyakuda which was located on the seashore. But unfortunately, the port of Palura has not yet been properly identified. Whatever views have been furnished by the scholars so far are more a possibility rather than fact. We, however, feel that the area from Palura village to Rambha, which has been converted to paddy field, seems to be the real port of Palura which had flourished in still waters. Moreover, it is difficult to select the area for trail trenching. Thus the port still remains an enigma.

### **Special Lectures and Seminars**

Under the direction of Chief Minister J.B. Patnaik, the erudite scholars of India having proficiency in maritime studies were contacted with request to deliver lectures at the Institute, relating to their research. This was a way for understanding the



subject in the all-India context and to cement our interaction for further activities of the Institute. At our request, the following scholars consented and had delivered their thought provoking lectures in the presence of the Chief Minister. These scholars include:

1. Prof. H. Kulke from Heidelberg University, Germany
2. Prof. H.B. Sarkar from Kharagpur
3. Dr. T.K. Viswas, Director, Bharat Kala Bhawan, B.H.U.
4. Prof. R.C. Sharma, Director General, National Museum and Vice Chancellor, National Museum University
5. Dr. Lathika Varadarajan from New Delhi
6. Prof. G.N. Panth from National Museum University
7. Dr. M.L. Nigam, Director, Salarjang Museum, Hyderabad
8. Dr. M.N.P. Tiwari, Professor, P.G. Department of History of Arts, Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi

Their papers, covering the whole of India's past maritime heritage based on their field studies in India and Southeast Asian countries and the archaeological and literary evidences, were of great significance. Though all the papers were edited and processed for publication, unfortunately, the papers were not properly preserved by succeeding officers who took charge of the Institute.

The recently published book *Kalinga-Indonesian Cultural Relations* is seen to contain the only paper of H.B. Sarkar titled

*Kalinga's Role in South East Asia.* Other valuable papers are lost forever.

### **Deputation of K.S. Behera and H.C. Das to Tamluk**

Being a scholar of repute, J.B. Patnaik was well versed with the heritage of the Tamralipti port which was under the jurisdiction of Kalinga in the early centuries. In accordance with the decision of the Chief Minister, Prof. Behera and I proceeded to Tamluk, stayed there for about a week and surveyed the Rupnarayan river valley on both sides with the staff of the Tamluk Museum. In the course of the survey, we collected some ancient pottery and examined the existing mounds. Two mounds were excavated during the 60s and the 70s by the Department of Archaeology, Calcutta University, and the recovered objects are now displayed in a small museum established at Tamluk, under the Tamluk Cultural Organization. The antiques pertain to the Gupta Terracotta figurines, Roman bulla, some punch-marked coins and a copper plate grant of a later date.

We had a long discussion with the officials of the cultural organization on the maritime heritage of the Tamralipti port. They accompanied us to the survey of the sites but were dismayed at the fact that no funds were coming to them. They further alluded that some of the antiques recovered from the two earlier excavations have been taken away by the excavators themselves to Calcutta. They decry the fact but cannot do anything as they had no support. Two magazines in Bengali containing the papers on the Tamluk port were given to us. These were kept in the Institute but are not available now. Over time, the sea too has receded to about sixty kilometres from Tamluk and the port of Haldia has come up at the mouth of the Rupnarayan River.

On our way back, we came to Kharagpur to meet Prof. H.B. Sarkar, an outstanding scholar in this field who has done intensive study of the Southeast Asian cultures through field surveys and who also happened to be an epigraphist and a historian. He welcomed us to his residence where we had a long discussion for about three days with regard to the scope of activities to be undertaken in the Institute. He maintained a vast library containing several thousands of books and journals. Since he was advancing in age and had some cardiac problem as well, we benignly requested him to hand over the library to the Institute, of course on payment for the cost of the books. He denied. It was later understood from his daughter that the library has already been sold to the Calcutta University.

### **Participation in International Seminars**

In February 1992, I participated in the international seminar on *The Silk Route and India*, organized at Panjim, Goa, by the UNESCO. Scholars from Arab as well as the European countries came by a big ship through the Silk Route to Goa. It was a grand seminar and new lights were thrown on different aspects of the maritime activities. I presented a paper on the first European trade establishment (Portuguese) at Pipli port at the mouth of the river Survarnarekha. The Portuguese traders paved the way for the Danes, the French and finally the British traders to spread their business through ships. My paper earned wide acclaim in the conference as none of them were aware of the fact that the Portuguese had their first trade settlement in Odisha.

Prof. Behera and I had also participated in the international seminar on Kalinga and Bali organized at Denasar, the capital of Bali Island. On the occasion of the Kalinga Bali Yatra Utsav,

a grand exhibition of Odia art and craft was also organized. What happened to those papers presented in the seminar is not known to us now. Probably, Prof. K.S. Behera had incorporated some of them in the book which he had edited, titled *Maritime Heritage of India*.

## **Buddhist Studies**

The Buddhist Heritage Project Cell was created in the Institute in April 2007 with funds from the 12th Finance Commission. The major thrust of the Project was to explore and excavate the early Buddhist sites to add a new dimension to the State's Buddhist heritage. With this aim in view, Pradhan undertook excavation of the Langudi hill in the Dharmasala Block and exposed the rock cut sculptures of the Buddhist pantheon belonging to the Gupta period and an Ashokan stupa encircled by railed pillars at the top of the hill. However, this is an early site which had flourished from the time of Ashoka upto the Gupta period.

Prominent sites of early Buddhism like Radhanagar, Vajragiri, Panturi, Kantigadia, Kayama, Tarapur, Neulpur and Deuli were explored with license from the ASI and Pradhan started excavation in these sites. All of these sites were located in the Dharmasala Block in the district of Jajpur.

However, it was not advisable to start excavations simultaneously on eight sites without adequate technical staff. In the near future all the sites which have been surveyed recently will have to be thoroughly and scientifically excavated. The antiques so far recovered from the scrapings are broken sculptures, pottery, structural remains, coins, inscribed seals and small inscriptions of Ashokan Brahmi belonging to the

4th and 3rd centuries B.C. The inscriptions which have names incised on them are of great importance. They are Bheku Tapusa Danam, Kesa Thupa, Kalinga Raja, Kaligadha Nayakasa, Kaligadesagadanayakasa, Gajaraja, Tisya, Tosalinagara, Tosali, Kalingaranyagam, Kanakamuni, Rajapasada, Nagara and many more. While referring to the inscriptions, this much can be said here that Radhanagar, which exposes the inscriptions of Tosali and Tosalinagara, throws a new light on the capital of Kalinga under Ashoka. Till today, the Sisupalgarh excavation report at Bhubaneswar identifies this fort as the capital of the Mauryan Kalinga. But the discovery of the inscriptions from Radhanagar, one of the ancient ports and forts on the banks of the river Keula, creates a problem in accurate identification of Ashoka's capital in Kalinga. A conclusion can be drawn only after completion of the excavation.

The inscriptions referring to Kesathuppa and Bhekhutapussadanam bring back the history of Buddhism in ancient Kalinga to about the fifth Century B.C. when the Jataka story mentions Tapasu and Bhallika, the two merchant brothers of Utkala who offered honey and homemade cakes to the Buddha just after his Enlightenment. The two last named inscriptions have been recovered from the Tarapur Buddhist site where, on a hillock, lies the remains of a square stupa which may be identified as the Kesastupa. Only further excavation will be able to enlighten us on this confusing issue.

## Publication

A book titled *Kalinga Indonesian Cultural Relations* has been published by the Institute in 2007. Dr. Balaram Tripathy and I were involved in another book titled *Maritime Significance*

*and Boat Building Tradition of Orissa*, based on five illustrated palm leaf manuscripts. Another book on the Manikapatna port is also under process.

The Odishan Institute of Maritime and Southeast Asian Studies, built up meticulously by J.B. Patnaik is now in a dwindling condition. With proper attention and funds, the Institute can be nourished back to its original status and purpose.

\* \* \*

## Odisha's Library Revolution

Prof. Pitambar Padhi ♦

**A** public library is the principal means whereby human thoughts, ideas and expressions of creativity and imagination are put on record and documented in order that they may be made freely available to all. It is a living force for education, culture, information and entertainment. It is concerned with the refreshment of man's spirit through the provision of books for relaxation and pleasure. A public library also offers assistance to students by providing up-to-date technical, scientific and sociological information for the development of the human personality. In this way it helps people to form opinions and develop creative and critical capabilities along with the power of appreciation. To fulfill its purpose, the public library must be readily accessible and its

---

♦ Prof. Pitambar Padhi is former Professor and Head of the Department, Library and Information Science, Utkal University

doors must be open for free and equal use by all members of the society, regardless of race, colour, creed, age, sex, religion, language, status or educational attainment.

### **Mission and Motto**

Keeping in view the above objectives, the following should be the mission of a public library.

- Creating and strengthening reading habits in children from an early age
- Supporting both individual and self conducted education as well as formal education at all levels
- Providing opportunities for personal and creative development
- Stimulating imagination and creativity among children and youth
- Promoting awareness on cultural heritage and appreciation of the arts, scientific achievements and innovations
- Fostering intercultural dialogue and favouring cultural diversity
- Supporting oral tradition
- Ensuring access for citizens to all sorts of community information
- Providing adequate information services to local enterprises, technocrats, associations and interest groups
- Facilitating the development of information and computer literacy skills among the staff and users



- Supporting and participating in literacy activities and programmes for all age groups and initiating such activities, if necessary.

Realizing the above objectives and missions, let us examine critically as to how far the development of Odisha's Public Library system has achieved its goal since its inception.

### **Historical Perspective**

While tracing the history and development of public library in the State, it has been observed that the public and the masses of Odisha have never shown interest towards library development. This could be due to lack of education, appreciation and awareness. As such, most of the libraries in different parts of the Odia speaking tracts were attached to palaces of the maharajas, ruling chiefs, zamindars and heads of religious institutions as a symbol of aristocracy and status. These libraries were never meant for the dissemination of knowledge to the masses and therefore, were opened only to a select few. Thus, one may observe that such libraries got royal patronage not for the sake of educational, social and economic benefit to the people but for royal pride and prestige. People working in those libraries were merely performing custodial functions and therefore there was no systematic arrangement of the collections. This attitude of the royal families resulted in the emergence of the palace libraries at Paralakhemundi, Baripada, Bolangir, Bamanda, Badagada, Kanika, Talcher, Dharakot, Madhupur, Athagarh, Hindol, Jayapur and other places. It was only with the introduction of liberal education and local self-government by the Britishers that some English-educated persons thought of starting public libraries in their respective

areas by the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century. Such attempts have given rise to the establishment of public libraries in different parts of the State. A few of these, like the Sriram Chandra Pathagar at Baripada, Utkal Sahitya Samaja Pathagar at Kataka, the public library at Berhampur, the Sachidananda Pathagar at Deogarh, Raghunandan Pathagar of Puri, Sobhagya Manjari Pathagar at Nayagarh, the Anchalika Pathagar at Chikiti, the Jayakrushna Bahinipati Pathagar of Rambha, the Raghunath Pathagar in Balipadar, the public library of Khalikote, the Upendra Bhanj Pathagar at Tanarada, the Kanakamanjari Pathagar at Kabisurya Nagar and a few others may be worth mentioning. These libraries, which had some rare collection of books, were established long before the formation of the State of Odisha in 1936.

Development of public libraries in Odisha had gone through many a hurdle because of the fact that different regions of our State were under the administrative control of the Bengal and the Madras Presidencies. It was only in 1936 that Odisha had come into existence as an independent State. Until then, no uniform rules were followed for the establishment and administration of public libraries in the different Presidencies and since most of the officials were either Bengalis or Telugus or Tamils, they had no interest in Odia. Thus, establishment of libraries in Odisha did not get due consideration and patronage of the British administration.

### **Library Development in the Post-Independent Era**

With the establishment of Odisha as a separate State in 1936 and after its reorganization in 1956, the public library movement received due recognition and importance. In 1938, the Government of Odisha desired, for the first time, to enact

library laws similar to those of the State of Baroda. Biswanath Das, the then Prime Minister of Odisha, deputed Prof. Rama Chandra Mahapatra of the R.N. Training College, Kataka, and Late Laxminarayan Sahu to study the public library system at Baroda and submit a report. But before they submitted the report, the Congress Government resigned in 1939. Subsequently, in 1944, the Utkal Library Association was formed, giving a momentum to the library movement in the State. But a lack of political will during the subsequent governments was the main hurdle in garnering patronage and support for the development of libraries in the State. Perhaps the time was not yet ripe for such developments.

It was with the enactment of the Odisha Grama Panchayat Act, 1948 and the rules of 1949, that the notion of village library development was conceived by the Government. But there still was no sincere effort to establish Panchayat Libraries in rural areas. By 27 November 1943, the Utkal University was established. As a result, a lot of pressure for the establishment of libraries in the State was built up. With the recommendation of the K.P. Sinha Committee on public libraries, the Government of India decided to establish a State Central Library in each state capital in 1959 and accordingly, grants were received in Odisha as well to establish a State Central library and a huge building was constructed at Bhubaneswar for the purpose. In 1961, the Government of Odisha decided to establish the State Library by constructing its present building with full grant from the Central Government. It took six years for the building to be completed and the State Library to be functional. This happened in 1967.

However, with the shifting of the office of the Directorate of Public Instruction (DPI) from Kataka to Bhubaneswar, the entire building was occupied by the DPI for its office, leaving

only one room for the State Library. Thus the fate of the State Library was sealed in only one room because of the wrong decision made by the government. In the year 1975, the All India Library Conference was held at Bhubaneswar under the Presidentship of D.R. Kalia. It was here at the conference that the local participants demanded that the office of the DPI be shifted elsewhere for the State Library to function properly. Prof. D.R. Kalia, then president of the Indian Library Association (ILA), met Jadunath Das Mahapatra and Akbar Ali Khan, the then minister of Education and the Governor respectively and got assurance for the shifting of the DPI's office elsewhere. But this assurance did not materialize. It took ten years to find an alternative accommodation for the office of the DPI and it was only in December 1985, due to the firm decision and intervention of Chief Minister J.B. Patnaik, that this became possible. Through his personal interest and involvement, the State Library, which was in a very bad shape and had a very shabby look, was renovated by the end of November 1986. S.B. Mahapatra, the then Secretary, Department of Culture, played a major role under Patnaik's instruction. In fact, such gesture shown by the executive head of a State is a rare and unparalleled instance in the annals of the library movement of Odisha. He had taken a timely decision by appointing Prof. D.R. Kalia as the first Director of the State Central Library and in the process, showed his interest in bringing about a sea change in the organization and administration of the State Central Library and making it one of the best State Central Libraries in India.

### **Appointment of Prof. D.R. Kalia as the Director**

Unless a public institution is patronized by the government with a strong political will, nothing concrete can

be achieved. This was proved to be true when J.B. Patnaik had rightly decided in 1986 to extend invitation to Prof. Kalia, a man of eminence and expertise, to hold the post of the Director of the State Central library by exonerating the age bar in a meeting of the Cabinet. This shows the keen interest of the Chief Minister to choose the right person for the right task at the right time to achieve the goal. The farsightedness of the scholarly Chief Minister definitely deserves high appreciation from the people of Odisha.

Thus, looking at the history and development of the public library in the State, it would be appropriate to divide the whole process of development into two phases. The period from the early 20th century to 1960 may be termed as dark period and the period from 1961 to 2001 as the golden period of library development. One finds maximum visible development of the State Central Library regarding finance, collection, staff, service and the enactment of the library laws due to the persistent effort of J.B. Patnaik, during his first and second term as the Chief Minister. The State Central Library, which was inaugurated on 15 August 1987, was named after the illustrious son of Odisha Dr. H.K. Mahatab. It was J.B. Patnaik's decision to name the library after Mahatab and for the first time, it was kept open for the public from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. He was also instrumental in inviting Prof D.R. Kalia who had by that time successfully completed various assignments as the Director of the Central Secretariat Library, Head of the library in IIT Delhi, Library Consultant to the Government of Jammu and Kashmir, consultant to UNESCO and had also done an assignment with the Delhi Public library. With Prof. Kalia as Director in 1986, the entire building was placed under the disposal of the library. The very nature of the library was drastically transformed and the library had received a modern and aesthetic look. Prof. Kalia

prepared a development plan based on the instructions of the Chief Minister and began its execution in a phased manner. The work of the library was divided into technical service, readers' service and administrative service. Following a divisional pattern of organization, two libraries, namely the Bhubaneswar Public Library and the State Central Library respectively, were established in the same building. By the end of the fourth year, the collection in both the libraries increased from 44,000 titles in December 1986 to 80,000 in December 1990. Similarly, the staff strength of the library increased from five to 91. Prior to 1987, the annual budget of the library was only Rs. 3.5 lakhs. But the same had now been raised to Rs.40 lakhs, with a book purchasing budget of Rs.10 lakhs. All this development was possible only because of the interest and cooperation of the then Chief Minister and his secretariat. Prof. Kalia had not only brought a sea change in the organizational and service pattern of the state library but he was also able to get matching and non matching grants from the Raja Rammohun Roy Library Foundation. He also envisaged the introduction of library automation with the cooperation of the National Informatics Center (NIC) Bhubaneswar. By the end of December 1990, about 400 readers and researchers were making use of the library every day, free of charge, which placed the Central Library among the most used state central libraries in India.

### **Library Legislation**

Library and information service is fundamental to educational, scientific and cultural planning. The public library movement should be sponsored under the established law of the state so as to ensure a state-wide provision for library services.

The legislation should guarantee establishment, maintenance and development of public libraries.

The Public Libraries Act of Odisha, 2001, has a long history. The first attempt for a library legislation at the Government level dates back to 1938. However, the nature of political development at that time did not permit the legislation to sail through. The Utkal Library Association was also keen in drafting the first Bill of its kind following the model public library Bill of Prof. Ranganathan and accordingly, had submitted it to the Government for consideration in 1974. This was presented to the Government at the time of the All India Library Conference. Then on 4 March 1982, a state conference on public libraries in Odisha was held at the Sambalpur University. This conference was jointly organized by the Department of Library & Information Science along with the Department of Culture, Government of Odisha and was sponsored by the RRRLF and the UGC. The outcome of the conference was the drafting of the Odisha Public Library Bill. But due to the lack of a follow-up action and apathy of officials, the Bill could not get the Government's attention.

The reorganization of the Hare Krishna Mahatab (HKM) State Central Library under the direct supervision of Prof. D.R. Kalia in 1987 gave an opportunity to the Government to think about a Library Act for the State. J.B. Patnaik asked Prof. Kalia to prepare a draft library Bill and submit it to the Government by 1988. But before the Bill could see the light of day, J.B. Patnaik resigned. In 1992, during the All India Library Conference at the Utkal University, the demand for the enactment of a public library law was again raised, discussed and deliberated upon by the participants and a resolution was passed for its enactment. Continuous efforts at different times brought the matter to the attention of academicians,

library professionals, legislators, publishers, eminent writers and the media to build pressure on the Government. Members of the Legislative Assembly, Umarani Patra, Jagneswar babu and Trilochan Kanungo too rose to the occasion by bringing the private members' bill in the State Legislative Assembly. In response to the demand, J.B. Patnaik, then in his third term as Chief Minister, gave an assurance on the floor of the House regarding the Government's intention to bring about such a Bill. Accordingly, the Department of Culture constituted an expert committee in 1997 under the Chairmanship of Prof. Pitambar Padhi, who was at the time the Head of the Department of Library and Information Science, Utkal University. Abakas Jena, ex-Librarian, Central Reference Library, was made a member and Budhadeba Panda, Deputy Director, Libraries, was made member convener. The committee had several rounds of meetings and discussions with the officials of the Departments of Culture, Law and General Administration of the State on 5 May 1997 and 17 June 1997 in line with the terms of references and finally presented a draft Bill before the Secretary of Culture. A memorandum was prepared by the Government on 17 July 1998 in the form of an agenda to be included in the Cabinet meeting. This memorandum was duly approved by the Cabinet. However, even before the draft Bill was circulated among the Members of the Legislative Assembly, J.B. Patnaik's Ministry was dissolved. But the draft Bill was subsequently re-introduced on 3 August 1999 in the Odisha Legislative Assembly by Prasad Harichandan, Minister of State for Culture in the ministry of Dr. Gamango. But the same was not discussed due to the super cyclone in October 1999 and thereafter, the Congress Government was no longer in power. However, the same draft Bill was again introduced in the State Legislative Assembly on 11 December 2001 by Bijayasri Routray, Minister of Culture.



After some discussion and with a few amendments, the Bill was finally passed on the floor of the Assembly on 22 December 2001 and the Governor gave his consent to it on 28 February 2002. The Act was published in a special issue of the Odisha Gazette on 11 March 2002. Though seven years have passed since then (till 2009), nothing in concrete has been done by the Government for active implementation of the Act. As a result, the forming of the Odisha Public Library Council, creating of the Odisha Public Library Funds, amalgamation of public libraries under the different departments of the Government of Odisha with the existing public library and augmentation of financial provisions in the budget have not yet been made.

### **Real Picture of the Organizational Structure of Public Libraries**

A brief description of the organizational structure of the public libraries under the control of the Director, Culture, indicates that these libraries can be conveniently categorized for better understanding.

#### **I. State and Central Libraries**

- (a) The State Central Library, known as the Hare Krushna Mahatab Library (HKM) was established in 1968. This is the State's apex library, providing reference and research services to the public. No reading materials are issued from this library.
- (b) In the same building which houses the State Library, the Bhubaneswar Public Library has also been functioning since 1987 as the lending library for the public. In future, it is to be shifted to a convenient place as a Central Library in the capital city.

## II. District and Sub-Divisional Libraries

At present, there are 13 district libraries in the undivided districts in the State established since 1979. Besides, there are four sub-divisional libraries which started functioning at Bargarh, Nuapada, Rairangpur and Rayagada since 1984. These libraries have been upgraded to district libraries through a notification. Thus, thirteen district libraries are to be opened in the other districts namely, Boudh, Bhadrak, Deogarh, Gajapati, Jagatsinghpur, Jharasuguda, Kendrapara, Khurda, Malkangiri, Koraput, Nawarangpur, Nayagarh and Sonepur.

## III. Ex-District Board Libraries

In the district of Ganjam, there are six libraries, one each at Rambha (1910), Chikiti (1915), Khalikote (1920), Balipadara (1923), Kabisurya Nagar (1925) and Tanarada (1939). All of these were under the control of the ex-District Board up to 1969. These libraries, having very rich and rare collections, were transferred to the Department of Culture in 1975.

## IV. Integrated Library, Anugul

This library was established in 1955 during the first Five Year Plan, under the Special Assistance Programme of the Government of India. It is the only one of its kind and also operates a mobile library service. It has 19 depository points which is unique in Odisha and has now been upgraded to a District Library.

## V. The Memorial Hall Libraries

There are also three memorial hall libraries under the control of the Department of Culture namely, the Gangadhar Meher Memorial Hall Library at Bargarh (1976), the Panchasakha Memorial Hall Library at Sakhi Gopal (1976) and the Mahabir Jain Library at Dhenkanal (1972).

Besides the five categories of libraries mentioned above, there are also 314 Gandhi Pathagars established in 1994 to commemorate the 125th Birth Anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi, at each block head quarter under the Panchayat Raj Department. The Department of Information and Public Relation has also established eighty information centres spreading over different parts of Odisha as lending and reference libraries. Most of these libraries do not have trained personnel. Such libraries are to be brought into the fold of the public library system as per the provisions of the Act.

Under the assistance of the Raja Rammohun Roy Library Foundation, 600 libraries, including 314 block level libraries and 286 urban and rural libraries, are being provided with books every year. Assistance for building and furniture are also provided to such libraries to promote an effective library service.

Municipalities and the NACs in different parts of the State are also providing library service to the people in their respective areas. Out of the 102 Municipalities and NACs, 39 are maintaining their own libraries, though with limited service. However, during J.B. Patnaik's Government, the Sahid Bhavan Pathagar was established by the Kataka Municipality in 1982 as a centre of attraction for the intelligentsia of Kataka town.

Users from various parts of the State and different walks of life visit this Library for consultation and reference as it contains a representative collection of important books from all branches of knowledge. Trilochan Kanungo, ex-Member of Parliament, who was the Chairman of the Corporation, took a lot of interest in the matter.

### **Critical Appraisal**

An impartial assessment of the functioning of the public library system in the State, starting from village libraries to the State Central Library, reveals that no substantial development took place after 1999 except the enactment of the Odisha Public library Bill, 2001. However, no follow-up action regarding the implementation of the provisions of the Act has been taken by the Department of Culture. Nor is there any competent library advisor to the Government of Odisha of the stature of Prof. D.R. Kalia. It is most unfortunate to mention that the efforts which J.B. Patnaik had made two decades back for a comprehensive public library movement in the State are not being nurtured today. The first decade of the present century presents a very dismal picture. The Act has been passed after persistent efforts but the rules could not be framed so far for implementation of the Act. Thus, when it comes to a proper public library system, Odisha is far behind the progressive states in the country.

\* \* \*

## Setting up of the Satyananda Yoga Ashrama & Yoga Vidyalaya

Swami Swarupananda Saraswati ♦

I came to Odisha for the first time in 1975 following the instructions of my revered Gurudev, Paramahansa Satyananda Saraswati, the founder of the Bihar Yoga Vidyalaya. Upon my arrival, I took charge of the management of the Utkal Yoga Vidyalaya which was established by him in Sambalpur. In the seven years starting from 1968, yoga conferences had been held a number of times at Sambalpur. Guruji himself had organized and conducted these conferences. A great deal of interest in yoga had been aroused among people. Keeping this in view, the construction work of the Utkal Yoga Vidyalaya had been completed within two years under the aegis of the Lions Club with the consent of Guruji. I had to come to Kataka and Bhubaneswar at intervals in connection with the management of the ashram as also to conduct yoga camps.

---

♦ Swami Swarupananda Saraswati is Chairman, Odisha Branch of Bihar Yoga Vidyalaya

At Kataka I got acquainted with a barrister, Birendra Mohan Patnaik. And then on, whenever I came to Kataka, on his request, I stayed at his house. He used to learn yoga himself. He also used to organize yoga camps for advocates and judges at Kataka. Patnaik and his associates had shown extraordinary interest in establishing a yoga vidyalaya, be it either at Kataka or at Bhubaneswar. Finally, an institution named the Satyananda Yoga Vidyalaya was registered at Kataka under the Societies Registration Act, 1984-85, of course with the permission of Guruji. The institution was registered in the names of seven persons which included K. Ramamurthy, IAS, Birendra Mohan Patnaik, G.C. Senapati, Sarita Jayant Das, Madan Senapati, Swami Swarupananda Saraswati and Sriballav Panigrahy.

Ramamurthy and G.C. Senapati formally applied to the government for a piece of land at Bhubaneswar. In Odisha, the Congress under the leadership of Janaki Ballav Patnaik formed the government at the time. It would have been foolhardy to sit quietly after applying for the land because effort was needed to get the work done. I had heard from Birendra babu that the Chief Minister Patnaik was a yoga enthusiast. He was full of hope that Patnaik would positively help in getting a plot of land for the yoga vidyalaya. And because he knew Janaki Babu closely, he went to meet him. Janaki Babu was also interested in the proposal and he promised that all help would be rendered for the purpose. The proposed land for the yoga vidyalaya was allotted by the government in 1986 at A-6/2, Vidyut Marg. Janaki Babu also got the Cabinet to approve that no cess would be payable on the land.

Thus, I came to Bhubaneswar in February 1987 and stayed at the Janpath Hotel. I knew the owner of the hotel, Bhimsen Subudhi, very well because a number of yoga camps had been organized earlier at Bhubaneswar with his active support. A

meeting of the devotees was convened to decide on the day of the Bhoomipuja. At the meeting, a committee was formed with K. Ramamurthy as the President and Samarendra Patnaik as the Secretary. A decision was taken unanimously to conduct the Bhoomipuja on 26 February 1987, the day of the Mahasivaratri. Dibyasingha Deba, the Hon'ble Gajapati Maharaja, accepted our request to conduct the Bhoomipuja. I stayed in a rented house for a year and a half after that and imparted yoga lessons. Later on, an outhouse was constructed on the plot allotted by the government with the efforts and financial support of a few employees of the NALCO as well as Baula Mines. These employees were practicing yoga under my tutelage. So once the outhouse was completed, I started living there and conducted the yoga classes.

However, the possibility of the elaborate plan prepared for the ashram and the yoga vidyalaya bearing fruit seemed to be remote because of a lack of resources. People in general were enthused about yoga, bhajans and kirtans. But no one paid any serious thought about the resources needed to build a full-fledged ashram, let alone extend a helping hand. I myself being a *sanyasi*, where would I have the resources to undertake the task? Ironically enough, many people started asking me whether I could read palms and horoscopes, whether I could make predictions by looking at people's faces and whether I could produce anything from thin air. I was assured that many people would be drawn to me if I possessed such powers but I replied to them in the negative. I told them that I was only doing Guruji's work by spreading the concept of yoga. In return, I was told that if such was the case, there was no hope of anyone helping me in my effort to build the ashram. I was left disheartened upon hearing such words.

Finally, I made up my mind to return to Sambalpur where an ashram was already in existence. Moreover, the devotees at Sambalpur also loved me. When I had communicated my decision to Barrister Birendra Patnaik, he was more optimistic than I was. He advised me to meet Janaki Ballav Patnaik. In my first meeting, I realised that Patnaik had much appreciation for yoga. I told Patnaik about Guruji and the Bihar School of Yoga founded by him. I also updated him on my activities in Odisha. He asked me several questions on yoga and I answered them to his satisfaction. He had been practicing yoga since his student days and I too gave him a few tips on yoga, according to the Satyananda tradition, upon seeing his interest. Our relationship gradually grew close after that first meeting. One day as I informed him that I was planning to go back to Sambalpur, he reassured me saying, “Bhubaneswar is the State capital. There are plenty of possibilities for yoga at this place. Practicing yoga is essential for the health of the busy inhabitants of Bhubaneswar. Hence, apart from spiritualism, yoga has to be accepted as a stream of medicine. This is one of the basic necessities of the people living in the State capital and this could be fulfilled only with the help of a centre for learning yoga. There is nothing to worry. You’ll continue to live in Bhubaneswar.”

I indeed felt reassured and returned. Two days later, an unknown gentleman arrived at my doorstep late in the evening at nine. He said that he was an Odia and that he was a Mumbai-based businessman. He had come to render some financial help for the construction of the yoga vidyalaya. He neither disclosed his identity nor did he tell me about the person who had sent him to me. He simply handed over a sum of Rs 2,50,000 to me and left. Another unknown visitor had also helped in a similar manner. I constructed the main ashram with the help of this sum. In the meanwhile, the proposal submitted to the government for the training of yoga instructors was accepted



and a grant of Rs.600 was sanctioned for each trainee. I saved half of it and used the money for the construction of the ashram. And within a period of two years, the construction work was complete. Satyananda Yoga Vidyalaya would never have come to its present state without the support of the Government of Odisha, Bhubaneswar Development Authority, Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation, the NALCO, Baula Mines as well as the financial help and advice of several architects, engineers, builders and devotees. But the person responsible for the realization of my dream is, without doubt, Janaki Ballav Patnaik.

The activities of the Yoga Vidyalaya have increased manifold after its extension. Apart from imparting instruction on yoga for good health, yoga camps are being conducted for treatment of various diseases. Advice is rendered on a one-to-one basis and special camps are held for ladies. Camps are also held for children during summer vacations. Yoga instructors are provided with training on a continuous basis. Several famous saints have dropped by at the ashram from time to time and turned it into a shrine of sorts. Discourses are given regularly on the Vedas, Upanishads, the Bhagavad Gita and the Ramayan. Seven national yoga conferences have been held here until now which have been graced by numerous yoga aficionados. The conferences were inaugurated by Paramahansa Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati, the able disciple and heir of Paramahansa Satyananda Saraswati.

The ultimate objective of yoga is introspection. I and my associates have always been busy in bringing about a balance among the physical, psychological and the subconscious states of a person to help him get the most out of life. I am extremely grateful to Janaki Babu since he gave me the opportunity to live in Bhubaneswar to serve the people and to help them get the most out of their lives.

## Tibetan Hospital in Bhubaneswar

Dr. Nowang Dorje ♦

**M***en-Tsee-Khang. Men, in Tibetan, means medicine, Tsee means astrology and Khang means society. So the three words put together means Tibetan Medical and Astrological Institute. The hospital functioning under this name for more than two decades in Unit 1 of Bhubaneswar is well known in Odisha. There are about 50 branches of this organization founded by His Holiness the Dalai Lama in the entire country. But at the time of opening a branch of the organization at Bhubaneswar about 25 years ago, there was only one branch in the whole of eastern India, at Kolkata. This second branch at Bhubaneswar was opened on 18 January 1988.*

There is a story behind the establishment of this branch in Bhubaneswar.

---

♦ Dr. Nowang Dorje is a physician, Tibetan Medical and Astrological Institute, Odisha Branch

It is well known that many Tibetan refugees have been rehabilitated in the Chandragiri Valley of Ganjam district. A few representatives of these refugees had once met Janaki Ballav Patnaik when he was the Chief Minister of Odisha. They had informed the Chief Minister that there was a scarcity of water in the area they lived in. Among these refugees there were many good farmers who made a living out of farming when they were in Tibet.

Many people also know that many lamas and common people had left Tibet and settled in India when the Dalai Lama fled Tibet in 1959 to live in this country. India has the glorious tradition of accepting strangers into its fold. As such, thousands of Tibetan refugees had been rehabilitated in different places in India during the times of Pandit Nehru. Tibet is a plateau located at a high altitude and the Tibetans seek similar climate whenever they settle elsewhere. This had been considered while rehabilitating the Tibetan refugees and thereby, they had been provided refuge in Dharmashala in Himachal Pradesh, the headquarters of the Dalai Lama and in different places in Karnataka and Odisha.

The Dalai Lama is the leader and spiritual guide of the Tibetans in the spheres of both administration and religion. Therefore, he visits Tibetan settlements in India at intervals to enquire after the welfare of the refugees. So when the Tibetan representatives had gone to meet the Chief Minister, they had also informed him about the impending visit of the Dalai Lama to Chandragiri. The Central Government too wrote a letter to the Government of Odisha a few days later that the Dalai Lama would be visiting Odisha and that he should be treated as a state guest. The state government was also directed to make security arrangements for him. The Dalai Lama stayed at the Raj Bhavan as a state guest.

Chief Minister Janaki Ballav Patnaik had discussed the cultural relations between India and Tibet with the Dalai Lama in the Raj Bhavan at the time. He had also told him about the relationship of Indrabhuti, a Buddhist King of Odisha, with Tibet. The Dalai Lama had then acknowledged before the Chief Minister that Tibet was indebted to India in the spheres of language, religion and culture. Puspagiri Vihar is mentioned in the Tibetan religious tradition and the Dalai Lama had said that it could be the Puspagiri of Odisha.

In the course of discussion during that visit, the Chief Minister had requested the Dalai Lama to open a Tibetan hospital in Odisha. He had promised to provide suitable housing without any consideration for the hospital. His Holiness the Dalai Lama had immediately agreed with the proposal of the Chief Minister and informed him that until then they had only one such hospital in eastern India, in Kolkata.

The Dalai Lama had taken immediate steps in this regard. The Chief Minister had also honoured his promise and provided a large government house without any consideration in Unit 1 of Bhubaneswar. And thus, the *Men-Tsee-Khang* or the Tibetan Medical and Astrological Institute was started on 18 January 1988 at Bhubaneswar. The hospital has been functioning since then in Quarter No. VIC-1/2 in Unit 1 of Bhubaneswar. This government quarter had been allotted to the Phun Cho Kling Tibetan Settlement of Chandragiri in Odisha. This had been done through the representative of the Home Department of His Holiness the Dalai Lama. The Chief Minister's objective was to provide all kinds of medical facilities to the inhabitants of Bhubaneswar. In this regard, he had encouraged allopathic, homoeopathic and ayurvedic treatment and was also eager to provide for treatment through yoga and Tibetan medicines. *Men-Tsee-Khang* was the realization of this desire of the Chief Minister.

*Men-Tsee-Khang* is a charitable, educational and cultural organization. Its headquarters are located in Dharmashala in Himachal Pradesh and it is registered under the Societies Act. As of now it has 51 branches all over India. One doctor, one dispenser-cum-cashier and a class IV employee have been appointed in the Bhubaneswar branch by the organization's headquarters in Dharmashala. People from different areas of Odisha come here for medical treatment. It is estimated that about 2,400 patients are treated here every year on an average, of which about 99 per cent are Indian. People come here chiefly for the treatment of diabetes, gastric, asthma, skin diseases, high blood pressure, rheumatism, piles and spondylitis, though a few gynaecological cases are also treated. Poor and handicapped patients are provided with free treatment and medicines.

*Men-Hla* is the god of all medicines according to the Tibetan scriptures. There is a picture of *Men-Hla* in the *Men-Tsee-Khang* and it is only after offering prayers to Him that patients are treated according to the Tibetan ayurvedic method. Many patients have been successfully treated here. *Men-Tsee-Khang*, which was established in Odisha at the request of Chief Minister Janaki Ballav Patnaik and with the blessings of the Dalai Lama, has been serving the people of Odisha for the past 25 years.

\* \* \*

## Greening Odisha

Saroj Pattnaik ♦

**I**t all started in a winter night at Ganjam, in January 1982, where I was posted as Divisional Forest Officer (DFO) of Ghumsur South Division with headquarters at Bhanjanagar. I was informed by the Collector from Chhatrapur over phone that a wild tusker is on a rampage there and is damaging crops and when resisted, is breaking houses. Of course, he had not attacked or injured any person. The Collector wanted to get orders for his elimination. I requested him not to harm the animal and organize police force to keep the people away from him till I reach. When I reached Chhatrapur, I found that the animal was a very calm one and did no harm other than consuming cultivated crop as he had no food in the degraded forest where he lived. I decided to drive him away and did succeed too. But he came back again. That was when I decided to

---

♦ Saroj Pattnaik is a former Chief Conservator, Forest

ask Saroj Raj Choudhury, the first and legendary Field Director, Similipal Tiger Project, to tranquilize him because he had the required drugs and equipments. At my request he agreed to come but cautioned me that it is not the tranquilization but it's aftermath that will be critical. I agreed to take the risk and the responsibility. Finally the wild tusker, who was later named *Agasti* after the name of the village where he was first captured, could be caught but only after he had made two escapes. He was then trained with the help of trainers from Assam as we had none in Odisha and was then taken to Nandan Kanan. The rest, about the first ever chemical immobilization and his capture, is history in records.

After this incident, I received a call from the then Secretary, Forests, Som, to come to Bhubaneswar and meet him. When I did, I was told to come to Nandan Kanan as Wildlife Conservation Officer. The post of Director was not yet created till then. When I told him that I do not know anything about managing a zoo, he showed me a copy of the *Hombill*, published by the Bombay Natural History Society, in which the story of *Agasti's Capture* was published. The story was written by Choudhury. The Chief Minister, J.B. Patnaik, had written on the margin of the magazine alongside the story, "Where is this officer? Why not get him to Nandan Kanan?" This thought came from a Chief Minister whom I had never seen except in newspaper photographs. Nevertheless, my involvement with wildlife started, as the Wildlife Conservation Officer, Odisha. I was also assigned to look after the wildlife of the State besides Nandan Kanan. A number of incidents did take place during my eventful assignment but it is difficult to narrate all of them in this short article. I shall mention only a few of them.

## Chandaka Elephant Reserve

Situated on the outskirts of Bhubaneswar, though Chandaka still had more than 50 elephants, it had hardly any edible vegetation to sustain them. The entire forest was full of Eupatorium, a weed. Hence, a few elephants got killed or people got trampled every year. The Chief Minister took a decision to make it an Elephant Reserve though the term 'Elephant Reserve' was not in vogue till then and Project Elephant had not yet been formed. Neither did the union government fund the expensive venture to protect this sanctuary through trenches, nor did the State Government have deep pockets those days. In spite of such difficulties, the Chief Minister had supported the project out of State funds and I have seen the delight in his eyes when he went and saw the regeneration of bamboo thickets and Sal trees due to protection. Later on, Sheshan, Secretary, Environment & Forest, who once vehemently opposed funding the project, was so happy to see the regenerated vegetation and the end of man-elephant conflict that he released central assistance immediately on his return.

Once, as the Chief Minister was returning from one of his several visits to Chandaka, he saw Bharatpur with its badly hacked teak plantation. He apprehended that this will also be engulfed by the growing capital city in no time and asked for a remedy. I suggested that this should be notified as a sanctuary and should be made to form a part of Chandaka Elephant Reserve. He agreed to this and what followed is for everyone to see. Today, these added one hundred and ninety odd square kilometers are the green lungs of Bhubaneswar and Kataka and this part of the sanctuary is a major source of ground water which is increasingly and indiscriminately being tapped through deep bore wells. This portion of the sanctuary is being



protected despite all efforts from different quarters to use it for expanding the city. This patch of the forest, perhaps the only one of its kind, so close to a capital city, not only ameliorates the worsening climate of the city but it also helps minimize atmospheric pollution caused due to excessive emission from vehicles and some industries.

### **Expansion of Wildlife Wing**

The Chief Minister used to like clearing his pending file work in the Forest Rest House at Nandan Kanan. Being a very approachable political person, he had hardly any time in the Secretariat to clear important matters which needed undivided personal attention. He usually came to Nandan Kanan with his officers in the afternoon and continued till he was through with the last file. We, from the wildlife wing, often complained that we are no match for other states like Madhya Pradesh which had better organization, man power or mobility. During one such complaint he had said, "Yes, I want to see a sanctuary of Madhya Pradesh. Which one should I see, as I have already seen Kanha?" I spontaneously suggested Bandhavgarh, thinking that he won't be able to make a programme considering his busy schedule. But one fine morning his Principal Secretary telephoned and told me that the Chief Minister has made his programme to Bandhavgarh where he will reach from Gujarat and I should accompany him. I was happy that the Chief Minister had kept his promise but politely told Mr. Mishra, the Principal Secretary, that I would not be able to accompany the Chief Minister but should reach Bandhavgarh ahead of him, to tie up with the local officers. He agreed. Accordingly, the Chief Wildlife Warden (CWLW), Sibaram Mohapatra and I proceeded and reached one day ahead of the Chief Minister.

The CWLW of Madhya Pradesh had already reached and we had located a family of tigers that morning not far away from the Forest Rest House (FRH).

Amidst the heat of May, J.B. Patnaik landed at Madhya Pradesh by State helicopter around 11.00 a.m. with a Minister of Madhya Pradesh. We met him in the make-shift helipad not far from the FRH and requested him to straightway proceed to the forest. He did not waste any time and rode an elephant. I noticed the satisfaction in his eyes when he saw the mother tiger and her three cubs lying in the perennial, meandering stream to cool themselves in the unbearably hot sun. The evening rounds were yet more enjoyable with cheetal, sambar, nilgai, barking deer, pea fowl and other animals in their hundreds in the meadow. His question to us was: "What should we do to see this spectacle in Odisha?" We told him to hear out Mr. Saxena, the CWLW of Madhya Pradesh, who gave a detailed account of their wildlife organization, facilities, budget and other related issues and also screened a movie. The Chief Minister asked us to prepare a project report and meet him on our return. The project was already prepared. He took an early morning drive through the forest the next day and had the opportunity of seeing a tiger on a sambar kill. Soon after, he returned to Bhubaneswar. We too returned but through service flight via Khajuraho and by the time we reached Bhubaneswar, the Forest Secretary was frantically searching for us. Though this was not provided in the budget for the year, four wildlife divisions were created immediately but with much reduced staff strength which was to be augmented in the next year.

This period saw the notification of two national parks and 12 sanctuaries in Odisha. These sanctuaries, along with eight others notified in the State, have become green jewels in

the forest crown of Odisha, little affected by human pressure which is otherwise exerted on other forest areas.

### **Compassionate Grant**

I remember the day Padarbinda Mohapatra, the then Chief Conservator of Forest (CCF), telephoned me in a very concerned voice, about field forest staff being attacked and killed by timber mafia. And when they use their guns in self defense while performing their duties, they are hounded by the police. Now, they are hiding for fear of arrest. At that same instant, I had received a message that the Chief Minister would be visiting Nandan Kanan in the evening. I requested the CCF to take this opportunity to apprise the Chief Minister of the happenings. He reached Nandan Kanan and explained the situation to the Chief Minister and said that the forest staff is now reluctant to face smugglers and to use fire arms supplied to them. After a patient hearing, he advised his Principal Secretary to immediately announce that the next of kin of forest staff killed in action shall be paid a compassionate grant of Rs. 50,000 (this was around 1983). This was announced over radio even before the Chief Minister returned to Bhubaneswar and government orders followed.

### **City Plantation**

Bhubaneswar City is mainly spread out over a laterite belt with very shallow soil depth and hardly had any avenue plantation or cluster plantation. The Chief Minister was very keen that large scale plantation of indigenous species should be taken up. Those days, small patches of plantations were taken up by different agencies but very little care was taken for

their protection. Then one day I suddenly received a call from the Chief Minister's Secretariat office informing me that he would like to visit the city plantation in an hour's time and I am required to follow him as there were only two field forest officers stationed at the State capital. I, in turn, informed the Chief Wildlife Warden, U.N. Sarangi and we both reached the Chief Minister's residence to find him ready to move, though we did not raise any plantation nor maintained any, except at the avenue to Nandan Kanan. We told him so. But he said that as we were forest officers he wanted to know from us what is to be done for raising plantations in the State. He visited several places, starting from Rasulgarh and apprised himself of the ground situation. Thereafter, he called for a meeting of the concerned departments and asked them to not only take up plantations in an accelerated pace but ensure their care for five years and provide protection even to the established trees. After this, large scale plantations were taken up in the State in a more systematic manner.

### **Protection of Marine Turtles**

Odisha boasts of the three largest rookeries of the Olive Ridley turtle in the world. In those days, only one of them called *Ekakula nasi* was known for mass nesting. Several lakhs of turtles used to visit the long coastal stretch at the mouth of the Pathsala River on the eastern edge of the Bhitarkanika Wildlife sanctuary. They nest at night and for a maximum spell of seven days. The approach to that site was a very difficult one and yet, when the Chief Minister heard of a nesting, he cancelled his entire programme and proceeded to Ekakula, taking the long and arduous journey. Moreover, since there was no place to spend the night close to the nesting beach, he remained awake

almost the entire night to watch the phenomenon and came to a makeshift leaf hut only for a brief while, for stretching out. He was very concerned about the fact that this stretch of the beach was gradually getting shortened due to tidal inundation. He therefore wanted different experts to suggest ways to restore the beach artificially and thereafter, to protect the same and prevent death due to trawl nets. Of course, this restoration was not possible and ultimately the long tip of the narrow beach separating the sea from the river mouth got detached and fragmented into three small islands. Every time he met senior officers of the Forest Department, he discussed ways to device measures to save the beach. Of course, later on, two new rookeries were established at the mouths of the rivers Rushikulya and Devi. For protecting this species, the Gahirmatha Marine Sanctuary was notified and in two other smaller rookeries, fishing was prohibited under the Marine Fishing Regulation Act.

J.B. Patnaik had great love for the mangrove forests of Bhitarkanika and he frequently asked senior officers about its status as these forests faced severe anthropogenic pressures, being located in a thickly populated coastal area of Odisha. He would do anything to save these mangrove forests.

### **Lion Safari at Nandan Kanan**

Though by 1981 Nandan Kanan had already distinguished itself due to various achievements, there was lot of demand from the people for a safari. We had the required land and animals but to raise more than rupees twenty lakh for a safari out of its meager forest budget was very difficult for the State Government. But the Chief Minister too wanted that a safari be set up. However, we got the required assistance from the

India Tourism Development Corporation (ITDC) due to the influence and insistence of J.B. Patnaik, as he was earlier Union Minister of Tourism. After I joined at Nandan Kanan in 1983, he wanted to know from me when the safari would be complete and ready to be opened to visitors. He wanted it fast. Though I had no experience of creating a safari, the encouragement I got from him forced me to avail of whatever resources was at my command to complete it fast. I stayed at Nandan Kanan and went to see the progress more than once every day and sort out problems faced by the workers. Towards the end of December, he fixed 20 January 1984 as the date of inauguration of the safari. We worked vigorously to complete the project with an artificial cave made of ferro-cement as the entrance. This gate was the first of its kind in Odisha and was admired by Rajiv Gandhi who inaugurated the safari.

### **White Tiger Safari**

Buoyed by the success of the lion safari, he asked if a safari for white tigers too is possible because by then the zoo had acquired the distinction of having the largest number of white tigers. When it was explained that tigers, unlike lions, are a solitary animal and cannot live in the company of other tigers if they are not already living together right from the beginning, he wanted a safari to be established within Nandan Kanan. After the funding was ensured, the construction started. It was to be the first such safari anywhere in the world. This safari, which was opened later and covered an interesting landscape, has become quite an attraction for visitors.

## **Black Bucks of Balukhand**

The Konark-Balukhand Sanctuary was notified mainly to protect a coastal population of black bucks. But most people had seen only cheetals (spotted deer) there and it was doubtful whether there were any black bucks there. I too had seen the sanctuary thoroughly but never once saw a black buck. Of course, the sanctuary was not under my supervision. One evening around 5 p.m. a call came from the Chief Minister's office informing me that he was proceeding to Konark and shall stay there for the night and would like to see black bucks next morning. Also, that the Chief Minister expected me there. I had no clue as to what to do. I went to the DFO, Sidheswar Mohanty, who was at that time suffering from asthma. On hearing about the Chief Minister's visit, despite his ill health, he took some medicines and started with me, asking me on the way, "Where can we see black bucks?" Though I had not seen black bucks anywhere in Balukhand, I thought the best bait would be an open place about one kilometre to the south of Chandrabhaga where there is a large clearing surrounded by thick casurina. I zeroed in on the site because black bucks live in open areas with no overhead shade and this place also provided the much needed cover from people and had enough succulent grass to be nibbled by black bucks as they are fine feeders.

The Chief Minister, along with his entourage, reached Konark Inspection Bungalow (IB) around eleven at night and asked me when to start in the morning. I said, "Sir, we should start at four in the morning." When he asked why, I told him that the number of black bucks is small and with increasing human activity, as the day progresses, they may move away. The next morning, by the time I came out of my room, I saw the Chief Minister ready to move and pacing up and down the

corridor of the IB. We proceeded to the spot, left our vehicles at a distance and walked about 500 meters into the meadow, leaving most people following the Chief Minister on the road. And amazingly, we saw them! Ah! What a sight that was! They stood still and stopped their foraging and looked up with their gaze fixed on us. We stopped under the tree cover without entering the clearing lest we disturb them. We saw the movement of a few more in the next clearing. The bucks were particularly very attractive with their black coat against white under-bellies shining in the early morning sunlight. "What a sight indeed!" The Chief Minister and everyone in the group exclaimed, overwhelmed with delight. He wanted that all reserved areas in the State and wild animals must be protected at any cost.

### **Banning Commercial Tree Felling**

Though working inside forests in most parts of the country, including Odisha, was being carried out as per the working plan prescriptions of sustained annual yield, it is the illicit removals which upset this balance, rendering stretches of forests devoid of tree growth. This fact disturbed the Chief Minister so much that he banned all commercial felling through contractors or the Odisha Forest Cooperation in a few divisions to start with and later extended the ban to all divisions, suspending the working plan prescriptions. However, giving in to very conservative feelings, this ban was lifted in later years. Thanks to his foresight, today Odisha boasts of more than 30 per cent of its geographical area under forest cover of different densities.



## **Ekamra Kanan**

The growth of the State capital had its impact on the forest growth of the area. Most of the forest cover had been lost to roads and buildings and with it, many species of trees and shrubs that thrived there had vanished. This was a matter of concern for all those who loved nature. I do not know how the Chief Minister became concerned but he went ahead with the setting up of an institute to save the flora of the State from extinction and enlisted the services of a few experts in the field to set up the Regional Plant Resource Centre on the outskirts of Bhubaneswar. This Center has not only helped to conserve many species including mangroves but also has an excellent nursery, a very large collection of cacti and a research laboratory with facility for tissue culture. Its water body and lawns provide recreation to people, attract migratory water birds and serve to organize annual flower shows. It has the potential to convert generations of people who will come there into conservationists.

## **Akhanda Shikar**

Though Similipal Tiger Reserve, the crown of the State's forests, boasts of rich floral and faunal diversity, very few animals are seen during visits there, except in the core area. This is primarily because of a ritual tribal hunt called the *Akhand Shikar* which takes place every year. During this hunt, thousands of tribals used to congregate and mount a hunting expedition with mostly traditional weapons like bows, arrows, axes and the like, killing whatever they came across on their way. The hunting continued for days together. Everyone was concerned about this tradition and its impact on wildlife. The Chief Minister

too was concerned about the huge loss of animals and the fire that was set to the forests in the process of the hunt, destroying vegetation. He issued instructions to the State police and the district administration to conduct joint operations to stop this ritual with deployment of adequate force. This process has been successfully prevented due to his intervention. The ritual no longer takes place like it used to earlier but in a much reduced scale and in a surreptitious manner, on different days. But the major damage has been prevented.

## Chilika

The Chilika Lake was another natural site he was passionately in love with. Lots of contradictory stories used to do the rounds regarding different aspects of the Chilika and he wanted to know for himself what the problems faced by Chilika were and wished to take remedial steps. So once he suddenly made a programme and in order to have a full day at the lake, started from Barbara Forest Rest House inside the forest at five in the morning to reach Barakul exactly at 6 a.m. Then started a full day's journey by boat across the Chilika from West to East, passing through Kalijai, Nalaban, Parikud ghat and Brahmapura before moving on to Satapada, asking questions relating to birds, their names in Odia, from where they came, fishing noise, salinity of the lake-water, vegetation, tourism, problem of local people, prawn gheri, coastal plantation and various other aspects, seeking a solution for all of these. He never looked tired throughout the journey and tried to find solutions to every problem these aspects posed before him.

## Joint Forest Management

While on one hand illicit removal of forest, both by timber smugglers and local people, was ruining our rich tropical forests, on the other hand there were examples in the State where people voluntarily protected patches of forest with excellent results. The Social Forestry Project in the State, assisted by the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA), also had been able to create awareness and many village woodlots were raised and given excellent protection by the village communities. This convinced the Chief Minister that unless the people's support is enlisted, the meager forest staff cannot protect the rich forests of the State. Thus evolved the first ever Joint Forest Management Resolution of the country in 1988. This was issued even before the Government of India came up with such a resolution. Of course, this resolution has undergone several changes over time and with experience.

Despite so much responsibility to be shouldered as the head of the State, J.B. Patnaik was always concerned about conservation of nature and natural resources, including forest and wildlife. He always had encouraging words for all those who did excellent work towards conservation and this attitude propelled people to give their best for the purpose. The threats to our environment can be substantially minimized if such steps are continued to protect the forests and wildlife of our country.

\* \* \*

## On the Road to Environment Protection

Prof. Radhamohan ♦

**E**nvironment, among other issues, topped Chief Minister J.B. Patnaik's agenda, once he assumed office in Odisha in 1980. Decisive steps were taken for the protection of the environment. One of the most significant steps taken towards this end was the creation of the Department of Science, Technology and Environment (DSTE) in December 1982. The department was divided into two wings. The first, 'Environment and Ecology', was to deal with issues pertaining to the environment and the ecology, and the second wing, Environmental Awareness, was to create awareness towards the environment.

---

♦ Prof. Radhamohan is an eminent Environmentalist and former Information Commissioner, Odisha

## Activities Under These Two Wings

1. The first and a major activity of the Environment and Ecology Wing was the creation of the State Pollution Prevention and Control Board in the year 1983 under the Chairmanship of Dr. Mahendra Kumar Rout, the well known scientist. The Board was vested with the power to issue NOC to industries, to undertake and study Environment Impact Assessment reports, monitor air and water quality, decide the standard and impose penal measures on erring industries.

Since the State was poised to undertake massive industrialization programmes, the creation of the Board was a necessary step to keep the environment clean and ensure sustainable development.

2. The establishment of the Regional Plant Resource Centre (RPRC), popularly known as Ekamra Kanan, in an area of approximately 450 acres at Bhubaneswar, was another important achievement of the Department. The primary objectives of this Centre were the collection and conservation of exotic, rare and threatened species of plants and the standardization of their propagation techniques, undertaking research to analyze the nutritive value of various plant species, ethno-botanical studies of major tribes, creation of public awareness on plants, and of course, provide recreational facilities.

Ably guided by Dr. Premananda Das and supported by the Government, the Centre has acquired much fame and glory which have gone beyond the boundaries of the State and the country. It has attracted wide attention and admiration.

The Centre was the first in the State to standardize banana tissue culture and today it has the distinction of maintaining the largest collection of cacti and other succulent plants. Besides, it has a rich collection of 32 species of bamboo including the black bamboo and the gigantic bamboo. By now the Centre's herbarium has 10,500 specimens.

3. The Prakruti Mitra and the Prakruti Bandhu Awards were initiated in the eighties with a view to recognizing and encouraging villages, institutions and individuals for protecting and promoting the environment of the State. The Prakruti Mitra Award, for institutions, carried an amount of Rs. 5,000 and a citation and the Prakruti Bandhu Award, for individuals, carried an amount of Rs. 1,000 along with a citation. For every district there was an award in each category. Normally, these awards were presented annually on the World Environment Day, that is, on 5 June, at a state level function.
4. The support of NGOs, voluntary agencies and village level groups were garnered as another major activity of the two wings. A massive public awareness campaign on environment protection and forest conservation was organized throughout the State through the provision of financial support, seminars, workshops, *padayatras*, cultural activities, street dramas, posters, slogans, debates, poster and painting competitions, rallies, film shows and other possible activity towards mass propaganda. People's representatives, doctors, engineers, teachers, farmers, writers, poets, students, tribal leaders, NGOs, Yatra groups and Mahila Samiti members, NSS volunteers, Nehru Yuvak Kendras and many more associations were involved in this programme.

The outcome was that some of the most widely known environment movements like the Balco, Gandhamardan and the Chilika have their origin in these activities.

5. During the eighties, all districts were requested to form District Level Environment Societies to identify environmental problems affecting the respective districts, create public awareness and suggest and undertake conservation measures and community initiatives to protect forests.
6. Under activities relating to Wildlife, the two Wings took on programmes under two categories.

### **(A) Sanctuaries**

Before 1980, Odisha had only five sanctuaries. They are Bhitarkanika (1975), Satkosia (1976), Hadagarh (1978), Nandankanan (1979) and Similipal (1979). But in 1981 alone, two more sanctuaries were established, one at Baisipalli, then in Puri, and now in the Nayagarh district, adjacent to the Satkosia Gorge Sanctuary and the second at Kotagarh, then in Phulabani and now in the Kandhamal district. In the following year, in 1982, one more sanctuary was established in the Sambalpur district.

Two years later, in 1984, two more sanctuaries were added. These are Balukhand-Konark in the district of Puri and Kuldiha in the district of Balasore, which is linked with the Similipal National Park.

During the next year, in 1985, two more sanctuaries were added. They are the Debrigarh Sanctuary, then in Sambalpur but now in the Bargarh district and the Lakhari Sanctuary, then in Ganjam and now in the Gajapati district.

Thus, while in all the previous years only five sanctuaries were created, in the first five years beginning 1980, seven sanctuaries were set up.

During the year 1987, two more sanctuaries came up, one at Badrama in the district of Sambalpur and the other at Nalaban, inside the Chilika lagoon. Two more sanctuaries were added in the following year, in 1988. They are the Chandaka-Dampada in the districts of Khordha and Kataka and the Sunabeda, then in Kalahandi and now in the Nuapada district. The Chandaka-Dampada Sanctuary was the first elephant sanctuary of the country.

## **B) National Parks**

Odisha has, until now, two National Parks and both of them were established in the year 1988. Although Bhitarkanika was declared a sanctuary in the year 1975, it was notified as a National Park on 16 September 1988, with an area of 145 Sq. Km.

Similarly, Similipal was notified as a sanctuary on 3 December 1979 but it was notified as a National Park on 6 August 1980 with 330 sq km in the first stage and on 11 June 1986, an additional 515 sq.km was added in the second stage, bringing the total area of the park to 845 sq km. But if the sanctuary area too is included then the total area comes to 2200 sq. km.

Only five sanctuaries were notified before 1980 and just one, Karlapat, in 1992. But between 1980 and 1990, 11 sanctuaries were established and yet another one, Gahirmatha, was established in 1997. Thus, out of the 18 sanctuaries in Odisha, 12 were established while J.B. Patnaik was the Chief Minister. Only one sanctuary has come up when he was not in



the helm. Both the National Parks were also established during 1985-90 when Patnaik was Chief Minister.

Due to Patnaik's personal interest, Nandan Kanan became a national show piece and facilities like Lion and Tiger Safaris were introduced.

Besides this, between 1980 and 1990, the Kadamba was declared the State tree, the Ashoka, the State flower, the Sambar was declared the State animal and the Blue Jay or the Bhada Bhadalia, the State bird. Mini deer parks were established at Kuanria, Kapilash and the Berhampur University Campus.

The second and the most spectacular result came from the awareness programmes in the shape of an unprecedented mass enthusiasm and initiative in protecting forests. Thousands of villagers came forward to protect forests in their neighbourhood without even asking the Government to provide funds.

Recognizing this effort, in the year 1988, Odisha became the first state in the country to confer rights on those villages which were protecting forests. That declaration, despite the Forest Department's opposition, actually motivated villagers to come forward in large numbers to re-green their degraded forests. The villagers have developed their own ways of forest protection and management as a result of which a set of Community Forest Management (CFM) practices emerged in the State. Today, close to 10,000 villages are protecting the forests because of the foundation laid in the year 1988.

## **Social Forestry**

In the year 1984, with support from the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA), a social forestry programme was launched to create village woodlots in village common grounds and fallow lands, primarily to meet the fire wood and small timber needs of the communities.

## House Committee on Environment

With encouragement from the State Government, a House Committee on Environment was formed to have a close look at environmental issues affecting the State and to monitor activities of regulatory bodies like the State Pollution Control Board.

## The OREDA and the ORSAC

Two more autonomous institutions, the Odisha Renewable Energy Development Agency (OREDA) and the Odisha Remote Sensing Application Centre (ORSAC) were created in 1984. Although they were clubbed under the Science and Technology wing of the DSTE, their functions were essentially helpful for environment protection. OREDA promoted firewood conservation measures like improved *chulhas*, biogas plants, wind energy generators, solar lighting, heating and cooking devices to reduce pressure on conventional energy produced mostly by burning coal and wood.

Similarly, the ORSAC, using satellite imagery, helped in projecting a correct picture of our natural resources like forests, soil, water and minerals, enabling us to adopt a more judicious and national use of these natural resources.

## Planetarium

To promote awareness about the celestial environment and its relation with the terrestrial environment, Odisha's first Planetarium was constructed and completed by 1989 and was opened for the public in January 1990. Named after the legendary Pathani Samata, it is still the only one of its kind in Odisha.

## **Life Science Institute**

To promote research and studies on life sciences, a Life Science Institute, one among very few in the country at that time, was established in the year 1989. The Government of India has now taken it over and it has grown as a premier centre of excellence in the country.

## **Chilika Development Authority (CDA)**

The CDA came into formal existence in the year 1992 but all preliminary measures were taken well before that. Two regional workshops, one at Balugaon and the other at Satapada, were organized during 1987-88 to get people's views on the causes of Chilika's slow death and measures necessary to revive the health of the lagoon. A national workshop was also organized where prominent scientists working on water bodies and coastal dynamics participated. Both the regional and the national workshops helped prepare a road map for Chilika's revival.

Between 1995 and 2000, the CDA received larger attention and the Chilika's slow decline has been reversed and its health has been restored.

## **The NORAD Project and Odisha Environment Project, 1992**

Although formally launched in the year 1992, all the ground work was done in the late eighties for a collaborative environment project with the help of the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD). Between 1995 and 2000, both the projects were strengthened.

## Ekamrakanan: An Island Paradise

Dr. Premanand Das ♦

**J**anaki Ballav Patnaik wanted to set up a grand park in Bhubaneswar like the Buddha Memorial Park, the Nehru Garden or Delhi's Lodhi Gardens. So on 27 July 1982, he chaired a meeting in his secretariat chamber on the aesthetic development of the capital city of Odisha and expressed his wish to utilize the 137 acres of land earmarked for the establishment of mango germplasm and to create recreational amenities for the people of Bhubaneswar in particular and of Odisha in general.

He wanted to develop large water bodies in the natural drainage system through the harvesting of rain water. The purpose of these water bodies would be to moderate the climate of the city, provide facilities for water sports and boating and soften the harshness of the dry city which was built mostly on laterite and red soils and also to provide raw water to develop

---

♦ Dr. Premanand Das is a well-known Botanist and Director, Ekamrakanan

plantations, green belts and gardens in the city. After the meeting, he visited the site proposed for the establishment of the natural garden near Nayapalli. During discussions, he approved of the use of the adjacent fallow and vacant land which had better physical features such as undulations and which not only looked interesting but was also better suited for a garden with a natural look. Then he visited various other sites and asked the expert team headed by me to submit a report for necessary action by the General Administration Department of the State Government. He entrusted his secretary, Sudhansu Bhusan Mishra, who took personal interest in the matter, to take the project forward.

A detailed report was prepared after a thorough survey of the area by the Soil Conservation Department under the leadership of B. Das, Soil Conservation Officer, Kataka. The Chief Minister wanted to bring me, on deputation, to the newly formed Department of Science, Technology and Environment, Government of Odisha, to oversee and guide the establishment of the garden, then known as the Ekamrakanan Plant Resource Centre. The Soil Conservation Department was entrusted with the task of undertaking a detailed soil survey of the 487 acre plot of land, prepare a soil map, reclaim the area and provide a boundary wall as a deposit work.

A formal project proposal was submitted to the Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEF) to support the establishment of the Ekamrakanan Plant Resource Centre, Bhubaneswar, because it was the function of the MoEF to support different activities in the form of research and development projects on conservation, documentation and utilization of plant resources. Initially conceived as a garden for recreational purpose, the Ekamrakanan, today, is recognized as a centre of excellence for biodiversity conservation and research, subsequently named

as the Regional Plant Resource Centre, Bhubaneswar. To save time, a cattle feed godown with asbestos roof was improvised to initiate the research and developmental activities. Subsequently, several laboratories with sophisticated instruments and facilities were developed in an area of about a hundred thousand square feet. Gardens were developed taking into consideration the existing features and the terrain. Three thousand species and varieties of plants including trees, shrubs, herbs, climbers, cacti and other succulents, orchids, chrysanthemums, dahlias, roses and medicinal plants were introduced from various parts of the world through germplasm exchange programmes by arrangements with the Royal Botanic Garden, Kew and the National Bureau of Plant Genetic Resources, Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR), Government of India. The Regional Plant Resource Centre has gained the distinction of having established the largest collection of palm and bamboo at a single place and the largest collection of cacti and succulents in Asia. Its rose garden, spread over 20 acres and having 913 varieties, was considered the largest in the country. Its cacti collection is so interesting and attractive that visitors to the site remain awe-struck.

Janey Coal of the US Information Service, American Centre, Kolkata, was very impressed by the visit to the Regional Plant Resource Centre. She commented, "Fascinating and educative, a miracle of ingenuity and creativity. I think that I shall never see a poem as lovely as a tree... or a cactus." After visiting the Centre, Oscar Fernandes, Member of Parliament and also Member, Standing Council on Science and Technology, Government of India, had said: "I am fascinated by the work being carried out at the Centre." Dr. Gulnara Ismagulova, Institute of Molecular Biology and Biochemistry, Kazak Academy of Sciences, after visiting the Regional Plant Resource Centre

wished, “May be new kaktus (cacti) will have Kazak name!” Similarly, Michael Fagg, a connoisseur of cactus, commented, “It is a unique and unbelievable experience to have loved cacti for 30 years and then to suddenly discover new varieties with new shapes and colour! It is indeed overwhelming!”

The rose garden, with its riot of colours and beauty, attracted a large number of visitors from within the State and outside. It was frequently shown by the electronic media all over the country.

Many distinguished scientists, academicians and representatives from other nations and eminent personalities visited the Plant Resource Centre and appreciated its development. Prof. John M. Poehlman from the University of Missouri, USA, wrote, “You have started a very ambitious yet useful programme.” And from the University of Maryland, USA, Prof. Jogesh C. Pati, Professor of Physics, commented, “The Regional Plant Resource Centre seems to have an impressive beginning in research and landscaping. Away from the city, its location high on the hills with a beautiful rural environment is ideal for starting a research institute of national and international calibre.” Virendra Prakash, Advisor, Planning Commission, Government of India, had said in appreciation of the development, “This is a very well conceived and inspirationally managed Centre. It can make tremendous contributions to our country’s ambitious programme of GREENING INDIA.” Prof. M.K. Rout, eminent scientist and former Vice Chancellor of the Utkal University had written, “What I saw at the Plant Resource Centre was not only much beyond my expectation but also beyond my conception. Just to say that it is superb and wonderful will be an inadequate description.” Pannalal Dasgupta, a well known Gandhian, had visited the Regional Plant Resource Centre with Masanobu

Fukuoka, the natural farmer from Japan. Interpreting the views of Fukuoka, Dasgupta had written, "I wish the re-plantation of our barren and wastelands and naked hills begin from here." Professor B. Mishra, well known economist and Deputy Chairman of the State Planning Board, appreciated the development and remarked, "I have come here many times and every time I come, I go back inspired...I hope the Centre will be a Centre of Excellence and spread its light to other areas as well." Vasant Sathe, former minister, Government of India, commented, "I first want to thank and congratulate J.B. Patnaik, Chief Minister of Odisha, for his vision in the setting up of the Botanical Research Centre so near the capital and that too, on a waste land which has now already become a rich botanical garden with beautiful varieties of exotic species. I am more excited about the potential the place has for both research and its applications. I am told by the Chief of this institute, Dr. Das, that there is great potential for the export of some rare varieties of cacti and other plants. The government should invest liberally in this project which is beneficial for environment and ecology."

Prof. K.L. Chadha, Deputy Director General (Horticulture) of the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR), New Delhi, had commented, "I have visited almost every research institution in the country but there is none which fascinates me more than the Regional Plant Resource Centre, for its work on ornamental crops and trees. The Centre has done outstanding work on several crops. The work on cacti and succulents is unique and virtually unparallel. The work on oil yielding crops, medicinal plants and timber trees is very valuable. Dr. Das is a very dedicated worker and the State of Odisha should consider itself fortunate in having such a knowledgeable and practical scientist at the helm of affairs of



the Centre. I hope the State realizes his potentials and exploit it to the fullest.”

Yet again, Gero Wahlstrom, Director, Norwegian Development Agency, Oslo, Norway, was also full of appreciation on seeing the kind of work being done at the Regional Plant Resource Centre. He had commented, “It needs dedicated and enthusiastic people to achieve so much within less than 10 years. I particularly appreciated the emphasis you placed on the relevance of your research for the needs of the common people. And your cacti are just marvellous.” P. Chidambaram, being deeply impressed by the excellent research work done at the Regional Plant Resource Centre on cactus and banana, wished this Centre to be developed into one of the foremost botanical centres and bio-reserves of the country. Eliahu Bejalal, Managing Director, Plant and Flowers Nurseries Ltd., Israel, had said after a visit to the Centre, “Beautiful and excellent work, a pearl in the heart of the wilderness. The tissue culture being done here is the future of the development of agriculture and has to be immediately enhanced.”

Right from the selection of the location to its full development into a botanical garden and research centre, the Chief Minister took a personal interest in the Regional Plant Resource Centre and he kept visiting the Centre from time to time to motivate us with encouragement and inspiration. Moreover, because he was himself the Chairman of the Centre, there was the least bureaucratic hurdle in its functioning. It is heartening to note that successive Chief Ministers of Odisha followed his example.

For its outstanding contributions, the Regional Plant Resource Centre has been recognized by eight universities in different states of the country, including Odisha, Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh, as a centre for

doctoral studies. About 35 scholars were awarded PhD. degree by the above universities. A large number of students were also mentored here during their post graduate studies. Moreover, a large number of training programmes were also conducted to make people aware of the need for plant biodiversity conservation and its sustainable use.

Under the umbrella of the Regional Plant Resource Centre, research and development activities on the conservation of mangroves in Odisha, biomass production and re-establishment of self sustaining vegetation on mine wastes, particularly coal, manganese, iron, lead, aluminum and chromites, were strengthened. The Sanghagara sub-centre, spreading over 1200 acres and showcasing more than 550 plant species, is a unique endeavour of the Regional Plant Resource Centre towards the conservation of our green wealth.

Extensive facilities were also created to standardize tissue culture techniques, particularly on banana, sugarcane, rare and endangered medicinal plants, forest species and plants of economic importance. In Odisha, cultivation of banana through tissue culture was pioneered by the Centre. The Centre was recognized for its extensive research work on mangroves and bamboo, woody plants for biomass production, restoration of ecology in mined areas and conservation of plant bio-diversity. The Regional Plant Resource Centre was declared a centre of excellence by the Ministry of Environment and Forests, the Department of Biotechnology, the Ministry of Science and Technology as well as the Indian Council of Agricultural Research, Government of India. While the Centre has established links for higher education with the University of Liverpool, U.K., in the realms of mine reclamation, re-vegetation and restoration of ecology under disturbed mining environment, with the Royal Botanic Garden, Kew, it has established higher educational links in the areas of plant

biodiversity conservation and research. Almost all the scientists working at the Centre were trained abroad with the support of the British Council Division, Kolkata.

Contributions made at the Regional Plant Resource Centre have been recognized by major scientific academies, by honouring the scientists with the Academies' fellowships and medals for their outstanding contributions to science. The Odisha Bigyan Academy, the highest scientific body of Odisha, has conferred the Samanta Chandrasekhar Award to many scientists of the Centre in recognition of their contributions to the State.

The Regional Plant Resource Centre at Bhubaneswar boasts of being the largest botanic garden and research institute of India. A highly degraded waste land, converted into a virtual dense forest, is now able to support an enviable variety of flora and fauna. Thousands of migratory birds visit the lake during the winter months, giving an impression of the Chilka lake in Bhubaneswar. The lake at the Regional Plant Resource Centre is probably the only lake in Bhubaneswar with unpolluted water which has been harnessed and maintained to improve the ecology for plant and animal life, besides replenishing ground water. The Regional Plant Resource Centre is the mother of all plant nurseries in the State. Prior to the establishment of this Centre, plants were procured from other states for gardening. But now it is heartening to note that people from other states are coming to buy plants from Odisha. With the development of the unique water body and the dense vegetation comprising diverse plant species and wild life, the Centre can virtually be called the *Lungs of Bhubaneswar*.

One man's vision is now a beautiful creation, a *Paradise on an Island*, standing with pride in the capital of Odisha, a paradise which has been dedicated to the service of the State and the country.

## Odisha on the Defence Map of India

Vice Admiral S.H. Sarma ♦

**J**anaki Ballav Patnaik was indeed a man with a mission. And, defence projects, too, did not escape his attention. Several large scale defence projects were initiated and completed in Odisha during the tenure of J.B. Patnaik as the Minister of State for Defence. Among them, the most prominent one was the Naval Boys Training Establishment, on the shores of Lake Chilka. The establishment was commissioned as INS CHILKA.

At that time, I was appointed as the Commandant of the National Defence College, New Delhi, one equivalent to the British Royal College of Defence Studies. Hitherto, Boys' training was conducted at Vishakapatnam, the head quarters of the Eastern Naval Command. However, the operational commitments of this base tended to hamper the training

---

♦ S.H. Sarma, PVSM (Retd.) is a former Vice Admiral

needs. As such, search was on in Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and all over India for a suitable alternative training base, but not in Odisha. Odisha was ruled out owing to the large expanse of water by way of the Chilka Lake and because it was adjacent to the East Coast railway tracks. Odisha's proximity to the important East Coast base was also another reason why Odisha was not considered as an alternative training base.

The expressed objection to this base was apparently the effect the naval establishment would have on the special migratory birds that visited Chilka every winter. The noise of the base, the noise from the small arms firing range and such other drill sessions and their consequent noise would discourage the birds from visiting Chilka.

Nevertheless, I suggested to the Minister that he prevail upon the Prime Minister, Indira Gandhi, to spend a few days at Barkul bungalow to see for herself if the apprehensions were well founded. I pointed out that the small arms firing range was several miles away, too far to effect the influx of birds. Because even the frequency of trains on the adjacent railway tracks has increased tenfold, though never influencing the bird movement.

I was glad that Patnaik was able to prevail upon the Prime Minister who ultimately agreed to consider setting up the Boys' Training Establishment to be located at Chilka.

Today, INS CHILKA is a centre with thriving naval activity, giving new recruits of the navy basic training before they are selected and branched off to the different departments like the executive, the engineering, the electrical, the logistics and so on. Then the sailors are sent to different training establishments to complete the remaining part of the initial training in their

specializations. The Commanding Officer of INS CHILKA is the Naval Officer in charge, Odisha. There is also a naval hospital in the base, INS NIVARINI, which is of a fairly good capacity.

I came to understand from a report that since the functioning of the training base as INS CHILKA, it has produced about 70,000 sailors and it is today an institute of the entire nation churning out brave sailors donning the gallant uniform of the Indian Navy. The sailors of INS CHILKA did great service to the affected people after the devastating super-cyclone hit the State in 1999.

On the whole, there are more than three thousand naval personnel at the base. This naturally has a spiraling effect on the prosperity of the area.

Besides the establishment of INS CHILKA, the other naval establishment in the State was the Naval Armament Depot near Koraput. There is an armament depot for every naval base in the country and that is generally located in the State where the naval base is situated. But Patnaik was able to prevail upon the Indian Navy to establish this armament depot near Koraput for the naval base of Vishakhapatnam. This depot too has given employment to a large number of people of the State.

Gopalpur was a sleeping village by the sea with nothing much by way of attraction. And far away in Maharashtra, in Deoli, the Indian Army had an Anti-Missile Training Centre which, in course of time, had outgrown its utility and the Ministry of Defence was in search of a new location for it elsewhere. It was again through the efforts of J.B. Patnaik, the then Minister of State for Defence, that the village of Gopalpur was selected for the purpose. For a long time, there was a demand for an army cantonment in Odisha. And now this demand was fulfilled, with the Training Centre at Gopalpur. On 30 October 1984, during Indira Gandhi's last visit to Odisha, she inaugurated

this Centre in the presence of J.B. Patnaik who was by then the Chief Minister of Odisha. Before Patnaik became a Minister of Defence, Odisha had not received its due share of recruitment in the Army. And once again, it was through his efforts that the situation changed and now, enrolment of Odia boys to the Indian Army has increased considerably.

The last but not the least was the establishment of the Ordnance Factory at Saintala, during his tenure as Chief Minister. Indira Gandhi had laid its foundation in 1984.

Thus, Odisha, which was until then not on the defence map of India, came alive as an area of multiple defence activities and Patnaik had no mean contribution in this regard.

\* \* \*

## Ushering in a New & Vibrant Odisha

Basant Das ♦

**D**ecades of political instability in post-Independent India had kept Odisha from enjoying the fruits of development. As such, when the Congress came to power in 1980, Odisha was struggling with a host of problems. In fact, many of Biju Patnaik's dreams could not materialize only because of the shaky nature of the governments in the State.

Then on 9 June 1980, Janaki Ballav Patnaik led the Congress back to power in Odisha and he himself was sworn in as the Chief Minister. J.B., as he was popularly referred to, was well aware of the plethora of problems he and his government had to contend with. But he also had an agenda for turning around the State's fortunes, an agenda he was determined to implement.

---

♦ Basant Das is a Journalist and Columnist



Pragmatic and progressive, J.B. knew that industrial growth had failed to take off in the State and realized the need to break the vice-like grip of the red tape to kick-start the process of industrialization. He meticulously drew up a brand new industrial policy for the State, stressing on a single-window system to facilitate easy processing of industrial projects.

While establishing major projects like the Nalco and the Paradip Phosphates, J.B. also foresaw the emergence of information technology as the face of new India. He was instrumental in ensuring the setting up of the Software Technology Park at Bhubaneswar.

J.B. fully understood the importance of small and medium enterprises as well as ancillary and downstream industrial units for the State to witness an industrial renaissance. He floated the slogan *Hazaare Koti Tankare Hazaare Dinare Hazaare Shilpa*, which translates into *a thousand industries in a thousand days at a thousand crore rupees*. This caught the imagination of entrepreneurs and soon, industrial hubs sprung up across the State. And industry received a much-needed fillip after a long period of neglect.

J.B. made relentless efforts to improve the road and rail infrastructure within the State and was primarily responsible for putting Bhubaneswar on the map of the nation's airways. Linking blocks with district headquarters and the latter to the State capital through a network of roads went a long way in the effective administration of the State at the grassroots level.

The power sector also received special attention under J.B.'s rule. J.B. engineered a dramatic reversal in the otherwise perennially power deficit scenario of the State through a series of visionary steps. While the Upper Kolab, IB Valley and the Rengali hydro power projects increased the State's generation capacity, thermal power projects turned Odisha into a power

surplus State. At the same time, he initiated a slew of measures to improve irrigation facilities and combat floods.

The poor and the neglected were always close to J.B.'s heart. He authored several schemes in a bid to ensure equitable distribution of resources and include backward areas in the mainstream of development. J.B.'s brainchild, The Economic Rehabilitation of Rural Poor (ERRP) programme, was vastly successful and created employment and income-generation opportunities for many families in the rural areas. Besides a host of poverty amelioration schemes, his government also paid special attention to the tribal and the Scheduled Caste population. Protection of forest rights of tribals apart from providing them access to health care and primary education topped J.B.'s agenda for the poor and the underprivileged.

Primary education was indeed a focus area during J.B.'s regime. He came up with the ingenious idea of introducing mid-day meals in schools to curb the high drop-out rate at the primary stage. It was a master stroke and is evidenced by the fall in the drop-out rates as well as the marked improvement in the State's literacy over the years.

A great votary of Odia language and culture, apart from being one of the greatest scholars the State has ever produced, J.B. made the use of Odia mandatory for all official purposes. He was convinced that unless officials were well-versed in the local language, development would not become inclusive. Besides the introduction of Odia typing machines, he saw to it that senior officials and Heads of Departments used Odia for all official communication and correspondence. Any deviation from the practice attracted severe reprimand from the then Chief Minister.

The astute politician that he was, J.B. recognized the need for an effective working relationship between the Centre

and the states. In fact, many of the development schemes and major investments came to Odisha during his reign owing to his warm vibes with the Central leadership and of course, due to his persuasive skills. It is apparent that Odisha has suffered whenever the State leadership has been at loggerheads with the Centre. J.B.'s firm leadership and his sagacity brought about a huge change in Odisha's fortunes, thereby ushering Odisha into a new and vibrant state.

\* \* \*

## Reminiscence of a Bureaucrat

Gian Chand ♦

**W**hile I was working as Secretary to the North Eastern Council and was posted in Shillong, J.B. Patnaik, Chief Minister of Odisha, asked me to take over as the Chief Secretary of the State. As I was not the senior most officer in the Odisha cadre at that time and because there were a few IAS officers senior to me serving in Odisha, I, while thanking the Chief Minister for the offer, suggested that he may like to consider appointing one of the officers senior to me to this topmost position in the State. The Chief Minister, however, told me that he had duly considered this aspect prior to selecting me. He further told me that had I not left Delhi and had I been working as Secretary to the Government of India, he would not have liked to disturb me. But now that I had left Delhi and was based in Shillong, he felt that I could as well be

---

♦ Gian Chand is former Chief Secretary, Government of Odisha

in Bhubaneswar and give the benefit of my experience to the State.

Thereupon, once I agreed, orders appointing me as Chief Secretary as well as Development Commissioner were issued and I set forth on my new assignment, hoping to do the best to serve Odisha and its people.

Thus, exactly 30 years after I had joined as Assistant Commissioner cum Assistant Magistrate in Sambalpur, I joined as Chief Secretary and Development Commissioner on 2 April 1983. I was happy to be back amongst the people I had known and in familiar territory where I had worked in various capacities over a long period and had established good rapport with the people and the surroundings.

I plunged into work soon after joining as Chief Secretary, Odisha. As I believed in leading by example and working as a team, I told the Secretaries of the various departments in the very first meeting I had with them that all of us have to work very hard and follow the motto of honesty, efficiency and anonymity while performing the duties and tasks assigned to us.

I was ably assisted by the Additional Chief Secretary, L.I. Parija, who shared with me the responsibility for the efficient running of some of the departments of the State Government, so as to ensure that the government machinery functions with utmost efficiency and speed. I mainly kept with me all the Development Departments and Departments of General Administration, Home, Vigilance and Planning, to mention a few. The rest of the departments were left under Parija's immediate charge with the provision that I will remain in overall charge of these departments as well and Parija could, whenever required, submit the files for orders of the Ministers through me and I could also call for any file or matter relating to departments under his charge to be submitted to me or through

me for government orders. This arrangement was approved by the Chief Minister and it worked very well and smoothly throughout my tenure as Chief Secretary.

For the smooth functioning of the government as a whole, I started holding weekly meetings with the Secretaries of the various departments. In these meetings we discussed how the various departments were running and sorted out problems and snags, if any, which could be coming in the way of the smooth functioning of any department. Matters requiring inter-departmental consultation were also discussed and resolved.

As the implementation of government programmes and policies is the key to good governance, I undertook hectic touring of the State and visited all the districts to inspect and review development work and to give on the spot instructions to resolve any difficulties faced by the field officers in the implementation of the government programmes. I also kept a record of the tour notes which were sent to the concerned field officers for compliance. The result was that compared with the reports of the other states on the implementation of the Prime Minister's 20 point program, the reports sent from Odisha started getting appreciated at the national level.

I also visited all the major irrigation and power projects under implementation in the State at that time and reviewed the progress of each of the major projects with the Chief Engineer in charge of the project and the Secretary of the concerned department, so that the projects could be completed according to schedule and so that cost over runs were avoided. This gave a good momentum to the work in the projects and ensured their smooth and speedy completion so vital for the economic growth of the State.

I paid due attention to the implementation of the approved five year plan for the State as well as the formulation

of the next five year plan, through periodic reviews. I saw to it that the implementation of the State plan and formulation of the next five year plan proceeded apace and that there were no shortfalls in spending the allocated funds and achieving the targets. The next five year plan was formulated under my care and supervision, of course after deliberations with the Planning Commission and later, with the Vice Chairman of the Planning Commission. In that meeting the Chief Minister too had participated and had approved substantially increased allocation of funds.

I also evinced great interest in the development of forests and fisheries in the State. Periodic reviews of the implementation of the various programmes and projects aimed towards development registered a good deal of progress in both forests and fisheries in the State. Moreover, considering the high potential for further development of forests and fisheries, a number of new schemes and projects were formulated and included in the next five year plan.

I also paid special attention to the development of agriculture in the State. Besides ensuring smooth and speedy completion of major irrigation projects, I also took great interest in the development of minor irrigation, lift irrigation and water shed management schemes which were directly in the interest of small and marginal farmers.

To tone up the general administration, I reviewed the policy of transfer of officers and found that, by and large, officers at various levels were being transferred too frequently and in some cases, arbitrarily, without following any norms. This practice was not at all in the interest of good administration. After a thorough review of the existing practices, I drafted fresh guidelines, under which specific norms for transfer of officers at different levels in various departments were laid

down and the power of transferring officers at the said levels was vested in official committees instead of being arbitrarily done by the departments. This was done with the approval of the Chief Minister and the problem of frequent and arbitrary transfer was brought under control, which in turn, toned up the administration.

I had found the Chief Minister, J.B. Patnaik, to be highly progressive and forward looking. At his own level, he used to review the progress of all the major projects under implementation. Besides keeping a watchful eye on the major projects under implementation, he was ever keen to discuss and formulate schemes and projects for the all round development of the State. He had come to the conclusion that in the resource rich State of Odisha, the key to development lay in the construction and strengthening of the infrastructures relating to roads, railways, electricity, irrigation and the likes, as well as in the arrangement of funds for taking up of various projects for the further development of the State. As a result, we had numerous discussions with the Ministers of various departments of the Government of India, the Planning Commission and also some Financial Institutions. This led to the sanctioning of a few big projects for mineral and industrial development and for augmentation of power supply and irrigation facilities in the State and substantial increase in allocation of funds for the next five year plan for the State.

Another major concern of the Chief Minister was the alleviation of poverty in the State and the development and improvement in the living conditions of the scheduled castes and the scheduled tribes. Besides the Central Government's scheme for the alleviation of poverty, the Chief Minister had formulated a parallel scheme for the alleviation of poverty of those people who were below the poverty line. This scheme was



being implemented with funds from the State's own resources. The welfare of the people of the State was also close to his heart. Whenever the State suffered from floods and drought, he would personally see to it that administration of relief and rehabilitation of the people affected by these natural calamities were done quickly and adequately.

The holistic and innovative approach of the Chief Minister towards the welfare of the people and also towards the all round development of the State is evident from the setting up of the Odisha Milk Federation and the Odisha Oilseed Growers Cooperative Federation (Oil Odisha). J.B. Patnaik established these two organizations at this own initiative with the help of Dr. Kurien, the renowned developer of the cooperative movement and dairy industry in the country. Both the organizations did remarkably well in their respective fields and helped in boosting diary development and development of oil seeds in the State, besides strengthening the cooperative movement in the State.

As regards crime, law and order in the State, all these aspects remained under control throughout my tenure except for some disturbances in Paradeep where the situation was marred by complaints of police excesses and the disturbance at Bhubaneswar where the situation was marred by mob violence for one night. Both the situations were properly handled and were promptly brought under control.

Here I must make mention of the visit of Indira Gandhi, the then Prime Minister of India, to the State in the last week of October 1984. Besides addressing the public on the grounds opposite the Secretariat and on the lawns of the State Museum, she also reviewed the implementation of the 20 point programme in the State. However, instead of holding a meeting with all the concerned officers for reviewing the implementation of the programme, she had desired that this time she would meet the

Chief Secretary and Secretaries of the concerned departments individually and discuss the programmes on a one to one basis with them.

I was the first to meet her for the review. She was very polite to me when I met her. At the outset she told me that she will not discuss politics of the State with me and wanted me to instead brief her on how the administration in the State was being run and how the state was developing besides the implementation of the 20 point programme. I gave her an overview of how the administration was running and also how the State was progressing in every sphere during the recent years and apprised her that the implementation of the 20 point programme was proceeding very well in the State. She seemed to be satisfied and after a few personal questions about me and my children, she asked me to send in the next officer for discussion.

She flew back to New Delhi on the morning of 31 October but most unfortunately, soon after reaching her residence when she came out to go to her office, she was assassinated by her own bodyguard. Thereby an era in the history of the country came to an end.

I demitted office as Chief Secretary and Development Commissioner on 31 December 1985 and handed over charge to Parija who was appointed as Chief Secretary and Development Commissioner. All in all, it was very satisfying and fulfilling to work as Chief Secretary and Development Commissioner, with day to day administration being mainly left to be run by me with the help of officers and staff of the various departments of the State while the Chief Minister and his Council of Ministers confined themselves to policy formulation and approval of programmes, schemes and projects for the development of the State and the welfare of the people. Thus, the bureaucrats were

given the opportunity to oversee the implementation of these schemes and programmes as well as to create an ideal condition for the smooth rendering of the civil services.

Today I recall with satisfaction my days as a bureaucrat under the leadership of J.B. Patnaik.

\* \* \*

## Governance & Development In the Eighties

Nilmadhab Mohanty ♦

Perhaps the only philosophy one needs to follow in life is—“I’ll do my best!” And I have reasons to say so. From December 1986 to November 1989, I had the opportunity to work as the Secretary to the Chief Minister J.B. Patnaik. This position gave me an excellent overview of the State’s administration and brought me face to face with the problems of governance, development and policy-making in our backward but developing State.

Chief Minister Patnaik is a man of erudition and learning and his leadership was marked, among other things, by an intellectual vigour which is rare among today’s politicians in the country. Besides, he was his own man and led the government upfront without any external power centre orchestrating or

---

♦ Nilmadhab Mohanty, IAS (retd.), former Secretary to the Government of India, Ministry of Industry, and Managing Director, United Nations Industrial Development Organization, UNIDO, Vienna, Austria

influencing government decisions and action. This had its reflection in the role that the Chief Minister's office played in bringing about coordination among the various government departments and agencies.

In governance, the cabinet form of government with the collective responsibility of the ministers was fully in operation in Odisha. The Chief Minister was the undisputed leader but the other ministers had full autonomy and power to run their respective departments and agencies. They would come to the Chief Minister for guidance and advice and also for decisions where these were required under the rules of business but there was rarely any undue interference in their work or decision-making. The Chief Minister's office also followed this principle in its interaction with the relevant departments and agencies at the operational levels.

There was both explicit and implicit understanding in the administration that maintenance of public order throughout the State was of paramount importance for good governance and also for undertaking development works. Protection of life and property of the people was given high priority. In order to ensure this, the law and order authorities, especially in the districts, were given support, assistance and full freedom to discharge the responsibilities assigned to them under the law. Again, there was no undue interference or back-seat driving from the Chief Minister's office. This approach ensured that during the eighties, Odisha maintained a peaceful political and social climate compared to the general trend towards disorder and violence in the rest of eastern India.

The Chief Minister, his Council of Ministers, and also the senior officials, both at the headquarters and in the districts, were easily accessible to the people. This ensured that the

genuine grievances and difficulties were taken care of by the administration at the relevant levels.

For a backward State like Odisha, economic and social development is of paramount importance for improving the living standards of the people and reducing poverty. And the J.B. Patnaik government had just that required vision which determined the contours of government policies and action-programmes towards development.

Low irrigation and a rice-dominated cropping pattern are the unique features of agriculture in Odisha. Poor water management, resulting in low consumption of fertilizers and inadequate infrastructure severely constrained productivity in irrigated agriculture. So in order to alleviate these problems and improve the situation, development policies and programmes were designed under the Chief Minister's guidance and leadership. There were regular review-meetings and analysis at the level of the Chief Minister to monitor the implementations of the major multi-purpose river projects. These included the Indravati project in the Kalahandi district, the Rengali project in the Dhenkanal-Sambalpur districts and also the Upper Kolab project in the Koraput district. Additionally, other medium and minor irrigation projects were also reviewed regularly with a view to increasing the irrigation potential in the State. Chief Minister Patnaik would go into details and meticulously review various aspects of project implementations. No doubt these projects had long gestation periods, yet, at the end 1991-92, Odisha's gross irrigated area had gone up to 25,29,000 hectares, which was 25.8 per cent of the cropped area, as compared to 20,06,000 hectares, which was 22.9 per cent of the cropped area in 1981-82<sup>1</sup>. Also, there was an improvement in the cropping

---

1 Source: Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy (CMIE), 'India's Agricultural Sector,' September 1995.

pattern in the sense that by 1990-91, paddy accounted for 45.90 per cent of the gross cropped area compared to 66.72 per cent in 1970-71<sup>2</sup>. Consequently, the share of pulses, oil seeds and other crops had increased during this period.

In terms of economic prospect, too, many people depending on agriculture with predominantly small and fragmented holdings and low productivity made the condition of the people of Odisha bleak. This is one of the major causes of poverty in the State. Therefore, the government's strategy and policies were aimed at diversifying its economic base and redeploying work-force from low-productivity farm jobs to more productive non-farm occupations in industries and services.

In the absence of large urban centres and product markets, the State had to depend on its mineral, forest and marine resources to promote large investment projects which, it was hoped, would inevitably result in the growth of small industries and service enterprises to meet the requirements of the larger ones. Apart from setting up and expanding industries through public sector undertakings, determined efforts were made through the State's industrial promotion agencies to attract large private sector companies to set up industries in the State.

The relative success of these efforts may be gauged from the fact that while the share of industries in the state's gross domestic product (GDP) in 1980-81 was only 19.5 per cent, by 1990-91 this share had risen by 7.2 per cent to come up to 26.7 per cent, during just one decade<sup>3</sup>.

In the tertiary sector, the tourism and hotel industry was given a strong boost. A number of modern hotels and

---

2 Source: Nabakrushna Choudhury Centre for Development Studies, Bhubaneswar, 'Orissa Economy- a Database', December 2000

3 Source: National Accounts Statistics quoted in UNIDO (United Nations Industrial Development Organization)

restaurants were established in Bhubaneswar and other major towns, with financial assistance from the industrial promotion and financing agencies.

These policy measures had a very positive impact on the growth and structure of Odisha's economy during the 1980's. The State's GDP at 1999-2000 prices rose from Rs. 21,447 crores in 1980-81 to Rs. 33,234 crores in 1989-90. The per capita income, though still less than the national average, climbed to Rs. 10,813 in 1989-90 from Rs. 8,204 in 1980-81<sup>4</sup>. The average rate of SDP growth during the decade (1980-81 to 1990-91) was 5 per cent per annum, compared to 4 per cent for both the neighbouring states of Madhya Pradesh and Andhra Pradesh and the all India figure of 5.6 per cent during the same period. It is interesting to note that the rate of SDP growth in Odisha fell to 3.8 per cent during the subsequent period (1990-91 to 1997-98)<sup>5</sup>. Also the sectoral composition of the SDP changed, indicating a diversification of the State's economy. During the eighties, the share of agriculture and allied activities began to drop in Odisha. From 1980-81 to 1990-91, the share of agriculture and allied activities fell sharply from 50.2 per cent to 35.8 per cent, a level at which it remained throughout the nineties. The share of the secondary sector, which includes manufacturing, rose from 19.5 per cent in 1980-81 to 26.7 per cent in 1990-91. Similarly, the share of the tertiary sector, which included services, also rose from 30.3 per cent to 37.3 per cent during 1993-94<sup>6</sup>.

---

4 Source: EPW Research Foundation, Domestic Product of States of India, 1960-61 to 2006-07, Mumbai 2009.

5 Source: National Accounts Statistics as quoted in UNIDO, 'Industrial Policy Resolution 2001 of the State of Orissa, Vol-II', Vienna, June 2001.

6 *Ibid*



The economic growth in the eighties had its impact on the incidence of poverty in Odisha. The percentage of population below the poverty line was 65.29 in 1983-84 but it fell to 55.58 in 1987-88 and further to 48.56 in 1993-94<sup>7</sup>. The largest reduction in the number of poor people took place particularly between 1983 and 1987, with figures showing a fall from 180 lakh to 161 lakh of poor people, while the absolute number of poor had risen to reach 179 lakh in 2004-05<sup>8</sup>.

Apart from economic and social development, Chief Minister Patnaik, himself a renowned writer in Odia, was deeply interested in developing and promoting Odisha's rich cultural heritage comprising its art forms, crafts, heritage sites and pilgrimage centres. The Odissi Research Centre and other cultural institutions were given active support and assistance and scholars were encouraged to research on Odisha's ancient maritime links with the countries in South-East Asia.

The J.B. Patnaik government also gave considerable importance to maintaining the State's environmental integrity, preserving its forests and improving the urban environs around Bhubaneswar and other towns. For instance, the Chandaka forest on the outskirts of Bhubaneswar and its elephant sanctuary were protected and developed. A large park named Ekamra Kanan was created on the periphery of the city and the barren parade ground in front of the Odisha secretariat building was converted into a beautiful park which had been dedicated to the memory of the late Prime Minister Indira Gandhi with her statue installed on the spot from where she addressed the last public meeting of her life.

---

7 Source: Government of Odisha (GOO), 'Economic Survey, 2007-08'

8 Source: Manoj Panda, 'Economic Development in Orissa: Growth without Inclusion?' Indira Gandhi Institute of Development Research, Mumbai, November 2008

Thus, a holistic approach for the development of Odisha's economy, culture and environment was the hallmark of the J.B. Patnaik administration in the eighties. The Chief Minister's office as well as the other organs of the State administration provided full support in the execution of relevant policies and programmes.

Finally, some reflections on the role of the Secretary to the Chief Minister may be appropriate at this point. The Chief Minister has access to advice from a variety of sources, both political and bureaucratic. However, the position of the Secretary to the Chief Minister, as head of his immediate executive office and closest civil service adviser, gives the incumbent some special responsibilities and obligations. How he discharges these responsibilities have implications on the State's administration.

The first issue is the nature and quality of advice that the Secretary to the Chief Minister provides him with. There is a perception in many quarters that Indian political leaders surround themselves with *yes men* who tailor their advice according to the wishes and anticipations of the political bosses. However, if the Secretary to the Chief Minister too falls into this category of advisers, it would be most unfortunate. Instead, he needs to display independence of mind and provide his advice on various issues frankly and fearlessly, at times even articulating viewpoints different from those of the Chief Minister. This would enable the Chief Minister to weigh various options, both political and administrative and take decisions accordingly in the interest of good governance.

Secondly, the Chief Minister's office has a close interface with State politics and political leaders. It is tempting sometimes for the Secretary to the Chief Minister to develop political affiliations, to get involved in controversies and to

take sides, particularly if he has long-term political ambitions. This amounts to unprofessional behaviour in a civil servant and should be avoided at any cost.

Lastly, there is the issue of fairness. The Chief Minister's office is the highest decision making body in the state government and in cases involving state government employees, it is the highest court of appeal in the executive. Given his senior position and proximity to the Chief Minister, the Secretary to the Chief Minister may sometimes be tempted to become arbitrary, arrogant and vindictive and may even be tempted to patronize groups and favour individuals in the state administration. This again is an unethical and unprofessional behaviour which will have an adverse effect on the morale of the civil servants and will be harmful to the state's administration. It is thereby obligatory on the part of the Secretary to the Chief Minister to be scrupulously fair in his dealings with various interest groups and parties, even if it displeases friends and colleagues and to draw the attention of the Chief Minister if something unfair is being done.

It was these principles which I tried to follow during my assignment in the Chief Minister's office. Whether I succeeded or not only my colleagues and the people affected by the decisions can say. At this point of time, however, I can only claim that *I tried my best* and when faced with partial success or partial failure during my years as Secretary to the Chief Minister of Odisha, Janaki Ballav Patnaik, I was able to say, *I did my best*.

This is exactly the reason why I had said that the only philosophy one needs to follow to go through life is, *I'll do my best!*

## Janaki Babu: Leader of the House & Leader of the Opposition

Narasingha Mishra ♦

I stepped into the Odisha Legislative Assembly in March 1990. At that time, Janaki Ballav Patnaik was neither the Chief Minister nor did he occupy any other position of power. But I had been associated with him prior to 1990 when he was the Chief Minister. In 1995, he again became the Chief Minister and in 1997, when Biju Babu went to the Parliament, I became the leader of the Janata Party. So I got an opportunity to see him from close quarters and got to know him well between the years 1995 and 2000.

I noticed that there were many leaders in the Assembly but there was no one as knowledgeable, intelligent, experienced and witty as Janaki Ballav Patnaik. Let alone be compared to him, at the time, there was not a single leader in the Assembly

---

♦ Narasingha Mishra is a Member of the Law Commission of India and former Law Minister, Odisha

who could even come close to him in these qualities. In fact, he was incomparable.

One day, I noticed another admirable aspect in Janaki Babu's personality. It was his quality of endurance. He always gave a decent reply even to biting criticism. He responded to all allegations candidly and never used harsh words while replying to scathing criticism.

During the sessions of the Legislative Assembly from 1995 to 2000, perhaps it was I who used the harshest of language to criticize him. And despite those scathing criticisms, he replied to all my allegations. He, in return, never used a single harsh word. Today, I feel that every member of the Assembly should learn from him how to reply to every comment or allegation in polished language and style and end all criticism.

Another thing that I noticed was that he not only used decent words in his replies but his answers were heart-touching as well. He always remained unperturbed and maintained his composure when someone commented, complained or criticized. I have never seen him disturbed on any matter, any day.

As the chief of the ruling party or the Chief Minister, Janaki Ballav Patnaik possessed another important quality. He always strived to take the opposition party into confidence. One instance is the whirlwind that occurred in the district of Balasor. That whirlwind created an immense havoc. At that time, he invited all the leaders of the opposition parties to visit the ravaged area. However, many did not accompany him but I did. Under the rules of democracy, it is always important to take the opposition party into confidence. The opposition party should never be ignored. As the Chief Minister, not only did Janaki Babu have great faith in this principle, but he followed it

literally as well. In later years, I have never noticed this quality in any other Chief Minister.

When Janaki Babu was the Chief Minister, he not only gave logical answers to all comments, allegations and criticisms of the opposition party but he considered those seriously as well. He accepted many logical demands of the opposition. When I was the leader of the Opposition, I started discussions regarding the Home Department in every session of the Assembly and he replied to those as the Chief Minister. There are many instances of him accepting the proposals of the opposition. One such instance is related to the Police Department. It has always been the duty of the police to maintain law and order and to investigate into cases. However, I gave a proposal to separate these two duties and my argument supporting the proposal was that it would facilitate to punish the accused and people would get justice. Another instance pertains to the appointment of government pleaders. I proposed that government pleaders should be appointed permanently or as permanent cadres after an unbiased examination. He accepted both the proposals and ordered their implementation.

Then there was another issue relating to the prisoners who were undergoing rigorous imprisonment after being convicted. At the time, the remuneration for working in the jail was one rupee a day and I had made a scathing criticism of it. I pointed out that it was an inhuman act on the part of the government to pay a remuneration as low as one rupee a day. This remuneration should be increased from one rupee to ten rupees. Chief Minister Janaki Babu accepted this proposal immediately and regretted that he had not noticed it earlier.

As the Chief Minister, he accepted the demand for setting up of the Western Odisha Development Council and instructed that laws should be formulated for that. However,

I was not fully satisfied with the laws which were formulated under his instructions. But I nevertheless welcomed it as the beginning of an important step.

As Chief Minister, when Janaki Babu had to face scathing criticism on account of the activities of the then Advocate General, he finally supported the demand of the opposition and instructed the Advocate General to resign.

I feel what Janaki Babu dreamt about irrigation facilities throughout Odisha is incomparable. Privatization of electricity distribution in Odisha is another important step which he had taken up. Though I personally do not support privatization, I do not hesitate to admit that at the time, it was regarded as a national trend. Privatization of electricity distribution in Odisha throws light on the farsightedness of Janaki Babu.

The introduction of the mid-day meal scheme in primary schools of Odisha is another feather in Janaki Babu's cap. As a result, the number of drop-outs in primary schools in Odisha declined to a great extent. The scheme was such that even the opposition parties did not get any opportunity to criticize it. Later, as instructed by the Supreme Court, the Central Government too accepted this scheme to be implemented throughout the country.

## **Leader of the Opposition**

Janaki Babu was the leader of the opposition in the Odisha Assembly from 2004 to 2009. I was assigned the duty of the deputy leader of the Congress in the Legislative Assembly. He had then given me the opportunity to table all matters, as the deputy leader, on behalf of the opposition party in the Legislative Assembly. I noticed that while he always strived to take the opposition party into confidence when he was the Chief

Minister, now as the leader of the opposition party he always strived to make the opposition party worthy of being taken into confidence. Every day, before the session of the Assembly commenced, he called the leaders of all the opposition parties to his chamber and taking opinions from them all, presented the decision relating to any matter in the Assembly. He never wanted to impose his opinion or decision on others forcibly.

Another achievement of Janaki Babu as Leader of the Opposition is that he was able to keep all the members of the opposition party together and united till the end.

Whatever subject Janaki Babu discussed or commented upon as the leader of the Opposition in the Legislative Assembly has always been of importance. Of particular importance was the address he delivered about the condition of irrigation, generation of electricity and its supply in the State. It was so data-based and the views expressed were so logical and based on such experience that any one hearing that address would get a complete picture of the development scenario in Odisha. Not only these, but he has expressed significant opinion on many other subjects as well, and if the proposals that he had given were accepted and implemented, our State would improve a lot in these fields.

Finally, Janaki Ballav Patnaik's activities as the Chief Minister and the leader of the opposition in these two decades are worth emulating and remembered in the field of politics.

\* \* \*



## Janaki Babu: The Man & The Chief Minister

Srimoy Kar ♦

**T**he year was 1984. Janaki Ballav Patnaik was the Chief Minister of Odisha and the trend that created a stir in the State in the sphere of journalism was the *Sambad*, a daily newspaper that had just made its foray into the world of print media. And the connect between Janaki Ballav Patnaik and me was such that while he was a veteran in the field of politics, I was an amateur in the field of journalism. While he was a successful Chief Minister, I was the youngest journalist. And it was because of a particular incident that he came to notice me. It so happened that I learnt of a seer who hailed from Kolkata and was staying at the Baishnav temple in Bhubaneswar, fulfilling people's wishes. Attracted by his capabilities and words, many highly qualified men and women visited him. I, however, had my suspicions about him. Soon after, when he was with a

---

♦ Srimoy Kar is Editor, *New Indian Express*, Odisha

woman in an intimate moment, I took a photograph of him. And when I exposed him, he fled Bhubaneswar, afraid of being arrested. When Janaki Babu came to know of this, he sent for me and lavished praise on me for exposing this fraud.

After the assassination of the then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi on 30 October 1984, towards the end of the year, the holding of the general election was announced. The grave duty of campaigning for the Congress fell on Janaki Babu. Setting out in a helicopter, he moved through the length and breadth of the State as he campaigned. As there was less room in the helicopter, only one such journalist was sought who could send both news as well as photographs. And I was lucky when the opportunity came to me. I was young as well as new in the field of journalism and so I readily agreed. But the enthusiasm to visit the whole of Odisha by helicopter with the Chief Minister soon faded when I was bothered by my inexperience and lack of depth in State politics. And yet, the campaign started and I found myself moving around with the Chief Minister.

The experience of those 14-15 days served as a tutorial for me as a journalist. It was a thrilling experience for a young man like me to move around with the Chief Minister. To tell the truth, I have never got an opportunity to gather as much knowledge about villages, people, culture, politics and administration as I did during this journey.

During the election campaigns, he assured the people of a few things. For instance, he assured them of the creation of deep forests in the coastal areas in order to protect the people living in those areas from the ravages of cyclones. He also promised to arrange for fresh water instead of saline water for farming and drinking, which could be possible through creek irrigation projects. Creek irrigation was a new programme for Odisha. He proposed to build barrage doors across small rivers at places

before the river met the ocean. These doors would be opened to allow the flood waters to flow into the ocean during the rainy season and to preserve fresh water by closing these barrage doors during the winters and also during the summers, just after the rains. Arrangements could be made to draw water for irrigation and drinking by lift irrigation through this method. I remember, he had implemented many creek irrigation projects in the State and had taken a major step to create farms in the coastal areas with the help of the Swiss Government. In later times, however, it could not be successful because of a lack of co-operation from the people due to issues relating to land-holdings and ownership documents and land deeds. Consequently, people had to face the ravages of the super-cyclone of 1999.

Many of my misconceived impressions about J.B. Patnaik changed when I saw him from close quarters. His communicating skills choosing the right words, calm and quiet nature, eagerness to know everything and his knowledge had a great impact on me.

Patnaik was a Chief Minister who was a politician with high standards. He was an efficient administrator, a lover of culture and an ardent fan of literature. There is no doubt that he was determined to work for the all round development of the State. Otherwise, it is not possible for any person to play such an important role in the State politics for 40 long years and yet, to keep up his dedication and enthusiasm all along.

It was no mean a feat to perform the duties of a Chief Minister for 14 long years amidst many obstacles and oppositions within a power-centered party like the Congress in which leadership or administrative efficiency is not regarded as the yardstick for choosing an efficient Chief Minister.

He was also a pioneer in encouraging newspapers and journalism because he was himself a journalist at one point

of time. From my personal experience, let me narrate what happened once during his third term as the Chief Minister. At the time, I was working with the *Indian Express* and we needed land for the Bhubaneswar edition of the Newspaper. Accompanied by the Managing Director of the *Indian Express*, I met Janaki Ballav Patnaik and very soon he arranged land for us.

Success brings praise as well as criticism. Many hold the view that Patnaik's enemies and critics became powerful on account of his successive accomplishments and his extreme devotion to some of his followers and co-workers. But his patience, hard work and self-control helped him remain on the top, facing many trials and tribulations at different times.

Patnaik was a scholar and a highly educated man. But at a time when abject poverty could have compelled any highly educated young man to take up a salaried job which provided financial and social security, he stuck to his wish of becoming a social worker which he had wanted to be right from the very beginning. So he embraced journalism as his profession and scaled great heights as the editor of the *Prajatantra* and the *Eastern Times* within a short period. Then his political life commenced.

His failure in politics in the beginning did not perturb him. Rather, it encouraged him to go ahead. He had realized very well that patience is another mantra for success. He had taken his first step towards success in politics in 1971. First he became a Deputy Minister with the Central Government, then Minister of State, then Cabinet Minister and finally, the Chief Minister. His contribution to Odisha as a Central Minister and the Chief Minister is incomparable.

His thinking process was contemporary and far-reaching though he is never prepared to consider himself as a special

person. He had many dreams but he regrets that he could not complete some of the projects that he dreamt of, because of internal problems and instability, inspite of being the Chief Minister of the majority Congress party for three terms. Had there been no instability and repeated change of leadership, he would have done many more things for the State.

Many blame Patnaik for the leadership crisis in the State Congress. It is alleged that he is an expert in placing the stake in the political game of dice and even now he strives not to let go of the leadership of the State Congress from his hand. It is also not true that during the last 40 years the charge of the Party was not assigned to others. Inspite of this, the Congress has not been able to find an alternative to him. It should therefore be judged how far it is logical to blame him for the failure of others to provide leadership.

Often it is found that it is difficult to assess a contemporary person or incident. The same thing goes for Patnaik because he has been associated with the course of political events for a long time and is active till date. So, while assessing his activities, the political aspect of his personality comes to sight before any other aspect. He probably will be suitably evaluated only after he retires from active politics. Only then shall we see the two sides of the same person, Janaki Babu, the man and Janaki Babu, the politician and the Chief Minister.

\* \* \*

## An Era of Inclusive Growth

Prasanna Kumar Mishra ♦

**D**uring a public address at Pattamundai on 19 February 1988, the then Chief Minister, Janaki Ballav Patnaik, had dwelt upon his long cherished dream of making Odisha the best state in India. Odisha, he said, was considered till about 10 years ago, as the most backward state of the country but now its overall progress has been widely acknowledged. Now we are ahead of three states, that too big ones like Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Madhya Pradesh. This, he said, was the assessment of the Planning Commission. This was by no means a mean achievement, he explained to the people.

He also explained why the government was so keen on bringing more and more area under irrigation. Irrigation was the key to agrarian prosperity and without prosperous villages, the

---

♦ Prasanna Kumar Mishra IAS (retd.) is former Secretary, Government of India

State's development would never be possible. He laid stress on the importance of education and more particularly, education of girls. Just as when a bullock cart cannot move when one of its two wheels is damaged, similarly, a society cannot make progress unless both boys and girls receives good education in equal measure. He thus explained why his government had waived the tuition fee for girls at all stages of education, including at the post-graduate level. These initiatives were indeed noble components of his governance and underscored his commitment to inclusive growth.

Worthwhile initiatives in agro-industries included establishment of a number of spinning mills and sugar mills in the State. The State had never witnessed such a bold programme like this before. Here again, the leadership was alive to the need for providing an opportunity to the State's farmers to go in for cash crops like cotton and sugarcane. The strategy succeeded and the farmers derived benefits out of it. Organized milk farming in the State became a reality for the first time with dairy units coming up. Appreciable progress in irrigation was achieved through the modernization of the Mahanadi delta irrigation system, expeditious execution of the Rengali Irrigation works, completion of the Potteru project, substantial progress in the Upper Indravati project and the creation of the irrigation potential in the ayacut of the Subarnarekha River. An innovative approach was adopted through creek irrigation for preventing intrusion of tidal saline water into the creeks which otherwise rendered large cultivable areas unfit for intensive cultivation. Through regulated flow of floodwaters into the sea and by preventing seawater from entering the creeks, a large number of farmers derived immense benefit. Cultivation of potato on the riverbed was another innovation which exhibited the eagerness of the Chief Minister in ensuring more production for the

State's farmers. The completion of the coal-based thermal power station in the IB valley was yet another landmark marking the economic resurgence in the State. Incidentally, after this power station, no other power station has been set up for many years in Odisha.

As a senior official in the State government, when I made my first notes in Odia in a file in the Secretariat in conformity with the government's decision to use Odia in all official correspondence, I had a feeling of being promptly drawn to the people. To my pleasant surprise, I found myself more expressive and witty in my official notes and discussions in the new arrangement. I recollect one interaction with the Chief Minister while I was Secretary, Housing and Urban Development Department. The Chief Minister was on the phone and wanted to have my views on a ticklish issue. The Irrigation Department was doing a major improvement work on an important storm water channel in Kataka which needed to be extended up to the river Kathajodi and in doing so, would have to cross an important city road, known as the Link Road. A bridge on the road was to be constructed. Now the construction of the bridge would have to be taken up either by the Irrigation Department or by the Public Works Department. "Which Department should take up the construction of the bridge?" the Chief Minister asked me. And I had to give my views over phone while the Chief Minister was still holding the line. "Road jahara, bridge tahara", I blurted out, in Odia! He was quick enough to repeat my words, perhaps approvingly, and that settled the issue. Activities of most of the government machinery in Odia demystified the government's working to a large extent and made the government more endearing to the people.



While addressing the senior officials of the State government after assuming the office of the Chief Minister, he called upon all of us to come forward with feasible programmes for the economic rehabilitation of the rural poor. He was quite specific about the people he had in mind and who alone would qualify for the benefits of the scheme. Such people, he clarified, have no material assets. Their only assets were their hands, he said, raising both his hands. “I want a comprehensive programme for such people. They cannot be eligible for bank loans. The State should take the responsibility of their rehabilitation,” he said. A flagship programme of inclusive growth called the Economic Rehabilitation of the Rural Poor (ERRP) was born thereafter. Many community assets were made available on lease to the poorest persons for their economic rehabilitation. Cashew orchards on government land, created as a part of the soil conservation programme, were made available to such people for enjoying the usufruct while these poor people would maintain the trees. Such people who would have usufruct rights would maintain coconut trees on the embankments of canals. Public tanks would be made available for fish farming to the allotted beneficiaries. Small financial help would be given to the poor people to start petty business.

Funds from the National Rural Employment Programme (NREP) were also used to create assets like plantations, tanks and the like, which would be maintained by the poor people and the usufruct enjoyed by them. It was a new era, an era heralding economic empowerment of the most marginalized. Those who believed in equity and social justice welcomed this initiative. Thousands of very poor people derived great benefits through this new programme. The implementation of the 20 Point Programme was also very closely monitored by the Chief Minister. Odisha’s overall performance remained consistently

satisfactory. Special drives were launched to speed up allotment of government land to the landless and house sites to persons without homestead land. The public distribution system was streamlined. Rice at two rupees a kilogram was made available in tribal areas to improve the nutritional standard of the poor people of the region.

I deem it appropriate to cite here the example of two poor persons who derived benefits from the ERRP. This was reported in the special issue of the *Utkal Prasanga* on the occasion of Utkal Divas in 1988. Rajendra Behera and Surendra Nayak of Singada village in Suliapada block of Mayurbhanj district were given a big tank of 1.25 acres in area, on lease for ten years under the ERRP in 1983-84, for pisciculture. Before they acquired this asset, they had an extremely modest living. Rajendra had an annual income of only Rs. 1000 where as Surendra was worse off, with an annual income of Rs.800. But once they started fish farming, they received an income of Rs 1800 in 1983-84, Rs 2560 in 1984-85, Rs 5000 the next year and Rs 8000 in 1986-87. In four years they had a total net earning of Rs 16370 after meeting the cost of fingerlings and they shared the net income equally between themselves. Rajendra built two houses, one 33 feet long and 11 feet wide and the other, 20 feet long and 11 feet wide. He spent around Rs 3000 on the houses. He then bought a pair of bullocks for Rs 1600 and bought a sewing machine as well. Rajendra's son, in addition to his studies, took up tailoring as a vocation and made a savings of Rs 2058 in the post office. Rajendra no longer looked for work to earn his wage. His large family of 12 members is presently a contented one. Surendra invested Rs 3500 out of his income from pisciculture to start a business on sabai rope. Through this, he has been having an income of Rs 2500. He has now bought eight decimals of land for Rs 500 and also has a bicycle. He is cultivating two acres of

land with permission of the owner of the land and keeps a share of the produce. He has a saving of Rs 2528.

However, it is unfortunate that neither the civil society nor the successive governments have kept a vigil on the sustainability of these programmes. Let us see what happened to a few ERRP beneficiaries in one cashew plantation in Khurda district. Details of a report were published in the Odia daily, *The Samaya*, on 1 August 2009. According to the report, each of the 44 poor persons of a few villages of Khurda district including Janla, Mundamuhan, Gopalpur and Harapur was assigned the right to usufruct of cashew plantations over two acres of land in 1983 under the ERRP. Subsequently, the plantations withered away and it is alleged that builders are keen on grabbing these eighty-eight acres of land which is now lying barren. It is further alleged that a few lessees are being induced to part with the land in favour of the builder.

This however is a sad and exceptional case but elsewhere in Khurda and other districts the cashew plantations have immensely benefited the poor families. Thousands of Lanjia Soura families in the Gunupur block of the Rayagada district have utilized the cashew plantations given to them so well that they have now stepped above the poverty line. They are acquiring new land for cashew cultivation and now have residential buildings made of bricks and mortar. They are also giving their children good education and are adopting a middle class life style.

The Dongria Kandhas in the Bisam Kataka block of the Niyamgiri hills have avidly taken to pineapple, orange, lemon and turmeric cultivation and have benefited much from it.

In the Malkangiri district and in Umerkote, Papadahandi and Navarangapur blocks of the Navarangapur district,

cultivation and utilization of sabai grass has helped a large number of poor families to bring in an additional income.

Elsewhere, cashew, coffee and sisal cultivation under the Economic Rehabilitation for the Rural Poor scheme benefited the poor adivasis and substantially added to their income.

Besides this, a vigorous campaign was initiated for giving title deeds of home-stead land to about 300,000 poor people who have so far been living on revenue land and were thus deprived from the benefits of the poverty alleviation schemes.

According to the statistics of the Planning Commission, 67.89 per cent people in Odisha were living below the poverty line in 1977-78. However, in the next decade, because of the implementation of various anti-poverty programmes, this high percentage was reduced to 44.76 per cent. This indeed was no mean achievement.

Inclusive growth is possible only if the political leaders show vision and conviction and do not use populist programmes for political expediency. A leader who is erudite and enlightened, hastens the process of inclusive growth. He shuns flamboyancy, for he is too erudite to be flamboyant. The era of inclusive growth I have described here was the result of such a leadership. Inclusive growth displays righteousness in governance. In such an environment, the governing apparatus weaves a protective ring around the weaker and the marginalized segments of the population and extends a supportive hand to enable the weak to stand up. It protects the weak and the marginalized from the extremist elements and therefore, ensures stability in the society. In the prevailing environment today, one sincerely feels the immediate need for the government of the day is to revisit the issues of inclusive growth. Odisha cannot afford to have a holiday on new irrigation projects, nor can it afford near apathy towards value-addition activities in agriculture. Schools and

colleges should have teachers so that the younger generation does not slide down towards illiteracy. Each house needs to be electrified and each village should have noticeable economic activity. Marginalized people have to be again brought to the centre-stage of the government's attention. We have had enough of distress-induced migration and now this must stop. We have to preserve, nurture and develop our human resources. Our children have a right to smile in their own land and the government of the day needs to show a human face and ensure that the smile appears.

\* \* \*

## Women's Organizations & Empowerment of Women

Jayanti Patnaik ♦

**W**omen constitute around 50 per cent of India's population. And without a doubt, development of women is an extreme need for progress of a country or state.

Masculine and feminine forces are symbiotic. If one remains neglected and sick, society as a whole can become handicapped. Along with it, the country would also lose the potency of half of its human resource.

Mahatma Gandhi had dragged out women from the nondescript corners of their homes to make them participate in the Freedom struggle. He was well aware of the fact that without active cooperation of women, the calls of revolution by him would not attain a totality of character.

---

♦ Jayanti Patnaik is former MP and Chairperson, Women's Commission, India

India became Independent, and with it, the dream of Mahatma Gandhi got materialized. When the Constitution was framed, women got equal rights as that of men. Apart from Constitutional rights, various rules, laws, plans and programmes were formulated for development of women. Yet, after Independence, only some welfare programmes were provided for women. During the sixth five year plan, the Government of India contemplated that the way men are part of the flow of development, women, too, must become part of the highway of growth. So, in the sixth five year plan, a special chapter named 'development and women' was added. After that, special departments for 'women and children' were formed in Central and State governments and budgetary allocations made.

As part of the Union, the states also formulated special plans and programmes keeping women in view. Education, health, social and political progress of women was considered a prime duty of states.

We know a stable government accelerates the momentum of development. It was Odisha's misfortune that it witnessed change in government nine times and imposition of President's rule twice between 1962 and 1980. In 1980, the Congress came to power with full majority. From then on, the foundation for a stable government was laid. A dedicated and stable government was the need of the hour to accelerate development of a underdeveloped state like Odisha. During this period, better concepts and programmes were initiated for development of women.

As we know, the primary need of women is education. Education is the only path to climb the stairs of progress. During British rule, university education had been introduced in the country as per modern education system. During the period between 1875 and 1881, two women from Bombay had applied

to appear for the matriculation examination. But university authorities had not allowed them to sit for the examinations. Later in the twentieth century, Sudhansubala, the daughter of Madhubabu, was not allowed to take up the legal profession although she had studied law.

During 1980, the male literacy rate was 46 per cent and female literacy rate was abysmally low at only 22 per cent. Literacy rate was lower in case of Scheduled Tribe and Scheduled Caste women. During this period, adult education and non-formal education centers were opened up along with formal educational institutions to make education universal. At that time, the 'Literacy Mission' was working for the purpose. During that period, the state government for the first time introduced mid-day meal scheme in primary schools. After Tamil Nadu, Odisha became the next state to introduce mid-day meal programme in schools. Its intention was to increase attendance in schools and check dropout rate through the provision of mid-day meal. By 1997-98, all blocks of the State were included in this mid-day meal programme. Children from 40,687 schools benefited from it. The state government at that time also established 1200 residential schools in tribal areas. Twelve hundred more residential schools of the same nature were added up in tribal pockets in the next phase. These schools had separate facility for boys and girls. Some kanyasharam schools were opened up in tribal areas. Fifteen ashram and kanyasharam schools were elevated to high schools.

There was extra stress laid on secondary education also. The number of girls' high schools in 1980 increased fourfold by the end of that decade. At the beginning of this decade, there were 11 women's colleges in the State. By the end of the eighties, their number also increased almost four times to reach 43. During this period, the state government for the first time made



arrangement for free education for girls from schools to post graduate level. Model career corridors were opened up in ten high schools and 12 women's colleges in tribal areas, through which girl students were provided career counseling regarding different professions. They were opened up during 1998-99. In 1998-99, students' information bureaus were opened in 12 key colleges across the State.

**Health:** Mother and child mortality rate was quite high in Odisha. So, administration of polio drops to infants was started. To provide medical services to more people, especially women, in blocks where there were single PHC, new PHCs were added up for every 40,000 population. These aside, CHCs were also established.

### **Integrated Child Development Scheme**

The Integrated Child Development Scheme, a Central scheme, was operational in only 60 blocks during 1980. Gradually, this scheme was extended to 314 blocks across Odisha during this decade. Simultaneously, this scheme was initiated in urban areas. In towns like Kataka and Bhubaneswar, ICDS program for children was started. Through it, nutritious food was provided to large number of children along with proper care of their health. In these centers, pregnant and neo-mothers were also being provided nutritional food. Several women got employment opportunity due to the ICDS. Apart from it, scope of employment of female ANMs increased and they provided health care to women in rural areas. Pregnant women and mothers of newborn were also provided financial assistance of 300 rupees, which was later enhanced to 500 rupees. Eighty six thousand women were employed only to provide cooked food as mid-day meal to the children.

**Drinking water:** In the eighties, extra emphasis was laid on drinking water supply and several new tube wells were provided to every panchayat and block. Pure drinking water is essential for our body. Along with it, the women who had to walk miles to fetch drinking water also found some succor. Financial assistance was also provided to dig up wells. For the first time, tube wells were provided in schools and colleges. In several schools and colleges, toilet facility was also provided.

To provide employment or to make them able to generate income is a major aspect of women's empowerment. The government of that time gave importance to it. Women can look after their children well and can also teach them. In several developed countries, only female teachers are seen to be teaching in primary schools. Keeping this in mind, the government of the day appointed females as teachers in primary schools on priority basis. Due to this, 5000 female primary school teachers were appointed. Besides, women were appointed in non-formal and adult education centers.

Twentieth century was the age of the electronic industry. This industry also bloomed in the state during this time. At the insistence of the Central government, several women were employed in this industry. There was a proposal of the government to make Bhubaneswar a software city. So, there was scope for employment of large number of women. By that time, Konark Television company had been taken over by the state government. Several women secured jobs in this company. Konark Television sold TV sets in other states. It had market in other states due to its quality. But during the tenure of the next governments, this company got closed down and employment scope of women in this industry got curtailed. It was decided to have ten per cent women during appointments in industries. Palli Vastra Kendras were opened up in 100 blocks, where economically backward women were trained and appointed. In

these kendras, 3000 poor women were employed.

To make them capable to face SCB interviews, qualitative up to date coaching was provided to women. Due to this coaching, eight girls got selected for defense services in 1997-98.

**Social security:** Since the days of Indira Gandhi, economically backward people are being provided assistance through several poverty eradication programmes. Government of India had decided to have 30 per cent women among the beneficiaries of IRDP and ERDP special scheme of state governments. In Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe dominated areas, this was to be 60 per cent. This programme was accepted by the then state government.

In 1995-96 and 1998-99, the state government had provided 1465.33 lakh rupees as revolving capital to 6309 women's groups under DWCRA scheme. Thousands of Self Help Groups had come up and were able to generate their own income through financial assistance and bank loans. The government of that time also provided two acres of land to poor landless families especially from Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe communities. The patta of the land was in joint title of the man as well his wife. The state government introduced pension for widows. Apart from widows, there are several destitute women in rural areas. Two lakh such women were provided 1000 rupees each to enable them to start small businesses from their homes to run their families.

Balika Samriddhi Yojana was started. When a girl is born, five hundred rupees would be deposited in a passbook in her name. Its interest would get added up. Arrangements were made to hand over the amount in the pass book in her name, when the girl reaches the age of 18.

There were only 18 hostels for working women. In the eighties, six more hostels were constructed. During this time,

women got chance to represent in cooperative institutions. To counter criminal activities and other problems, women's police stations, short stay homes and family welfare centers were established.

It was decided to remove liquor shops from tribal dominated villages. In a village of Kandhamal district, women succeeded in eradicating liquor consumption habit of the men folk through the path of agitation and destruction of liquor brewing unit in their area.

**Culture:** Women are flag bearers of culture. Role of women in a culturally rich state like Odisha cannot be denied. A research centre for internationally acclaimed Odissi dance was established by the state government during this period. A spacious open air auditorium (nritya mandap) was established at Konark during this time. Konark Utsav is being held there every year.

Status of women in politics is too low. At that time through formation of women's wing in the Congress party, women got more scope to get organized. With it, they entered the political sphere. Many women came to politics for the first time. In 1980, five women had got elected to the State Assembly and two of them became ministers. Today, after 29 years, only eight women of the ruling party have got elected as MLAs. During that time, a woman (this writer) had got elected to the Lok Sabha for the first time.

To have equal share in the field of development along with men, women have a long way to go. Yet through better planning and programmes, women can progress by getting themselves more conscious and organized. Foundation of women's development and empowerment had been laid since 1980. Later, however, as per the programmes of the then Congress government, women have found place in panchayats. Institutions like State Women's Commission, too, were established.

## A New Horizon for Newspapers and Journalists

Gopal Mishra ♦

Several epoch-making measures concerning journalists and newspapers had been initiated during the Chief Ministership of Janaki Ballav Patnaik. He was an editor himself and he had respect for democratic values. He was ever eager to improve the condition of Odia newspapers through modernization and professionalism.

Newspaper publishing was recognized as an industry during his time. State financial bodies like the IPICOL and the OSFC provided loans and subsidy for the modernization of newspapers. As a consequence, newspaper owners could set up new printing presses, install computers and revamp their publications. Many new newspapers appeared on the scene because of governmental encouragement, including financial assistance.

---

♦ Gopal Mishra is an eminent Journalist

Janaki Babu's government was always ready to improve the lot of journalists. Journalists were allotted residential plots of land at Kataka and Bhubaneswar. Instead of being evicted, journalists residing in the Labour Colony at Kataka were granted right of ownership. They were permitted to travel in buses on concessional fares and to receive medical treatment at subsidized rates. Journalists' welfare funds were also created. When Patnaik was the Labour Minister in 1980, the government received recommendations of the Journalists' Wage Board. Although the newspaper owners, through their organization, the IENS, vehemently opposed the recommendations and made representation to the Government, Patnaik got it approved by the Union Cabinet. New newspapers were made eligible to receive government advertisements within just four months of their publication. The budget allocation of the Public Relations Department was enhanced so that newspapers could get more advertisements and prosper.

I recall, in those days newspapers and newsmen were free to publish whatever they wished without any hindrance from the Government. As such, anti-Government news was the order of the day. Journalists had an easy access to the Chief Minister who addressed press meets almost every month. In short, this was the golden age for the newspaper industry and for professional journalists.

My own relationship with Janaki Babu dates back to the time when he was the editor of the *Prajatantra*. I joined there as a reporter. Let me put on record my personal experience to show how successful an editor he was.

Beginning with the devastating flood of 1955 that caused a breach at Dalei Ghai up to the famous students agitation of 1964, this was a memorable period in the political history of Odisha. It was then that I began my career in journalism. Today

when I look back upon that period of 55 years ago, the one name that comes to my mind is that of Janaki Babu. He was not merely the editor of the *Prajatantra*, which he deserved for his deep erudition in Odia literature, Sanskrit language and Indian culture but he was also endowed with a magnetic personality with great potential to lead the youth of our generation.

Incidentally, after appearing for my B.A. examination, I began my association with the *Prajatantra*. Since I was interested in writing and cultivating contacts with well known writers of the time, I was drawn towards the *Prajatantra*. It was then the only newspaper which provided opportunities to budding writers and had a children's corner and a cine review. How I joined the *Prajatantra* and became a full-fledged journalist is yet another story. I had never dreamt of taking up journalism as a profession. However, the foundation of my profession was laid during the Dalei Ghai flood which had attracted the attention of the nation. Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru had come to see the situation for himself. The press meet held at that time at the Raj Bhawan, Kataka, is still fresh in my memory.

Almost every day, after having written the editorial, Janaki Babu used to go on a tour to the flood ravaged area. I used to accompany him at times. We used to meet and discuss with the afflicted people about their problems and whether they had received adequate relief. I was asked to prepare reports on the basis of our experience. I did not have any experience in reporting at that time and yet, I tried as best as I could to make my reports readable and factual. Of course, he helped me with suggestions and in shaping my style of writing.

Along with reporting, I was also working as a sub-editor in charge of the supplements devoted to literature and culture. Then suddenly in 1955, Janaki Babu instructed me to go to Bhubaneswar to report on the Assembly proceedings. He had

also asked me to gather information of public interest about the functioning of the Government. But I was a little nervous because usually, senior and experienced journalists were asked to cover the proceedings of the Assembly. During those days, I had to work untiringly. Travelling to Bhubaneswar with senior and experienced journalists and by talking to them, I learnt a lot about the profession. I was routinely travelling from the bus stand at Chandni Chowk in the morning and coming back late at night. Because the *Prajatantra* used to carry detailed reports of the Assembly affairs every day, I had to work without sleep on many occasions. I had to submit my copy the next morning before proceeding to Bhubaneswar. During those days, many ministers were residing at Kataka so while returning late at night I often travelled with some of them in their vehicles.

Gradually, my interest in journalism grew. I was confident that I could do the job well. I must admit without any hesitation that the one person who had greatly encouraged me to take up journalism as a career was none other than J.B. Patnaik. Had he not sent me as a reporter to the Assembly, I would have chosen a government job as my profession. Janaki Babu had sent a long letter in praise of my reports. This letter inspired me a lot. In those days, the *Prajatantra*, under the leadership of Janaki Babu, was a pioneer in the field of covering matters of urgent public interest. It was something novel in Odia journalism. Janaki Babu's editorials and lead stories were avidly read. His sentences were short and words were carefully chosen. The language was so simple and points so effective that even those who differed from him had to go through his editorials.

Let me share some of the events of those days which come to my mind even now. Satyapriya Mohanty was the minister in charge of Capital Administration. Those days, there was an increase in petty thefts and house breaking in the New Capital.



A notice asking people to combat such menace on their own was issued by the Capital Administration. When a copy of this notification reached me, I wrote a report in which I had mentioned the inability of the government and the police in curbing such menace. The opposition raised a ruckus in the Assembly. Satyapriya Babu flatly denied that any such notification had ever been issued. I was really in trouble. Mahtab Babu was the Chief Minister and it was quite embarrassing that a report regarding the inefficiency of his government was published in the *Prajatantra*, the daily newspaper founded by himself. If the report was not based on facts, my job would be at stake.

Janaki Babu called for me and asked about the truth of the report. So I handed over a copy of the notification to him. I never knew then that he would make a printing block of the notification and publish it in the *Prajatantra*. When the facsimile copy was printed, the topic was again raised in the Assembly. Finally, Satyapriya Babu had to admit that because of some mistake at some level, the notification was issued.

I recall another incident which shows how Janaki Babu had a role in protecting and encouraging his reporters. It was mid-term election time in 1961. Biju Patnaik was the leader of the state Congress Party but Dr. Mahtab was unable to accept Biju Patnaik's leadership. This rift was reflected in the pages of the *Prajatantra*. Winning a vast majority of seats, the Congress, under the leadership of Biju Babu, formed the government. The first State budget presented by his ministry had decided to raise four crores of rupees through taxation. I had somehow got a whiff of this information and published the matter in the *Prajatantra*, ahead of the formal presentation of the budget. In those days, the confidentiality of the budget was very tightly guarded. When the news leaked out, there was great commotion in the Assembly and within political circles.

The Odisha Government tried to find out the source of the leakage so that they could take action against the *Prajatantra* and the reporter of the paper who was at the root of the report. I remember Venkatraman, who became Chief Secretary later, was then Secretary of the Home Department. He knew me well and rightly guessed that I was that reporter. But irrefutable proof was necessary for the government to initiate action. He wrote a letter to the editor of the *Prajatantra* asking him about the source of his information.

I got to know much later what Janaki Babu had written back. His reply was short and sharp. Without mincing words he wrote that while it was the responsibility of the government to guard their secrecy, it was the duty of the press to expose the government if they worked against the interests of the public. And that was it, the source of information could never be revealed.

By the time of the mid-term elections of 1961, bitterness between Mahtab Babu and Biju Babu reached its peak. While Biju Babu's attempts at breaking the coalition of the Congress-Ganatantra Parishad Government under the leadership of Mahtab Babu bore fruit, Mahtab Babu never wanted the Congress under Biju Patnaik's leadership to succeed. When news of the Congress Party's victory began pouring in, we at the editorial section were at a loss discussing as to what would be the headlines for the event. We thought that although it was essential to carry the news of the Congress's victory, there had to be some sort of a skew in the headlines. I clearly remember Janaki Babu coming to the editorial section and unhesitatingly writing the headline himself. So the headline went as, *Victory horse of the Congress galloping ahead!* Despite the irreconcilable bitterness between Mahtab Babu and Biju Babu, he had chosen to print such a headline in Mahatab Babu's paper. This was

beyond our imagination. Irrespective of his opinion expressed in the editorial write-ups, there was no place for bias in presenting the news truthfully.

His decision was always right and he appreciated true journalism.

After the 1961 mid-term polls, bitterness between the *Prajatantra* and Biju Babu's government had increased. Every day the *Prajatantra* fearlessly carried some news or the other of the government's follies and misdeeds. Although Janaki Babu was the designated editor, he also functioned as news editor and page designer. A state-wide students' agitation against the corrupt practices of the government rocked the State in 1964. It will not be an exaggeration to state that Janaki Babu was the chief architect of this agitation. It was rumoured that under some pretext or the other, Janaki Babu might be arrested. Janaki Babu had written a note and kept it in the drawer of his table wherein he had suggested that in the event of his arrest, I would discharge his duties as editor. Janaki Babu himself had told me later about it. From this touching incident, it is evident how he trusted and inspired young people. There were very few editors who protected and encouraged young journalists as he did. Today when I look back, it appears as if even in those days, Janaki Babu was a man with a mission.

His stint as a journalist and an editor helped him immensely when he became the Chief Minister.

\* \* \*

## Sports in Odisha: The Golden Period

Anadi Sahu ♦

**A**s Additional Inspector General, Vigilance, among other duties, I was to stop the government doctors from engaging in private practice. Suddenly one day I was summoned by Janaki Ballav Patnaik, the Chief Minister, to Bhubaneswar. He proposed to transfer me to Puri as the Superintendent of Police (SP). I told him that I could not join as the SP because I was too senior for the post and instead, should be promoted to the post of Deputy Inspector General (DIG) of Police. He then said that I had to go only for six months to set things right because there was indiscipline in Puri Police.

So I went to Puri. J.B. Patnaik came to Puri once every month inspite of his extremely busy schedule. And whenever he came, he always went to the Jagannath Temple in the evening

---

♦ Anadi Sahu is former M.P. and former Director, Sports, Government of Odisha

to have a darshan. He had Mahaprasad in the Circuit House afterwards.

Discipline was soon restored in Puri Police. The District Constable and Havildar Union, which was threatening to go on a strike, were given adequate training about their work. Six months passed by in this manner and I reminded the Chief Minister in the seventh month that I was due for a transfer.

He reminded me that the Rath Yatra was in the offing and that I would be transferred after it was over. I said, "Sir, I am an atheist. What do I do in the Rath Yatra?" He answered, "You may be an atheist. But you are closely involved with the Odia culture and the Rath Yatra is but a symbol of Odia culture. You have to complete this assignment."

There was nothing more I could do about it. The Rath Yatra was conducted smoothly and the deities returned to the Jagannath Temple.

Janaki Babu then told me, "The Rath Yatra is over but there is one more job for you. I would like to see black bucks and you have to make the arrangements. I also want to take a bath in the sea. However, there is no fun in seeing black bucks or bathing when there are a lot of people around."

I therefore made arrangements for the Chief Minister to go to the Casurina forest behind the Konark Temple and to go there he had to take the road behind the light house of Chandrabhaga. The Chief Minister spent the night in the PWD inspection bungalow at Konark and in the morning, Satyananda Champatiray accompanied him to see black bucks. However, eight to ten more people also accompanied him in spite of our remonstrations and as a result, the black bucks vanished from sight upon seeing so many people. Only one black buck could be sighted.

We then came to a lonely spot on the beach between Chandrabhaga and Ramachandi. Coloured umbrellas were put up to provide shade and there was a flask of coffee as well. The Chief Minister would go for a bath in the sea, would return to have a cup of coffee and chat with others. Then he would get into the sea again.

As he sipped his coffee he told me, "I want to set up a separate Sports Directorate. My objective is that Odisha should excel in the field of sports. Would you like to join it?"

"Yes, Sir," I replied, "But I have two conditions. I should be elevated to the position of a DIG and I should have Secretarial status." He agreed and said, "Done. But won't it land you in trouble? Senior officers in the police force do not do anything themselves. They order their juniors. But you have to do most of the things yourself in the new post."

"I have no problems with that," I answered. With that the discussion was over and the Chief Minister left for Bhubaneswar after lunch. Of course, four months passed before things could be put in place but then all government work is like that. The post had to be created and budget provisions had to be made. Only then could the officer join. However, everything was done because of the strong willpower of the Chief Minister and I joined as the Director of Sports. My first two jobs were infrastructure development and talent scouting.

There was a rule that the Central Government would bear half the cost of developing the infrastructure and so I requested Janaki Babu to talk to Margaret Alva, the Central Minister for Sports and Youth Welfare. I also requested him to introduce me to her.

Janaki Babu obliged. For the first six months, I tried to arrange funds from the Central and State governments for the construction of stadia, gymnasiums and rural play grounds.

The Central Government would release funds only when the State Government provided the matching grant. So along with paperwork that needed to be done for that, the Government of Odisha also had to release funds.

Janaki Babu made all the arrangements in no time, whether it was reappropriation or supplementary demand. Sudhansu Mohan Patnaik and Jadunath Dash Mohapatra, the Secretary and the Minister for Sports respectively, worked at a quick pace to give effect to everything. I went directly to the Chief Minister's residence with the files as I had been given Secretarial status. He signed them immediately.

It was his greatness that he approved all my proposals with regard to development of sports in the State.

He only asked whether I had submitted the notes correctly. Then I went to New Delhi with the proposals of the government. Santosh Kumar was the Director of Sports with the Central Government. Though he was an I.A.S. officer of the Odisha cadre, he was not very interested in these things. But Varadarajan, the Secretary and Margaret Alva, the Minister, took keen interest in the proposals. And because Varadarajan loved Odissi music, I carried a few Odissi cassettes for him when I went to meet him. He listened to Odissi music with the red light in front of his office switched on. Now this red light meant that the officer was attending to some very important matter and ought not to be disturbed! And all my work was done in no time. It was not necessary to meet Margaret Alva often. In the first year, the Central Government gave rupees four crores and the Government of Odisha also gave an equal amount. Work was started to put the infrastructure in place with that amount and a sports hostel was constructed.

At that time I hit upon a novel plan. I persuaded the Chief Minister and the Finance Secretary to transfer all amounts

earmarked for the development of sports infrastructure to the Odisha Council of Sports (OCS). The construction firm completed one work before taking up another. When the first work was completed, they would ask the OCS for money and a cheque would be given by the OCS. I was also the Secretary of the OCS and noticed that construction work progressed at a slow pace. I had kept half the earmarked money in the State Bank of India as temporary deposit. Many competitions were held using the amount earned as interest on the deposits.

I faced a few problems since I had the designation of Joint Secretary. I requested Janaki Babu to designate me as an Additional Secretary. Though he passed the order, the General Administration Department had been delaying matters and I became an Additional Secretary only after the intervention of the Chief Minister.

I observed that 16 per cent of the money coming for sports infrastructure was deducted as pro rata by the executing agency. I discussed the matter with the Chief Minister and requested that this should be waived for sports activities. He waived it accordingly and consequently, we had more funds now. As a result, more playgrounds and gymnasiums were constructed. There was a new awakening in sports in Odisha because of the keen interest of the Chief Minister. Sports hostels were constructed in Kataka, Sambalpur, Brahmapur, Rourkela and Bhubaneswar. I requested Janaki Babu to plant a *Baobab* sapling when the Bhubaneswar hostel was inaugurated. Janaki Babu asked me about the name of the tree and wanted to know why it was being planted.

I told him that the tree had its origins in South America and would live for five thousand years. The tree would symbolically stand for the sports hostel programme to run for hundreds of years. It is, however, a matter of regret that the tree



broke down in the super cyclone of 1999. But happily, leaves have started appearing again.

Coaching and competitions are necessary in sports along with the development of infrastructure. Apprentices were kept in the hostels and coaching was imparted to them. Competitions were held after that. An amount of Rs 99,00,000 was sanctioned for the construction of the Brahmapur Stadium and the work was completed in six months. It was planned to inaugurate the stadium and to simultaneously hold an all-India competition. One portion of rural sports organized by the Central Government was decided to be held in Odisha. So our coaches moved into action. As scheduled, Janaki Ballav Patnaik inaugurated the Brahmapur Stadium. The women's hockey team of Odisha won the gold medal for the first time in that meet. As Janaki Babu distributed the gold medals, I could see a sense of deep satisfaction in his smile.

The hostel of the Sports Authority of India (SAI) was opened in the Barabati Stadium with the help of Margaret Alva. The gymnasts and the athletes of the SAI were coached in the Jawaharlal Nehru Indoor Stadium. Jadunath Dash Mohapatra, Minister for Sports and Youth Affairs, inaugurated the SAI hostel. The hostel was started with players who had excelled in sports and who had participated in all-India meets. At the initial stage, I was entrusted with its management. Later on, of course, a manager was appointed. Coaching was imparted in athletics, football, volleyball, basketball and gymnastics. The residents of the hostel excelled in athletics and basketball at all-India meets. Rachita Panda, who won the gold medal for India in the hundred metre dash at the Beijing Junior Asian Games, was a product of this hostel. Pranati Mishra won the gold in the 400 metre race.

A SAI hostel for hockey was opened in Sundargarh in the model of the SAI hostel at Kataka. India is proud of the players who were coached at the hockey hostels in Rourkela and Sundargarh. These players included legendary Olympians like Dilip Tirkey, A. Lazarus Barla and Jyoti Suchita Kulu.

Sports hostels were also opened in Baripada, Balasore and Keonjhar. Coaching was provided in archery at Baripada. At Brahmapur, coaching was provided in weightlifting. Budding wrestlers were coached at Puri. Many a sportsperson who had excelled at all-India meets in hockey, football and athletics over the years are the products of these hostels. Elderly athletes were given pension and sports organizations were given aid by way of providing encouragement to sportsmen.

Although coaching in wrestling has been provided in Odisha since a long time, the wrestlers of Odisha could not excel in all-India meets. The reason was that they would get exhausted by the time they reached the semi-final stage. They would not be exhausted if they had the right fixture. That benefit was availed by the wrestlers of Delhi, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh. We made a novel plan to turn Laxminarayan Mahasuar of Puri into a medal-winning wrestler. Accordingly, we gave him a scholarship of three thousand rupees and sent him to the Guru Hanuman Akhara. He took coaching there and won the gold medal in the heavy weight category of the Greco-Roman style of wrestling. But for technical reasons, his name was listed as an athlete from Delhi.

About four crores of rupees came from the Central Government in the first year for sports infrastructure and four and half crores came during the second year. The Odisha Government paid the matching grant without any hesitation. Plans were afoot to lay an astro turf for hockey in the Rourkela hostel. But there was a problem in the plan. The PWD or any

other government organization did not have the authority to spend so much money. We received only one crore rupees in the third year as the utilization certificate could not be submitted on time. The rural play field development programme too made slow progress because of delays in land acquisition.

There definitely was political will but it was administrative stagnation that proved to be the bottleneck.

Such hindrances had affected the construction of the Kalinga Stadium. The Bhubaneswar Development Authority (BDA) erected the north side gallery of the Kalinga Stadium without proper drawing and design. As a result, its entry and exit paths were not right. The height of the steps on which the spectators were supposed to sit was also not right. The Chief Minister was informed about it and the work was taken away from the BDA. Consequently, a high power committee was constituted with the Finance Secretary as the Chairman. The Sports Secretary, the Chief Architect and the Sports Director were its members. Thereby, the Kalinga Stadium was designed by eminent architects and the work was started by the PWD. But some of the flaws still remain.

As sports activities intensified, another problem came up. There were not enough coaches. I talked to the Chief Minister about the problem and also requested him to create 14 posts for coaches. It is an extremely painful exercise to create posts at the government level. Nevertheless, the posts were created at the insistence of Janaki Babu.

I usually went once or twice a week to meet the Chief Minister. Mornings were the best time for me when Janaki Babu would either be walking briskly on the lawn of the Chief Minister's residence or on the treadmill. It was at that time that I kept him abreast of the sports activities of the State and also discussed problems, if any.

During one such morning walk, he said, “There are many *baunsa ranis* in Odisha. These are women gymnasts or rope dancers who display their skills on the roadsides. Why not train their children as gymnasts?”

He was right. Those people had gymnastic skills in their bones. I therefore sent coaches to Odgaon, Sharankul, Shergarh and Polasara to select a few children. Five children were selected. Of these, three children stayed in the SAI hostel while two stayed in the state hostel. From out of the five, two won bronze medals twice in international meets.

For Odisha, the *golden period* in sports had arrived. *Yellow cards* were introduced for sports persons who had excelled at all-India meets. The government decided to reserve one per cent of jobs for holders of these yellow cards. Many of them have thereby been appointed as guards in trains, as booking clerks, conductors, attendants, police constables and as employees in the State Bank.

Everything, however, was not ‘golden’. Once, the then Chief Secretary desired that a swimming pool should be constructed at the Bhubaneswar Club and that the Sports Directorate would provide the funds. I did not agree to this. I told him that the Bhubaneswar Club was a private club and it was not proper to construct a swimming pool there with government money.

He did not bother to listen to me. He asked me to just make the plan and the estimates and provide the funds. He directed me to divert funds from other programmes and submit an estimate of Rs 10 lakh. I did send a proposal against my wishes but I also wrote a sentence therein that the money would be paid to the Bhubaneswar Club which happened to be a private organization. I met Nilamadhav Mohanty, Secretary to the Chief Minister, after getting an endorsement from the

Sports Secretary on the file. I explained everything to him. I told him that the Chief Minister should be informed about it. Purposefully, I myself had not informed anything to the Chief Minister. The file returned from the Chief Minister with a note written on it, in Odia, which read, it is not advisable to allot money in favour of a private organization. J.B.P.!

Furious, the Chief Secretary summoned me. He alleged that I had influenced the Chief Minister. But since I myself had not said anything regarding the matter to the Chief Minister, I answered firmly, "I have not said anything to the Chief Minister in this regard. Let us go to him if you do not believe me. You may ask him if I have anything to do with it."

"There is no need to ask. I'll transfer you to Kalahandi as the SP," he threatened.

"Sir, I've already become a DIG How can I be posted as an S.P.?" I replied.

"All right. You would then have to go back to your parent post," he persisted.

"Yes, Sir. Please send me back. I've already served three years as the Sports Director," was my reply.

He asked me to leave.

And I left. But in my Confidential Career Report he wrote that I was inefficient. I was lucky that the Sports Minister overruled his comments and wrote that I was an efficient officer who had done a good job.

The Brahmapur Stadium could not be completed because of objections by the Defence Department.

The Raja Saheb of Talcher had promised to donate 10 acres of land from the Rani Park for the construction of a stadium. But he went back on his promise at a later stage.

The practice hall of the Kataka Indoor Stadium too could not be constructed even though money had been sanctioned for the purpose. Although a lot was still left to be done, the work done for promotion of sports at that time was unparalleled. The second term of Janaki Babu as the Chief Minister was the golden period of sports in Odisha.

Even the impossible can be achieved where there is political will and administrative acumen, and of this, Odisha sports is a glowing example.

\* \* \*

## Bhubaneswar: From Clerical Town to People's Capital

Nalinikanta Panda ♦

**B**hubaneswar, Odisha's capital, is an ancient, historical city like Varanasi. The footprints of Odia history down the ages are seen here. Bhubaneswar boasts of several monuments of ancient times. These include Toshali, Sisupalagarh, Dhauli and Khandagiri as well as modern buildings of the New Capital. From Ashoka to Jawaharlal Nehru, it has a long and eventful history. Old Bhubaneswar was the capital of ancient Kalinga. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru had laid the foundation of the New Capital on 13 April 1948 when Dr. Harekrushna Mahtab was the Chief Minister.

Pandit Nehru's vision of the New Capital had been reflected in the following words at the foundation-laying ceremony:

---

♦ Nalinikanta Panda IAS (retd.) is former Chief Secretary, Government of Odisha

*I want that Bhubaneswar should not turn out to be a city of government servants. It should be a city of the common people of Orissa. Fraternity and national pride should be cherished by its inhabitants. Let not communal feelings corrupt the soul of the city. The inhabitants of the city should be free from all kinds of violence and enjoy everlasting peace, happiness and prosperity. Let there be beauty in its simplicity. Let Bhubaneswar emerge as a unique and ideal city.*

A German architect named Vaz had planned the construction of Bhubaneswar, the New Capital, just as the French architect La Corbuzier had planned Chandigarh, the capital of Punjab. The city planned by Vaz was supposed to be a city for 40,000 people. Later on, though, this new capital with a few high rise buildings was considered to be a planned village as compared to Chandigarh. It came to be known as a city of clerks, an abode of only government employees and was called Gulam Nagari. The population of Bhubaneswar had grown to about 100,000 by 1980. The New Bhubaneswar chiefly comprised the Utkal University, the Agriculture University, a few other educational institutions, the new Secretariat, the Legislative Assembly, the Raj Bhavan and a few government colonies. Shahid Nagar was the only non-government area that had cropped up. Another drawback was that there was not a single modern hotel in Bhubaneswar to accommodate tourists and outsiders.

The year 1980 may be considered to be a watershed year in the history of the development of Bhubaneswar town. A stable and strong government was formed under the leadership of Janaki Ballav Patnaik. Although Dr. Harekrushna Mahatab was the founder of the New Capital, it was Janaki Ballav Patnaik who would be remembered for its many faced growth and development, with all its amenities, as an attractive modern city, a people's city as Jawaharlal Nehru desired. Bhubaneswar



began to be considered among the important capital cities of the country during Janaki Ballav Patnaik's tenure. He believed that Odisha might be backward but its capital should not reflect its backwardness and poverty. A city should have its beauty and elegance. It should have all infrastructural facilities to encourage tourism, trade and commerce, health, education and pollution-free industries. His vision was to build a well-developed township with modern hotels, parks, market complexes, two-way roads, flyovers and such other infrastructures. He saw to it that all these things were put in place.

Keeping Bhubaneswar in mind, a strong effort was made for the development of tourism in the State. The objective was to promote Odisha both at the national and international levels, with the development of necessary infrastructures. In the proposed *Golden Triangle* of tourism, Bhubaneswar, Puri and Konark were the three focal points. While Puri attracted tourists for its sea beach and the world famous Jagannath Temple, Konark attracted people to its famous Sun Temple and Bhubaneswar attracted people because it was known as the city of temples, a clean city with a modern zoological garden and a forest nearby.

Along with the old Bhubaneswar which is dotted with temples, plans were also made to make New Bhubaneswar attractive for tourists. It has already been said that Bhubaneswar did not have a modern hotel earlier. So the question that naturally arose was where would tourists coming from other parts of India and foreign countries stay? Thus, the need to construct star hotels for the purpose emerged and necessary steps were taken for the construction of a number of star hotels. Several star hotels like Swosti, Oberoi, Mayfair, Swosti Plaza and Kalinga-Ashoka were set up during this period. Many other hotels were also set up to cater to different budgets. It was realized, however, that no hotel-owner would come forward to

set up hotels in the absence of fiscal incentives. Hence, the hotel sector was declared as an industry and Odisha was the first State in India to do so. Hoteliers could now get loans on easy terms and they also received several subsidies and incentives as per the provisions of the new industrial policy. The goal was to make at least 500 hotel rooms available to tourists.

The Lingaraj Temple and other temples of Bhubaneswar, the Khandagiri Caves and Ashoka's inscriptions and a modern Buddhist Pagoda in Dhauri were earlier the chief attractions of Bhubaneswar. The new attractions included the Ekamra Kanan and its 20-acre rose garden, the Plant Resource Centre with its artificial lake, bird sanctuary and the cactus garden, modern parks and the elephant sanctuary at Chandaka. Thus, Bhubaneswar was put forth as an attractive tourist destination for all classes of tourists.

A high-powered government organization called the Bhubaneswar Development Authority (BDA) was constituted for the planned growth of the city. In order to convert Bhubaneswar into a beautiful city and keep the environment clean, extensive afforestation programmes were launched.

Several new colonies were created to house people. The Housing Board set up colonies in Nayapalli, Chandrashekharpur, Patia, Mancheswar, Pokhariput, Khandagiri, Dumduma, Laxmisagar, Niladri Bihar, Shailasree Bihar, Kanan Bihar, Shikharchandi, Barmunda, Dharma Bihar, Kolathia, Raghunath Nagar, Palashpalli, Bhimatangi and Bargarh. Other colonies like the Rental Colony, Lingaraj Bihar, Jagannath Bihar and the I.R.C. Village also came up in due course. A huge colony was set up in Chandrashekharpur with direct connection to the airport by a two way road. A milk chilling plant with a capacity of 90,000 litres was also established. Hundreds of small and medium industries came up in the industrial areas of Mancheswar and Rasulgah. The rows of lights in the new

industrial areas and colonies gave the impression of another new city when one comes from Kataka to Bhubaneswar at night.

A few unhygienic clusters had come up at some places in Bhubaneswar between 1950 and 1980. These were the centres of various crimes in the city and foremost among these crime centres were Mali Sahi and Satya Nagar. It was considered impossible to remove these clusters of hutments. But steps were taken to see that the inhabitants of these clusters were provided with homestead land, water and electricity at the outskirts of the city in order to attract them to the new rehabilitation colonies. Thus, they willingly moved away to the new colonies that came up in Dumduma, Bharatpur and Raghunath Nagar. However, at a later stage, Mali Sahi again became a red-light area and a huge slum called Shaliasahi came up due to the leniency of the next government.

There was a large parade ground in front of the Secretariat which was used for holding public meetings and demonstrations. Late Indira Gandhi, the then Prime Minister of India, had addressed a huge public meeting there a day before her death. Because parks increase the beauty of a city, the Indira Park was constructed on that ground, in her memory. The statue of Indira Gandhi crafted by a famous sculptor of Leningrad, now St. Petersburg, has been put up on a beautiful pedestal inside the park. The BDA had been entrusted with the upkeep and the development of this park. The park is now one of the chief attractions of Bhubaneswar and is visited by hundreds of people every day.

Similarly, the Mahatma Gandhi Park was constructed in Chandrashekharpur. A statue of Mahatma Gandhi resembling the one in front of the Parliament has been put up on a beautiful pedestal at this place. The park abounds with flowering plants. There is also a play-area for children inside the park. The Buddha Park is another significant park. A 108 feet high statue

of the Buddha had been planned there but that has not yet been fully materialized. This is the biggest park in Bhubaneswar. The Forest Park was the only park when the New Capital was started. But soon after, it had turned into a real forest owing to lack of maintenance and upkeep. People had stopped going there. However, it was cleared up and new grass was planted at several places to make it an attractive place. Of course, the park was further developed and beautified later on. In such a thickly populated city like Bhubaneswar, a large number of playgrounds and parks are needed so that people could find some place to breathe fresh, clean air. Hence, arrangements were made to provide a playground and a park in each unit. The BDA was entrusted with the task of planting trees and maintaining the grounds.

Educational institutions imparting management education like the Xavier Institute of Management, the Regional Medical Research Centre, a Life Science Research Institute which is now supported by the Government of India, a research centre named after Nabakrushna Choudhury, the Odissi Research Centre, the Pathani Samanta Planetorium, the Harekrushna Mahtab State Library, the Nicco Park, the Women's Polytechnic and many engineering colleges and other educational institutions came up in the 1980s and between 1995 and 2000. An Information Technology (IT) Park has also been set up to convert Bhubaneswar into an IT hub like Bangalore. As a result, leading IT companies have set up shop in Bhubaneswar. The Ekamra Kanan and the Plant Resource Centre were set up on large tracts of barren land. Rare plants were planted there and a modern cactus garden was created.

Statues of all national heroes were put up in Bhubaneswar. The installation of the statue of Indira Gandhi has already been referred to and Jawaharlal Nehru's statue was put up in a newly constructed park near the railway station. Among other such

installations were Subhas Chandra Bose's statue at Rasulgah square, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's statue at the A.G. Square and Tagore's bust in front of the Rabindra Mandap. Apart from these, the statues of Utkal Gourav Madhusudan and Surendra Sai were installed in different places.

Several ultra modern hotels had come up in Chandrashekharpur in the meantime and it was felt necessary to connect this area with the airport by laying a straight and wide road. This too was given effect to. Two railway over-bridges were constructed during this period and several single-lane roads were converted into double lane roads. The old bus stand proved to be inadequate to accommodate the growing number of buses and hence a new bus terminus was also constructed at Baramunda. During the fifties, a lake had been planned to look like a necklace around the city. But no work was done on the project till 1980. It was only in the eighties that some work on this project was carried out and a new lake was created. Also, another lake came up in a large area adjacent to the Utkal University.

To solve the problem of drinking water for an ever-increasing population, arrangements were made to supply water to Bhubaneswar by laying pipe lines from Naraj. The problem of water shortage was thus tackled, at least for a generation to come.

It is noteworthy to mention that no capital city in India can boast of extensive forests in its outskirts. And because forests are extremely important for the environment, a dense forest covering an area of 2000 acres near Ekamra Kanan was protected for this purpose and an elephant sanctuary was brought into existence just twelve kilometers away from central Bhubaneswar. This was the first elephant sanctuary in India. This new sanctuary was created in the denuded jungles of Chandaka but the area has now been converted into a dense forest. This

has had a beneficial effect on the capital city's environment. It has also proved to be a tourist attraction. There are two large lakes, called Kamarkhunti and Deras, inside this forest. The Deras lakeside has become a popular tourist spot.

New roads were developed everywhere and new colonies were set up in far-flung areas. Thus, Bhubaneswar had enough opportunities to grow. The capital city of Odisha has been growing towards Kataka in the north, Khurda in the south, Uttara in the east and Chandaka in the south. Thus, the basic infrastructure created at that time for the growth and expansion of Bhubaneswar would never be erased from the memory of the people.

One Chief Minister, Harekrushna Mahtab, conceived the project of a New Capital at Bhubaneswar, while another Chief Minister, J.B. Patnaik, gave it the true shape of a modern capital in all its dimensions.

And Bhubaneswar stood transformed from a mere clerical town to the people's splendid capital!

\* \* \*

## Kataka: Old Capital Acquires New Look

Annada Prasad Roy ♦

**H**istory has recorded the rise and fall of many empires and civilizations. And along with them, the rise and fall of many cities and their capitals as well. Among these, one of the most ancient cities of the country was Kataka, the old capital of Odisha.

Having existed for more than a thousand years, Odisha too had its fair share of rise and fall and glorious periods to celebrate. And its capital city, Kataka, might have had a planned growth at one time for a much smaller population. According to the *Utkala Deepika*, Kataka had a population of only 40,000 and yet, the then administration had failed to give proper attention to its needs. So it soon became crowded as the city got confined in the area between the two rivers of Kathjodi and Mahanadi,

---

♦ Annada Prasad Roy is a well-known writer and former president, Utkal Sahitya Samaj

without any scope for expansion. The *Deepika* compared the city of Kataka to a huge saucer, the rivers forming its reams. During the rainy season, Kataka was always in danger of being submerged. Although the stone embankment surrounding it had given protection to the city against floods for a thousand years, its inadequacy to protect the city has now become evident because of the steady rise of the beds of the Kathjodi and the Mahanadi rivers.

Although Kataka was the chosen capital of the Somavamsi Kings, the Gajapatis, the Mughals, Marathas and the British, it was not chosen as the modern capital of Odisha because of limited space and the threat from floods during the rainy seasons. And so the modern capital shifted to Bhubaneswar instead.

Yet, there was a time when celebrities of Odisha chose Kataka as their place of residence. The famous zamindars of Aul, Kanika and Garh Madupur had their *Kothis* in Kataka. The great Motilal Pundit too had his Motilal Estate here. Brajasundar Das, who was a zamindar, a man of letters as well as editor of *Mukur*, lived in the Kataka of yore. Gouri Shankar Roy, Gopabandhu Chowdhury, Nabakrishna Chowdhury, Gokulananda Chowdhury and Nityanand Kanungo who was also a zamindar and subsequent Congress leader, lived in Kataka with his family. Utkal Gourav Madhu Sudan had his residence in Kataka too. Kataka is also the birth place of Netaji Subhas Bose. Probably as part of that tradition, my grandfather, Krishna Chandra Roy, too had his home in lower Telenga Bazar on the bank of the Kathjodi River.

I myself have a deep bond with Kataka, it being my place of birth. I have seen the Kataka of those days and I also see the sprawling Kataka as it stands today. And just like me, Janaki Babu too had a long personal association with Kataka. Janaki Babu spent four years in the Ravenshaw College in Kataka as a



student and had spent almost thirty years of his active life here. He had full knowledge of Kataka's problems and necessities. It is here that he exhibited his sense of patriotism by removing the Union Jack and unfurling India's Tricolor. After post graduation in political science from Banaras Hindu University, he began his career as editor of the *Prajatantra* and the *Eastern Times* at Kataka during 1951-52. In 1953, while still the editor of the *Prajatantra*, he organized a group of educated youth and participated in the construction of a road between the college square post office and Bhima ice factory. The monthly magazine *Paurusha*, his brain child, was also published from Kataka in 1967. Janaki Babu's intellectual, cultural and political life too had its base in Kataka city. It was also from Kataka that he was elected to the Parliament in 1971.

Janaki Ballav Patnaik had said that Kataka was his native city, next to his birth place of Rameswar, Khurda. A few quotes from his editorial in the *Eastern Times* appropriately reveal his commitment to the city's development. Inspired by Vinoba Bhave's call for a *Swachha Bharat* (cleaner India), he wrote in his editorial titled *Cleaner Cuttack*, "Acharya Vinoba Bhave has initiated what he calls the Swachha Bharat Movement. The aim of this movement is to keep the towns and the cities of this country clean. If this movement is urgently needed anywhere in Odisha, it is in Kataka. It is the centre of learning, business and administration of Odisha. An unclean Kataka is a disgrace to the State. The youth of Kataka should rise to the occasion and set an example for others in the state to follow."

Little wonder then that he was so eager to develop the city and as such, made use of the first opportunity he got to achieve his desire. One has to admit the role played by an able leader and administrator like Janaki Ballav Patnaik in shaping the growth and development of Kataka after 1980.

Thus, in modern times, a real effort was made for the planned expansion of Kataka during the time of Janaki Ballav Patnaik, who, as the Chief Minister, had a vision for its development as a planned city with a scope to expand. After assuming the post of Chief Minister, he devoted his attention to the expansion of the historic city of Kataka, the first signpost of his student life and the first place of his dedicated public life. For long, he had felt the need of extending its borders. The city was growing fast and the people of the State, because of varied reasons, flocked to it. Expanding the city beyond its traditional confines was the only way to cope with the pressure. And so, he began the expansion programme of Kataka in phases.

He built bridges over the Mahanadi, Kathjodi, Birupa and Kuakhai rivers to extend the city limits in different directions. The city thus spread to Chowdwar in the north, Barang, Balikuda and Vayalish Mouza in the south, Nayabazar in the east and to Naraj and Munduli in the west. A bridge near Barang linked it directly to Banki. Kataka and Chowdwar, merged and a satellite town, sprang up at Phulanakhara. As Kataka expanded, it reached up to Bhubaneswar and the concept of a twin city was mooted. Janaki Ballav Patnaik's greatest contribution to Kataka's expansion was the creation of the new township of Bidanasi Kataka. On the day of Gandhi Jayanti, he laid the foundation of the New Kataka. Janaki Babu said on this occasion that Markat Keshari, while setting up his capital here, used Bidanasi as a fort. So the city practically sprang up from the Bidanasi fort. That was the reason why its historical name was Bidanasi Kataka. But he renamed it Varanasi Kataka because according to him Bidanasi was a corruption of Varanasi. Now-a-days, this extensive area is popularly known as Markat Nagar. By removing all infrastructural impediments of the old city, he planned this new area on the models of Bhubaneswar.

From here emerged the Kataka Development Authority. A large patch of land in the east, stretching from Shikharpur to Nua Bazar, has been renamed Mahanadi Vihar and is gradually turning out to be the elite locality of the city.

In 1982, Kataka was threatened with deluge by the Mahanadi floods which caused havoc in coastal Odisha. If there would not have been a breach in the Mahanadi River downstream at Dalei Ghai and at Gopalpur in the Kathjodi River, Kataka could have been fully submerged. The ancient city, the seat of culture and the hub of State commerce, would have been lost forever. Janaki Babu had anticipated this. That's why, prior to his Chief Ministership, as the President of the State Congress, he had demanded the construction of a ring road around Kataka. Every year during the floods, the engineers of the Irrigation Department would remain prepared with sand bags to prevent any possible breach in the old stone embankment from Mata math to Khannagar. The old stone embankment of Markata Keshari was found inadequate to protect Kataka any longer. In 1982, he ordered the construction of the Kataka Ring Road along with other damage control measures in other parts of Odisha. He made the necessary financial arrangements to complete the work on time under the supervision of expert engineers. Today, the Ring Road not only protects Kataka but also acts as the artery of communication in the city. With the population growing at a fast pace, the city without the Ring Road would have suffocated with traffic snarls. This Ring Road has become the life line of the city. When this project was executed under the Irrigation Department, Niranjan Patnaik and Basant Kumar Biswal were working as Minister of Irrigation and Minister, Urban Development, respectively. Later on, during 1985-90, Sk. Mutlab Ali and Batakrisna Jena took charge of those portfolios. All of them worked sincerely

to fulfill the Chief Minister's dreams. The Ring Road, in fact, is a historic achievement and it shall always remain fresh in our memory.

As the Chief Minister of Odisha, Patnaik approached the British Overseas Development Agency (BODA) to speed up development work at Kataka. As a result, the British organization contributed large funds for the city's development. The organization worked under the guidance of the city corporation and to save Kataka from its bad reputation as *the city of slums*, it implemented a slum development scheme under which housing schemes, community toilets, supply of drinking water, construction of roads, electric supply and many such projects were implemented to improve the health and quality of life of the slum dwellers. The slums are a part of Kataka's historic legacy. Therefore, on one hand, during Patnaik's time, efforts were made to improve the living condition of the slums while on the other hand, subsequent governments took steps to remove them. Cases were filed in the High Court and orders obtained to remove these slums.

Even now, thousands of helpless people have taken refuge in the street corners and sidewalks of the city. They have no land rights. Since hundreds of years, they had been living on unused government land. To remove them without adequate plans for resettlement was a cruel move. Not only in Kataka but in Bhubaneswar as well, Janaki Babu took measures for the proper resettlement of slum dwellers.

During his Chief Ministership, the Kataka Civic Body was converted into a corporation. To preserve Kataka as the city of culture, he made persistent efforts to protect the historic Barabati Fort along with its moat. He was also instrumental in forming a celebration committee consisting of Justice Harihar Mohapatra and Girija Bhusan Patnaik, among others,

to celebrate a thousand years of Kataka's existence. And in that colourful function, an illustrated souvenir consisting of research papers and documentary evidences that claimed Kataka's ancestry was brought out. In remembrance of his Ravenshaw days, he built the New Hostel in the college campus, providing the much needed accommodation to a large number of students and inaugurated a scheme to convert Ravenshaw College into a University.

Kataka is the main seat of Odia culture and to preserve this culture, Janaki Babu increased government grants for the centuries old organization, *The Utkal Sahitya Samaj*. He himself is a life member of this organization. While he was the President of the Odisha Sahitya Academy, he once said, "Utkal Sahitya Samaja is a national institution. It has a glorious legacy. Literary recognition by this organization is more significant than any other literary award." He described Kataka as the chief centre of Odia literature and culture. Writers from all regions of Odisha came under its fold because it is the heartland of Odia culture. Janaki Babu once held a conference of the All India Correspondents' Association in the indoor stadium situated in the Barabati Fort area. Many renowned journalists attending the conference were overwhelmed by the majestic splendor of Kataka. But what impressed them most was the coexistence of urban and rural cultures.

Sriram Chandra Bhanja Medical College and Hospital is the biggest of its kind in Odisha and attracts patients from the whole State and even from outside because of its recognition as a centre of national standards. Janaki Babu had also set up the Acharya Harihar Cancer Research Institute here while he was the Chief Minister. As a result, cancer patients of Odisha got cheap and efficient treatment within the State. The Barabati Stadium was expanded during his Chief Ministership. He

renamed the Kataka Engineering School after Bhubanananda Das, the first Electrical Engineer of Odisha, who was also an eminent parliamentarian. He built a massive nine storey building in the premises of the Collectorate and shifted most of the State level offices of the city into this new building, thereby preventing their relocation to Bhubaneswar.

John Beams, a former British collector of Kataka, was ecstatic at the sight of the magnificent hill ranges over-looking the Mahanadi River and described Kataka as a beautiful, clean and cute little town. He was also a lover and admirer of the Odia language. Janaki Babu dreamt of converting Kataka into a garden city free of pollution and so he set up a large number of parks and gardens here. The office of the Film Development Corporation, which was set up at Buxibazar during his tenure, paved the way for cultural progress. Some important offices were also shifted to this building. A new Circuit House too was constructed. The former Prime Minister, Mr. Rajiv Gandhi, spent a night here ignoring the Raj Bhawan at Bhubaneswar because he wanted to see Kataka with his own eyes and enjoy its pristine beauty. With the establishment of an electric crematorium at Khannagar, the problem of cremation was eased. On the whole, Kataka is a beautiful city, a city of peace and cooperation. Janaki Babu has deeply influenced its life in many ways.

As he was an outstanding scholar, orator, a journalist, litterateur and a man of culture, Janaki Babu served Odisha for a record 14 years as its Chief Minister and in the course of that time, launched a large number of good schemes for the development of the State. The Khannagar area, which was formerly a desolate place, now vibrates with life after the setting up of the *Vikash Bhawan*, a town planning office. A beautiful park named after Vishwanath Pundit adorns the area. The Jawaharlal Nehru indoor stadium, modeled after Delhi's Indira Gandhi

indoor stadium, has been built within the Barabati Fort area. After the Asian Games, Janaki Babu dreamt of putting Kataka in the international sporting arena and he had largely succeeded in his effort. The International Children's Film Festival was held in Kataka and was inaugurated by the then Prime Minister, Rajiv Gandhi, during Janaki Babu's Chief Ministership. A railway level crossing, separating the Eastern and Western parts of Kataka, was creating much traffic problem and this gave rise to the urgent need for the construction of a railway overbridge. This bridge became a reality during his Chief Ministership. Both the State Government and the Central Government equally shared the expenses and thereby, one of the major problems of the city was solved.

The Sunshine playground near Kathjodi, the football fields of Pyari Mohan Academy, the Raja Bagicha City High School, the Engineering School and the school at Pota Pokhari near Nua Bazar were renovated. Thanks to him, the Sports Authority of India (SAI) Hostel was set up at Kataka for talented athletes. Subsequently, a large number of sports persons of this institute attained national and international fame. Thus, Kataka attained all-round growth and fame during Janaki Babu's Chief Ministership. To encourage entrepreneurs of the minority community who resided in Kataka in large numbers, he created the Minority Finance Corporation. For the benefit of small traders and businessmen and common people who needed financial help, he established the Urban Co-operative Bank, Kataka.

Kataka has always been the city of brotherhood and ideal fellow-feeling. Janaki Babu took many a step to encourage this fellow feeling. During his Chief Ministership, the Kadam Rasul shrine at Durga Bazar, the cremation *ghat* of Sati Choura and the Idgah ground nearby were repaired and renovated. To

promote cultural awareness among the Muslims of the State, he had set up the Urdu Academy and had also extended generous financial assistance to the Urdu Library.

Many places of Shakti worship such as the Durga Mandaps of Chaulia gunj, Khananagar, Jobra and Ranihat were repaired and renovated. For the benefit of the consumers, market-complexes were erected by the Kataka Development Authority in different zones of the city for the smooth supply of various consumer goods. A truck terminus and an industrial estate were built at Jagatpur on the northern bank of the river Mahanadi. Plenty of incentives were given to entrepreneurs to set up industries at Khapuria and Jagatpur. As a result, factories flourished in the two areas and hundreds of local entrepreneurs came up. Statues of Utkal Gourav Madhusudan Das, the first Odia Minister of the Bihar-Odisha Province and of Maharaja Krishana Chandra Gajapati of Paralakhemundi, the first Prime Minister of Odisha, were erected at the Cantonment Road and OMP Square respectively, surrounded by parks and gardens. As Kataka was his place of birth and early education, a statue of Subash Chandra Bose too had been installed close to the college square.

Kataka progressed on all fronts during Janaki Babu's Chief Ministership. Therefore, he will always be remembered as a friend and benefactor of the city. The new face of Kataka had been possible only due to his consistent love and efforts. Janaki Babu is synonymous with Kataka's prosperity and wellbeing.

He is indeed the second Markat Keshari of this great ancient city which needed a total reorientation at that time.

\* \* \*



## Kataka Ring Road: A Protective Embankment

B.C. Patnaik ♦

**A**lthough the capital of Odisha was shifted to Bhubaneswar, Kataka remained the cultural and business centre of Odisha. And to meet the growing demand of an ever increasing population, big ponds and low lying areas were reclaimed and replaced with buildings. However, with acute drainage congestion, the city itself remained threatened by the fury of floods.

The Kataka town is surrounded by the river Mahanadi on the left and the Kathjodi on the right. The stone revetment built by the imperial King Markat Keshari protected the town from the ravages of floods in the rivers for almost a thousand years. While under the Marathas, the zamindars were required

---

♦ Biren Chandra Patnaik is former Engineer-in-Chief, Irrigation, Government of Odisha

to maintain the embankment and for this purpose they were permitted certain concessions out of their revenue payment.

An embankment committee was formed by Regulations VI of 1806 to supervise all the embankments. Then in January 1847, the Military Board suggested that all the embankments in Odisha should be razed to the ground for free passage of flood waters. This suggestion was, however, opposed by Moffat Mills, Commissioner. Nevertheless, the annual repair of the embankments was stopped and their condition deteriorated further. So in July 1882, when the Kataka revetment needed repairs, the Military Board of Calcutta allowed Thomas Pakenhem, Commissioner, to remove stones from the Barabati fort to repair the embankment.

As mentioned earlier, the 17 kilometer long embankment to protect the city of Kataka was constructed by the Kesari King. The embankment started from Chahata on the right bank of the river Mahanadi and went up to Hariharghat on the left bank of the river Kathjodi via Satichaura for a length of three kilometres. Then on, from Hariharghat, it extended up to the Khannagar burial ground via Ganeshghat and Purighat for a little over three kilometres. Jobra and Chahata were connected by a little over seven kilometres of the embankment which ran via Matamatha and Gadagadiaghat. This section provided protection to a 15 square kilometre area which was earlier the inner city. Subsequently, the city extended towards the east, beyond the Khannagar-Jobra embankment. The Taladanda canal, the railway line and the National Highway-5 lie in this extended part of the city. Accordingly, the embankment beyond the Khannagar burial ground along the Kathjodi on the left and from Jobra along the Mahanadi on the right have been constructed to protect this extended part of the city.

Of the total length of 17 kilometers of the embankment, laterite stones of eighty centimetres in length, 40 in width and 30 in thickness were used in an eight kilometer stretch, from Matamatha to Chahata on the Mahanadi side and then to Hariharghat and Purighat on the Kathjodi side. At strategic locations, sand stones too were used. The revetment built by Markat Keshari withstood the ferocity of the flood in its original alignment for about a thousand years, though with minor repairs every once in a while.

The Hirakud Dam too had performed its best to moderate floods that occurred below Naraj. Most of the high floods during the post independence period, particularly after 1958, were due to floods in the free catchment area of 48,700 sq km downstream from the Hirakud dam and on which the Hirakud had no control. After the construction of the dam, the highest recorded flood at Naraj was 44,827 cumecs (15.84 lac cusecs), which occurred at 3 p.m. of 31 August 1982. This flood created havoc in the whole of coastal Odisha, including the city of Kataka. Flood waters had threatened to almost spill over the embankment at Kathjodi near Khannagar. However, this disaster was prevented with great difficulty by putting sand bags on the embankment. After this threat, the entire Kathjodi embankment was declared unsafe as there was profuse seepage almost at every place. Waters of the Mahanadi spilled over at several places and the old temple of Lord Siva at Gadagadia went under knee-deep water.

The floods of 1982 were far more serious in nature than any in recorded history. The damages resulting from this flood were more severe than the damages caused by the floods of 1955 and 1980 taken together. Special features of this flood were that the peak discharge of 15.84 lac cusecs at Munduli was mainly due to rainfall over uncontrolled catchment areas downstream

from the Hirakud dam. There was only 9000 cusecs release from the reservoir and the barrage gates were kept closed from 4 p.m. of 29 August 1982 to 11 a.m. of 31 August 1982. The peak at the head of the Mahanadi delta at Naraj Railway Bridge attained a level of 28.53 metres at 5 p.m. of 31 August 1982 which was well above the danger level of 26.52 metres. The peak level in Kathjodi at Bellevue was 25.50 metres which was again above the danger level of 23.14 metres. There was severe damage in the embankment along the Devi River and the Dalei Ghai was breached. The National Highway-5 breached near Balikuda due to breaches in the Kathjodi-Kuakhai right embankment, thereby detaching Kataka from Bhubaneswar for more than a month. The intensity of the floods that year was so severe that even extinct rivers such as the Prachi, which had silted up about a hundred years ago and the Alaka, which had silted up about 200 years back, had re-opened during this flood. A new rivulet too was created inside the sub-divisional town of Banki which they said was the reappearance of the historical Renuka River. The town of Banki was devastated by a breach in the Mahanadi embankment there.

The then Chief Minister J.B. Patnaik took stock of the entire flood situation and gave instructions for the restoration of breaches in canals and river embankments on a war footing. Major assignments were entrusted to me, as I was then Chief Engineer, Minor Irrigation. The Dalei Ghai breach was closed within six months. Similar breaches which occurred during the floods of 1955 took two years to be closed. Breaches in canals were similarly closed on a war footing to ensure water supply for the rabi season. The breach in the Kathjodi-Kuakhai portion of the embankment too was closed and the National Highway-5 was repaired in record time. At every stage, the Chief Minister was monitoring the restoration works.

But the most challenging task at that time was to protect the city of Kataka from the fury of the floods. The Chief Minister instructed the Chief Engineer, Minor Irrigations, to prepare a project report for a ring embankment to protect the old city of Kataka. Later on, the ring embankment was extended to bring the outlying area of Bidanasi, which was on the banks of the Kathajodi, under the ring embankment scheme. So now it extended up to Naraj. The project report was prepared with the above provisions besides providing a capital embankment along the Kathajodi and the Mahanadi rivers up to Naraj, to reclaim an area of 2000 hectares. Although fund was a problem, the Chief Minister was determined to get it. The ring embankment project was attached to the construction project of the New Jobra Barrage. Later on, the Government made adequate provisions in the state budget and a division was created in November 1983 under the Irrigation Department to look after these works

The first hurdle in the commencement of the work, though, was land acquisition. As it was not possible to acquire land within a short period, it was decided to extend embankments towards the riverbed to avoid acquisition of private lands. However, the railway authorities objected to this proposal as the Kathajodi embankment was to encroach more than 60 per cent of land from the abutment to the first pier. But again, due to the timely intervention of the Chief Minister, the railway authorities agreed and approved the proposal for letting the embankment be built between the abutment and the first pier. Thus, in the first phase, the following works were taken up.

\* Kathajodi river from the railway bridge to the burial ground

\* Mahanadi river from Matamatha to Chahata

\* Embankment from Hariharghat to Naraj along the river Kathjodi and Chahata to Naraj along the river Mahanadi, which was known as the Bidanasi Gherry

Subsequently, the work from the burial ground to Hariharghat along the Kathjodi and Chahata to Hariharghat was taken up. A portion of 800 metres of the embankment near Khannagar was in an extremely precarious condition with deep scars near the toe. This portion of the repair work was done with the specifications of a dam by providing sand chimney and such other material. As earth was not available, the embankment was constructed with sand and sandy soil, of course, with adequate filter cover. At every stage, the Chief Minister monitored the execution. In fact, in a review meeting held at the Circuit House, he instructed the District Collector of Kataka to provide all administrative help to the Executive Engineer for the clearing of un-authorized encroachment, shifting of the river-side temples, clearance of slums near Puri-ghat and to get over any such hindrance. The Collector was asked to take a review meeting every two months to sort out the problems of the Executive Engineer.

The embankment from Bellevue up to the National Highway-5 along the Kathjodi on the left was widened with stone revetment on the slope. At specific locations, the toe wall has also been provided with armour stones weighing more than 2.5 metric tonnes. A new embankment from Ganeshghat to Bellevue was constructed. Similar widening and strengthening works along the Mahanadi on the right was also done from Chahata to Matamatha which was later extended up to the National Highway- 5. A two-lane road which was a little over 12 metres in width was provided over the embankment for

conveyance. The upper most level of the embankment had been kept at 1.20 metres above the highest flood level of the 1982 floods. Besides this, a capital embankment of eight kilometres along the Kathjodi River and seven kilometres along the Mahanadi River were constructed to reclaim 2000 hectares of land in Abhinaba Bidanasi. This embankment has further been improved during the construction of the Naraj Barrage and is called the Bidanasi Gherry. At present, the city is fast growing on the western side beyond Chahata-Hariharghat up to Naraj.

The new city of Kataka was named by the Chief Minister as Nua Bidanasi Kataka but it is now known as Markatanagar. The mouths of two inundation channels connecting the Kathjodi and the Mahanadi rivers were closed. Strict quality control was ensured by the Chief Engineer, Minor Irrigation. Under instructions of the Chief Minister, fluorescent lights were installed from Khannagar Railway Bridge to the crematorium. These works were completed in 1989 at an approximate cost of rupees ten crores. The Kataka Ring Road had been able to protect the city of Kataka from the severe floods of 2001 and 2008. Despite the tenacity of the floods, the embankment withstood them. Today, the Kataka Ring Road is the lifeline of the city of Kataka without which probably the traffic system in Kataka would have plunged into utter chaos.

The farsighted vision of a Chief Minister had thus ensured the safety of one of the oldest and historic cities of the country.

\* \* \*

## Tackling Slums with a Humane Face

Surendranath Swain ♦

**I**n 2009, the United Progressive Alliance (UPA) Government headed by Dr. Manmohan Singh announced the granting of property rights to the slum dwellers across India. In her Presidential address to the joint session of the Parliament that year, the then President of India, Pratibha Patil, enunciated this policy of the Union Government. On the face of it, the policy appeared to be a very bold and ambitious one. Any scheme of social justice, for the benefit of the dispossessed, is welcome to the society at large. In this case too, the declaration to grant property rights to slum-dwellers did go a long way to meet the expectation of millions of slum dwellers in the country.

But it was in 1988 itself that the Government of Odisha, headed by Janaki Ballav Patnaik had granted property rights to slum-dwellers in Bhubaneswar, the capital city, by issuing

---

♦ Surendranath Swain IPS (retd.) is a former IGP and Novelist



land deeds in the names of individual slum-dwellers. The State Government had also given financial assistance to each one of them to build their houses in their plots. The Odisha Government had thought far ahead of the Central Government in this regard.

The Odisha Government perhaps had taken such farsighted decisions, and that too quite early, because of the existence of a number of slums in Bhubaneswar. The major slums were at Satyanagar, Malisahi, Sukavihar, Madhusudannagar and Raghunathpur to name a few. Of all these slums, Satyanagar was the largest, spread over a fairly large area. Malisahi came next. They were dens of crimes in the city chronically inhabited by sex workers in ramshackle houses. All these slums were principally located in the heart of the new capital area, not far from the State Legislative Assembly and the State Secretariat. They were all unauthorized encroachments on public land and their unplanned and unhealthy growth posed a menace to the healthy growth of the city's heartland. Many people felt disturbed at the growth of the slums, particularly residents of the planned colonies around them. Although government after government came and went, they never paid any attention to it. However, things changed when J.B. Patnaik took over as the Chief Minister. He was determined to see these unhealthy slums with criminal dens go from there and wanted proper rehabilitation for the genuine slum dwellers. A litterateur and visionary whose words match his actions, J.B. Patnaik could not accept the spread of slums in the core areas of the capital city and wanted to make Bhubaneswar a healthy and beautiful place to live in. At the same time, he did not want the poor slum dwellers to be unnecessarily harassed. They, he felt, needed to be properly rehabilitated.

I was the Superintendent of Police (SP), Bhubaneswar, during his second term as the Chief Minister. He discussed with me and other concerned officers on clearing the slums in Bhubaneswar. Satyanagar presented the biggest problem. If it were feasible to clear Satyanagar, other slums lesser in their spread and dimensions would not present much of a problem.

Administration must have a humane face, said the Chief Minister and he meant what he said. He was resolute in achieving the goal. Yet deep down in his psyche, there was intense feeling for human values. Thus, taking into account the humanitarian aspect of evicting them, the following scheme was announced by the Government for the benefit of the slum families:

- a) Each family would be given 600 Sq. ft. of land free of cost in the suburban areas of Bhubaneswar city.
- b) Each family would be given immediate financial assistance to the tune of Rs. 3000.
- c) The belongings of the evicted families would be transported free of cost by the Government.
- d) Cooked food would be served to the displaced families on the day of eviction.

The General Administration Department of the Government was entrusted with the task of implementing the programme with the assistance of the police, the Bhubaneswar Municipality and the Bhubaneswar Development Authority.

It was decided to take up the eviction of Satyanagar first. Sufficient notice was served on the slum dwellers and adequate breathing time was given to vacate the encroached land. All

legal formalities were completed. Repeated announcements were made over loud speakers about the benefits to be bestowed upon the evicted families. These people owned nothing, even the government land on which their shanties were established were literally encroached upon by local goons who had claimed their ownership and collected monthly rent from the poor slum dwellers. These goons persuaded the slum dwellers not to give any credence to the government notice. Such announcements, instead of producing persuasive effects on the slum dwellers of Satyanagar, produced the opposite effect. Outside forces started persuading the slum dwellers to resist the move. Political elements of varying shades and especially those belonging to the extreme left also saw in it a splendid opportunity to further their anti-establishment agenda. Social activists, including a University Professor, also joined the fray. The promised benefits announced repeatedly were dubbed as mere propaganda. Ensnared in their dingy homes in this slum for several years, the inhabitants of Satyanagar could never agree to abandoning their home and hearth and moving to unknown destinations. Besieged by a belligerent mood, the slum dwellers of Satyanagar made elaborate preparations to offer violent resistance to the government's plan. The place turned into a near battle zone. The Chief Minister on his part was determined to see the removal of these slums from the heart of the capital city.

J.B. Patnaik was a composed and soft-spoken person. His instruction was clear—remove the slum dwellers by force if necessary but without resorting to firing that would result in death. He reposed faith in me to achieve the goal. I assured the Chief Minister that I would do the job with the use of minimum force. He wanted the removal of the people from Satyanagar to set an example. There should be no unnecessary violence.

I was gathering day-to-day intelligence regarding the activities at Satyanagar. The inhabitants were belligerent. Tempers were running high. They were bent on defying the law. The left extremists who had descended on the scene had garnered the support of a good number of Adivasi women and men who came out with bows and arrows. Those who resisted the eviction calculated that J.B. Patnaik's Government would not take recourse to firing on the slum dwellers and that the police force would retreat if it was successfully resisted and attacked. They had an example before them. The Bhubaneswar police had made a hasty retreat on an earlier occasion under my command. Instead of taking recourse to firing at an unruly mob at the P.M.G. square, we considered discretion was the better part of valour. On that occasion, a massive rally had been organized under the overall leadership of Biju Patnaik, the then Opposition Leader (when J. B. Patnaik was the Chief Minister). During that rally, when I found that the police contingent deployed to maintain order at the PMG Square, in front of the Odisha Legislative Assembly, was nearly outnumbered and the only way to check the onward advance of the provocative unruly mob towards the prohibited area was to open fire at the mob, I commanded the force to retreat to the northern side of the Odisha Legislative Assembly to avoid a catastrophic situation. And in compliance to my command, the force hastily retreated from the PMG Square to a distance of about 150 yards. The mob set fire to a police tent and a police motor cycle and yet I restrained the police force that was emotionally charged when they saw the flames of the burning police tent.

So this time round too, some of the members of the Opposition parties who had observed the conduct of the Bhubaneswar police on that occasion advised the inhabitants of Satyanagar that firing by the police was out of question in

J.B. Patnaik's administration. That was the report of the District Intelligence Bureau.

On the appointed day in 1988, I moved there with 19 platoons of force and adequate number of police officers. I briefed the force about the Do's and Don'ts. All the members of the force had put on helmets and body protectors. The Magistrates on duty and officers of the General Administration Department were also provided with helmets and body protectors. The inhabitants of Satyanagar had closed all the entry roads to Satyanagar by digging drains and raising strong wooden barricades. I decided not to divide the force but to approach Satyanagar from one particular point, that is, from the western side. The entire force was kept under one unified command. On seeing the arrival of the police force, a tumultuous battle cry shot up from the slum. Gradually, the crowd swelled up.

I was leading the force from the front. I positioned the force at a respectable distance from the crowd to allow adequate space for maneuvering and to avoid the police force from being mobbed by the crowd. I saw quite a large body of men armed with bows and arrows, ready to shoot at us.

I addressed the crowd with the help of the loud speaker. As usual, I was polite yet firm in my message to the crowd. I repeatedly explained to them the scheme of the Government which was loaded with benefits and sought their co-operation for its implementation. I exhorted the crowd not to take recourse to any kind of violence. The entire drill was video-recorded to keep proof of the conduct of the police and the crowd.

Provocative battle cries of the mob rent the air. The atmosphere was gradually heating up. The bowmen let loose arrows in keeping pace with the tempo of the mob. Those of us who were in the front were hit by arrows but nothing serious happened to anyone as we had put on body protectors. Two

arrows hit my body protector below the knees and another at the waist level but no harm was caused to me. A piece of stone hurled by the mob hit one of my junior colleagues, Deputy Superintendent of Police, Barik, on the face, breaking three of his front teeth. He had to be taken away for treatment with a bloodied face.

The senior most Magistrate in charge of the police force declared the crowd as an unlawful assembly and issued repeated warnings to disperse. His warnings fell on deaf ears. The mob was gradually turning more violent. When repeated warnings by the Magistrate failed to disperse the mob, tear gas shells were fired at it. These tear gas shells were promptly picked up with the help of wet clothes and thrown back at the direction of the police. Brickbats hurled by the mob came and hit the members of the police force. However, these missiles did cause harm to curious onlookers and news reporters. Mild lathi-charge to disperse the mob was an impossibility on account of the barricade.

The mob grew restive as all their outrageous acts failed to push back the police. A large number of people from among the mob jumped over the barricade and armed with deadly weapons, menacingly advanced towards the force. Had it come in physical touch with the members of the force it would have spelt disaster. When there was no other alternative and the mob had advanced to close proximity, minimum force was utilized by taking recourse to firing, injuring one person below the knee at the ankle-joint. It did produce the desired result and the mob melted away within no time.

Thereafter, our task became absolutely easy. It dawned upon the agitators that the government meant business. They ran away in haste, in search of safe shelter.

The Chief Minister, who was then on a brief tour to Kataka, came to know that police had resorted to firing on the

mob at Bhubaneswar. Unaware of the detailed facts, he became worried.

In the evening, the Director of Estates and I were summoned to see the Chief Minister in his office chamber in the Secretariat. There I narrated to him the entire course of events from the beginning to the end and explained to him that having undertaken the task in question, I could not have run away from the spot along with a large contingent of police force and magistracy allowing the entire edifice of the governmental authority to cave in, yielding to anarchy and lawlessness. The Chief Minister was now happy that a difficult task had been successfully executed without any loss of life and with only one gun-shot injury to only one person and that too below the knee. Thereafter, the Chief Minister was particularly interested to know about the rehabilitation programme undertaken by his administration and the welfare of the displaced slum dwellers. We explained to him that we were half way through the job in transporting the displaced families to the new destination and it would take some time before we completed the job.

The scheme announced by the Government was carried out in letter and spirit. Slums were cleared at Satyanagar, Malisahi, Madhusudan Nagar, Sashtri Nagar and Suka Vihar. The slum dwellers were re-established at Jokalandi, Sikihar Chandi Nagar and Dumduma. As ascertained from R.N. Mishra IAS (Retd.), the then Director of Estates, who played a pivotal role in the whole process, altogether 2962 land deeds were distributed and the slum dwellers were granted unqualified property rights in the suburban areas of the city.

Of course, these lifeless land deeds bore the contours of a humane face in the administration.

## A Period of Peace & Communal Amity

Prof. M.Q. Khan ♦

**A** country or even a small state in a country depends on its leader for growth and development at a particular point of time. And at that point of time, it is only a leader with positive vision, creative imagination and high ideals can pull a state or a country out of a state of despondency to a state of awakening and achievement.

Such a leader need not be a person from a royal family or of blue blood but he definitely needs to be a man of vision and imagination, even if coming from among the common people in a society. Indeed, great leaders make great achievements for their countries only through their vision and imagination. Hence, an eminent philosopher, C.E.M. Joad, while commenting on the role of imagination and vision had said that it is the great vision

---

♦ Prof. Md. Qamruddin Khan is an Educationist and Former Vice Chancellor, Berhampur University



or imagination of great leaders that have really built civilizations and pulled up small nations or states to occupy significant places in the history of civilization. Such leaders, however, are also inspired by a true spirit of secularism which enables them to work for the good of all the people of the society.

During the first three decades of independence, Odisha, one of the poorest and most backward states in India, was languishing for poor standard of living, total lack of infrastructure, absence of decent industrialization and maximum dependence on agriculture. Above all, the minority communities, the schedule castes and schedule tribes and other weaker sections of the community did not have any future.

With Janaki Ballav Patnaik as Chief Minister of Odisha from 1980 to 1989, the situation changed significantly. After a break of five years, he again came back to power in 1995 and successfully administered the State till 1999. Among his various attributes, the most outstanding trait that made him the most effective Chief Minister of the State was his vision and imagination which always inspired him to work for all sections of people and create conditions that would give a new shape to Odisha. He initiated a massive programme of industrialization and meaningful progress in the fields of agriculture, power generation, infrastructure building, education and culture. For the first time, the people of the State found in him a man of hard work and someone fully aware of the social, political, cultural and administrative problems of the State. He made numerous contributions during his stint of about 15 years as the Chief Minister of the State which was a golden period in Odisha's history in post Independent India.

Foremost and significant among all these is his contribution to the welfare of the minority communities in Odisha in general and of course, of the Muslim community

in particular. As the head of the State, during his entire tenure as Chief Minister, he showed great concern for the people belonging to minority communities like the Muslims, Christians and the Sikhs. Essentially a man of secular spirit, he always prized the importance of secular values. He always came to participate in the religious and cultural functions of the minority people. For the Muslim community, he had a special place in his heart and he sincerely worked towards raising their social, cultural, educational and economic standards. He had also great regards for Muslim leaders and Ulamas like Moulvi Ismiel and Moulvi Sajid of Sunghada, Moulana Barkatullah and Moulvi Qadir Bux of Kataka and many other eminent Muslim religious leaders of Odisha. Among many of his close friends was Advocate Mujibur Rahman of Bhubaneswar, a respected leader of the minority community who was a school mate and had close access to him. He headed the Wakf Board during Patnaik's time.

As an enlightened and broad minded leader, Janaki Ballav Patnaik wanted to give adequate representation to minorities in his cabinet. He saw to it that more Muslims were elected to the Legislature in his time than before and that all those elected were accommodated in his cabinet. During the eighties, all the three Muslim Members of the Legislative Assembly were Ministers in his government. They were Janab Habibullah Khan, Janab Matloob Ali and Janab Muzzaffar Hussain Khan, holding important portfolios like PWD, Irrigation, Food and Civil Supplies, Panchayat Raj and Community Development.

Among his contributions to the welfare of the Muslim community was the formation of the Haj Committee. Earlier, during the sixties and the seventies, Muslims were not given any encouragement for the Annual Haj pilgrimage. Only a few Muslims used to proceed to Mecca and that too, in an unorganized manner. There was neither an office nor an

institution to motivate the Muslims and to provide them with facilities for the Annual Haj pilgrimage which is one of the five pillars of Islam.

Soon after Patnaik came to power for the second time in 1985, Muslims approached the Chief Minister and apprised him of the need of a State Haj Committee. He took the matter seriously, consulted the Law Department and called a meeting of eminent Muslims of Kataka at the Nari Seva Sadan in 1986 and later announced the formation of the Odisha Haj Committee which was attached to the Odisha Wakf Board. Thus it was under his direct patronage and with his keen interest that the Haj institution took a new shape and every year one responsible Muslim Moulvi was sent as the Khadim or guide for the Haj pilgrims. As a result of these measures, the number of pilgrims increased from 50 or 60 to around 600 to 700 every year. Apart from providing adequate financial help to the institution through the Odisha Wakf Board, he was also instrumental in sending some of the eminent Moulvies to perform the annual Haj. Needless to say, today the Muslims of Odisha are fully aware of the benefits and facilities provided by the Odisha Haj Committee established by the Chief Minister and every year thousands of Muslims apply to the State Haj Committee to proceed to Mecca through it. It was also through his efforts that Moulana Ismail of Sunghada became a member of the Central Haj Committee, Delhi.

Similarly, the Odisha Wakf Board, established earlier at Kataka, was in a sorry state of affairs owing to irregular appointments of the Wakf Commissioner and particularly due to lack of proper supervision of the Wakf properties. Little effort was made by the officials to make adequate utilization of the Wakf institutions. As an alert Chief Minister of the State, Patnaik took immediate steps to properly organize the Odisha

Wakf Board. He gave specific instructions to the Law Minister to take interest in the matters of the Wakf and raised its status by appointing a Muslim Minister as Chairman of the Odisha Wakf Board. When Ministers were not appointed, men of importance and status were chosen for the job. As such, persons like engineer Mumtaz Ali and advocate Mujibur Rahman had held the post of the Chairman of the Wakf Board. The Board was very active during Patnaik's time, rendering the best of services to the minority people. It solved quite a number of disputes that had blocked the programme and progress of the Board. Wakf endowments of the State were now properly protected and utilized.

Being a prominent though small state of India, Odisha is a meeting place of various sects, classes and communities with their distinct cultures. Muslims formed the largest minority community of the state although they are just about 2.5 per cent of the entire population. But they have a distinct culture, social customs and traditions and above all, they have intense love for their language, Urdu, which is one of the most loved languages of the country. But during the first three decades of Independence, the language was neglected and its growth and development were stunted due to lack of patronage by the State. The educated Muslims of the State had a real grievance in this matter and some of them approached the Chief Minister Patnaik, urging him to establish a State Urdu Academy. The Chief Minister being essentially a man of culture and an enlightened administrator had much admiration for this rich language. Early in the year 1980, an important public meeting was held at Madrasa Sultania, Kataka, where Patnaik was present as Chief Guest. In that meeting, I made an impassioned speech appealing to the Chief Minister to declare the establishment of the Urdu Academy in Odisha. A sensitive and enlightened soul, Patnaik was touched

to the core of his heart. With his green signal, I along with Samarballav Mohapatra, IAS, the then Secretary of Culture, drafted a resolution for the constitution of the Academy with its by-laws and all other necessary documents. The process led to the passing of an Act in the Odisha Legislative Assembly.

Soon, on 7 February 1987, in a grand function held at the Suchana Bhavan, Bhubaneswar, the Odisha Urdu Academy was inaugurated by B.N. Pande, the then Governor of Odisha, in the presence of J.B. Patnaik. A long-felt need and a dream of the minority community had at last materialized. And according to the Chief Editor of the souvenir published on the occasion for the Academy, it was “a symbolic gift of our enlightened Chief Minister to the people of Odisha”. The event was hailed from all quarters of the country as an important contribution to the development of the Urdu language which played a vital role in the cultural assimilation and unification of our country. The then Governor, congratulating the State Government on the occasion, observed, “It is gratifying that the State Government has embarked upon this laudable venture which will no doubt provide a new fillip to the development of this language in the State.”

Patnaik, in his message to the souvenir on the occasion, observed, “With the inauguration of the Odisha Urdu Academy on 7 February 1987, one of my most cherished dreams have come true. I am confident that the Academy will give the much needed boost to the study of Urdu in Odisha.”

Besides the establishment of this Academy, the Chief Minister took keen interest in the Odisha Minority Cell. Many of the problems of the minority community were solved and difficulties resolved through this cell because of the active intervention and support of the Chief Minister. The Urdu Library at Kataka, although started with the individual effort

of Moinuddin Ahmed, Dr. Mustaque Ali and many others, had full support and encouragement of Patnaik.

A profound scholar of language, literature and culture, Patnaik, with his winsome personality, was also a great friend of the minority institutions and eminent individuals. Hence he took personal care for the promotion of some of the promising scholars, administrators and men of letters in the State irrespective of cast, creed and religion. In the year 1995, he learnt that the Search Committee of the University Grants Commission (UGC) had recommended the name of Prof. M.Q. Khan, Director of Text Book Bureau, Odisha, for the post of Vice-Chancellor of Berhampur University, taking into consideration his academic achievements and administrative performance. Patnaik too felt that Prof. Khan, an outstanding academician, would be just the right choice for this post. Although it was the Chancellor of the University who made the appointment on the recommendation of the expert members of the Search Committee, Patnaik, as the Chief Minister of the State, exerted his influence to see that Prof. Khan was chosen for the job. Prof. Khan is the first and till now the only member of the minority community to have occupied such a high and coveted position as that of Vice Chancellor in an important University of the State.

As mentioned earlier, the Chief Minister took active interest in the peaceful observation of the feasts, festivals and rituals of the minority community. It is significant to note here that during the year 1996, a huge *Alami Ijtema* or Global Gathering was organized at Barambanada, a big Muslim dominated village in the district of Jajpur. The gathering attracted about a lakh of Muslims from all over the country. Large numbers of foreign delegates too came to attend the function. A huge marquee was put up along with temporary

accommodation for the participants, complete with basic amenities like toilet and drinking water facilities for three days' of comfortable stay. The Chief Minister himself visited the meeting place and sat among the crowd to pray with them as any other humble pilgrim. This huge conference of three days passed off peacefully and some misguided elements who tried to create trouble were sternly dealt with. As the Chief Minister, he organized Iftar parties and invited hundreds of Muslims from all over the State to break their fast with him. Members of other communities were also invited so that an atmosphere of communal harmony and amity would prevail.

The State Minority Finance Corporation was established to promote entrepreneurship among the minority community. The Chief Minister specifically instructed the police department to recruit more and more Muslim young men into the State police force. As a result, thousands of young boys got employment opportunities in the State.

At times, however, the State became apprehensive of communal tensions due to the provocative activities of some hostile communal elements. Chief Minister Patnaik dealt sternly with these elements and never allowed communal peace and harmony of the State to be disturbed. Once in the pretext of collecting bricks for the Ram Temple, a procession was organized at Kataka by some communal elements which would have led to a riotous situation if not properly handled. But Patnaik, by being personally present in the Kataka Circuit House on the day of the procession, saw to it that nothing untoward happened. He issued strict instructions to the district administration and the police to see to it that the procession should not pass through the Muslim areas of the city and that peace and order be maintained at all cost.

One of the greatest achievements of Patnaik as the Chief Minister of Odisha was maintenance of perfect communal harmony, peace and amity throughout his tenure. He had served as the Chief Minister of Odisha for 14 years and in this entire period not a single incident of breach of peace or communal violence was reported from anywhere in the State.

All sections of the society lived in an atmosphere of perfect peace and harmony.

\* \* \*



## Odisha & Christianity

Rev. Prabhat Chandra Bag ♦

**C**hristianity came to Odisha through the missionaries of the Baptist Missionary Society which was established in England on 20 October 1792. The Society's first missionaries, Bampton and Peggs, landed on the coast of Odisha on 12 February 1822. The first Odia Christian was Gangadhar Sarangi, an orthodox and educated Brahmin, who took Baptism in the river Mahanadi in Kataka on 23 March 1828. He was baptized by the missionary Brother Lacy. Although Christians in Odisha constitute only three per cent of the population, they are an important minority serving the State for nearly 200 years.

Christian missionaries played a significant role in the socio-cultural field of Odisha. The main aim of the missionaries was to abolish poverty, illiteracy, corruption and to bring a new

---

♦ Rev. Prabhat Chandra Bag is Senior Pastor, Odia Baptist Church, Kataka

light into the society. During the famine in 1866, the most disastrous natural calamity that befell the land, a lot of relief work was done by the Christian missionaries. They opened many orphanages and boarding schools for the destitutes. They worked hard to eradicate superstitions, blind beliefs and evil practices such as the *Sati Pratha*, child marriage, child sacrifice and many more. In 1919, the Leper Asylum was established in Kataka.

The missionaries put in much effort towards the development of the Odia language. They established the first printing press, known as the Mission Press, at Kataka in 1838. They also published the first Odia dictionary. They translated the Bible into Odia and the first Odia newspaper was printed and published from Calcutta. They established a number of schools, both for boys and girls, between 1822 and 1823. The Kataka Mission School was started as a high school and later on it was developed into a college. Their educational activities were not confined to Kataka alone. There were mission schools at different district headquarters. They introduced English medium schools initially as primary schools and then they developed these into higher secondary schools. The Stewart School, established in 1881, and the Convent Schools were some such institutions which grew from primary schools. The Stewart College was established later at Kataka. With the help of the Woods Despatch of 1854, women's education began to spread. The Christian missionaries also established good hospitals in inaccessible areas like Sundargarh, Ganjam Agency, G. Udayagiri in Kondhamal, Khadial in Kalahandi, Diptipur in Sambalpur, Bissam in Kataka and in Nawrangpur in Koraput. They spread practices of hygiene and good health among the people of Odisha and taught them that cleanliness was next to godliness.

Many Odia Christians occupied important positions in Odisha's administration and public life. Among them were Rai Bahadur Samuel Das, Secretary and Commissioner, Lalmohan Patnaik, ex-Speaker of the Odisha Legislative Assembly and the most important and respected of the them all, Madhusudan Das, who is known as Kula Bruddha and Utkal Gaurava.

In an integrated society and a secular State, a minority community needs complete security and equal opportunity with others to grow and prosper and to contribute to the totality of the State's development. India is a democratic secular state and the Christian community is proud to be secular in the service of the state. Sometimes, however, they have to suffer intolerance and indignities at the hands of some fundamentalist elements. I can say with confidence that Odisha is a peaceful state with utmost fellow feeling among all the communities in the State barring a few disturbing elements. And it is the duty of the State to control them. The Khondmal incidents, which would remain as a slur on the good name of the State, could have been prevented provided the administration had taken the right step at the right time.

I may recall here the sense of security and peace the community enjoyed during the period from 1980 to 1989 and again from 1995 to 1999 when J.B. Patnaik was the Chief Minister. For 14 long years, he had held the reins of the government and he would be always remembered for his concern for the welfare of the Christians and other minority communities. The help rendered to the Christian schools in Sundargarh, giving them necessary government aid and yet giving the mission full control over their management, is still remembered with gratitude. Strict law and order was maintained in sensitive areas and disturbing elements were never allowed to raise their heads.

Due political representation was also given to the Christian community during his Chief Ministership. Kumari Frieda Topno who belonged to this community was taken into the Council of Ministers in the State and later she was elected to the Lok Sabha as well. Similarly, Maurice Kujru was elected to the Lok Sabha from Sundargarh and Radhakanta Naik was elected to the Rajya Sabha when Patnaik was the leader of the opposition party. Nelson Soren, Remis Kerketa and Christopher Ekka were all Members of the Legislative Assembly when Patnaik was the Chief Minister. That was a golden period for the State both in the fields of development and good administration.

We should pray that such leadership always prevails in our State. We should also pray the Almighty to bless our State and our country to become prosperous, peaceful and powerful in the world through such able leadership. We should also strive to bring peace, joy, communal and religious harmony in the State.

Truly, it is written in the Holy Bible, “I urge then, first of all, that requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone—for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness. This is good and pleases God our Saviour, who wants all men to be saved and to come to knowledge of the truth”. (*First Timothy 2: 1-4*)

\* \* \*

## Sikhs in Odisha

Satpal Singh ♦

**D**uring his itinerary throughout India, Gurunanak Dev, the founder of Sikhism, also visited Odisha. He had then visited Bhadrak, Datan Sahib in Kataka and Puri in 1506 to pay homage to Lord Jagannath. An important event in Sikh history is that one of the bravest Sikhs was Bhai Himat Singh from Puri who offered his head to Guru Gobind Singh on the great historical event in 1699 at Anandpur Sahib. He was earlier known as Himmat Ray and was in the service of Guru Govind Singh. He was one of the five disciples of the Guru who came forward from among the crowd of disciples assembled there, offering their heads. These five select disciples are known, in Sikh history, as the Panj Piaras or the five beloved of the Guru. Later on, Bhai Himmat Singh laid down his life

---

♦ Satpal Singh is an Industrialist and president of Guru Nanak Public School

fighting the Moghuls in the battle field. Maharaj Ranjit Singh visited the holy Jagannath Temple of Puri to donate the famous Kohinoor diamond to Lord Jagannath.

The Sikhs, although a small minority in Odisha, have played a big role in the construction of major projects like the Paradip Port, irrigation dams, major bridges and the construction of the New Capital of Bhubaneswar. The Government of Odisha has always given a lot of opportunities to the Sikh community to prosper and progress in the State. The then Chief Minister, J.B. Patnaik, always had a soft corner for the Sikh community. Whenever any problem arose, he had promptly solved them. He had donated land to the Bhubaneswar Gurudwara. On that land, a beautiful Gurudwara along with a school and a hospital has been constructed, providing noble service to mankind. Patnaik had also given plots of land to the Gurudwaras at Kataka and Sambalpur.

The Sikhs of Odisha had also approached J.B. Patnaik for land in Puri for constructing the Gurudwara at Bolimath. He had then personally called the Collector and the temple administration to give the required land but unfortunately, it could not materialize due to interference from the Court.

In 1984, the Sikh riots broke out all over the country but in Odisha, Chief Minister J.B. Patnaik did not allow any untoward incident to take place. He immediately organized *Sadbhavana Padayatras* and set up a peace committee comprising Muslims, Sikhs, Hindus and people of other sects. And peace reigned in the State.

The Sikhs took advantage of the new Industrial Policy Resolution and established various industries in the State which created employment for their people. A good hotel and a modern shopping complex were also set up in Bhubaneswar.

J.B. Patnaik will always be remembered as a well wisher of the Sikh community.

Although Sikhs are a minority, they have never felt unequal in Odisha.

\* \* \*

## Janaki Babu: A Unique Personality

Mahapatra Nilamani Sahu ♦

**W**e first met in 1945 in the West Hostel of Ravenshaw College when Janaki Ballav was pursuing his graduate studies with Honours in Sanskrit. Subsequently, he did his Post Graduation in Political Science from the Banaras Hindu University. I was a student doing my intermediate studies in Humanities at that time. Soon, we developed a close relationship. He was the topmost leader of the Students' Congress and very popular among the students. After our interaction, my friends and I became besotted by his charismatic qualities. Everyone was captivated by his fair-complexion, slim figure, mesmerizing and affectionate eyes and sweet smile. He was soft at heart but sharp in his wit. With his refined taste and sense of humour, he was able to make his

---

♦ Mahapatra Nilamani Sahu is an eminent Author and Sahitya Akademi Puraskar Awardee



surroundings really appealing. Even now he enjoys the ability to charm those around him.

Besides, he had a great sense of patriotism, lofty ideals, purity of conduct and yearning for knowledge. Under his humble appearance, he had a firmness of character and self-respect, qualities he possesses even today. His ideal is Karna of the Mahabharata. He keeps quoting Karna's words of great self-confidence, "One's birth into a high family is accidental but one's qualities of the head and the heart are caused by one's own effort. One who stands up on one's own without being boosted by one's family name is a true hero." He has built up his life on meticulously cultivated qualities that have shaped him into a successful, self-made man.

Janaki Ballav Patnaik is basically a Gandhian. He was inspired by Gandhiji when he was still a child. Since his school days, he has spun yarns on the spinning wheel and worn khaddar clothes. In his school days, he read the Ramayana, the Mahabharata, the Bhagabat and the Geeta and he has been inspired by the ideals of these religious books. He has been inspired also by the humane ideals and thoughts of Ramakrishna Paramahansa, Swami Vivekananda, Sri Aurobindo and Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose. It was because of these that many students like me had spontaneously accepted him as their friend, philosopher and guide. During my school life, I was also a member of the *Vanar Sena* and took part in the freedom movement. My elder brother Late Kulamani Mohapatra had given up his studies to join the freedom movement. He even went to jail fighting for India's freedom. Therefore, I used to follow Janaki Babu and gave him my support and even today I do so.

In those days, he used to organize a study circle every Sunday with some students. We used to discuss with them a

number of issues relating to life, society and the world. He had kept up the good habit of reading and under his influence we all started reading books. Later, when he joined the *Prajatantra* newspaper, founded by Harekrishna Mahatab, he would organize such study circles there as well.

When we were in the West Hostel, we used to get up very early, read the Geeta and practise yogasana under his influence. Since those hostel days until now, even when he became the Chief Minister, our relationship has continued on high grounds of morality and idealism.

When we were in the West Hostel, he had once created a furor by tearing away the Union Jack flying over the college building and replacing it with the national Tricolour. He was expelled from the college and a big students' movement started, resulting in the imprisonment of many student leaders and this led to a students' strike all over the State. The students remained firm on their demand that no Union Jack would fly in the Ravenshaw College compound and in other educational compounds. It was only after the government conceded that the strike was called off.

After receiving his Post Graduate degree from the Banaras Hindu University, he did not go for any job. He could have become a government officer with attractive future prospects but he was independent-minded and imbued with noble ideas. He first became a journalist and then joined active politics. He became the editor of the *Prajatantra* and the newspaper increased its circulation during his tenure. He gave a new direction to journalism. *Prajatantra* was not a mere newspaper, it had a Sunday literary supplement and introduced such sections as Nari Mahal for women, Shishu Mahal for children, Kreed Jagat which was the Sports Section, Natya O Cinema Samachar which consisted of news from the world of theatre and cinema

as well as other features and articles. Eminent writers, teachers and intellectuals became associated with the *Prajatantra*. The editorials he wrote everyday were very inspiring. Janaki Babu was not only a journalist, he was also a lover of literature. He became very popular for his simple but lucid poetical translation of Bhartrihari's *Neetishataka*, *Vairagyashataka* and *Shringarshataka* in Odia. During that period, he also wrote the biographies of Swami Vivekananda and other saintly persons. His Ramayana and Mahabharata, especially his Bhagabat, will remain as treasures of Odia literature. He has earned the fame of a modern day mythologist by writing these books. He has profound depth in Sanskrit literature too. His knowledge in English literature is no less. He has studied the Vedas, the Vedantas, the Upanishads, the Satkavya and Indian and western philosophy. He can speak fluently in Odia, Hindi, Sanskrit and English. I know very few politicians who are equal to his intellectual calibre. He has received the Odisha Sahitya Akademi Award for his contribution to Odia literature and has also been awarded the Central Sahitya Academy Award.

During his Chief Ministership, he gave special attention to the Odisha Sahitya Akademi. The prize money was enhanced and a good amount of money was sanctioned for the various programmes of the Akademi. It was under his instruction and support that the correct edition of the saint-poet Jagannath Das's Srimad Bhagabat and the biographies of eminent Odias were published and sold at a reasonably low price. The Sanskrit Bhagabat was also translated into Odia. The Akademi organized seminars and many such programmes all through the year. A lot of translation work was also undertaken during the period.

It is a matter of pride for us that in view of his deep knowledge of Sanskrit and Vedic literatures and rich experience as an administrator, he has been nominated as the Chancellor of

the Tirupati University. From the very beginning, I have observed one noble trait in Janaki Babu, that he joined politics because he wanted the welfare of the society and the nation. Owing to this motivation, he has initiated a number of development works of considerable benefit to the people of the State.

Janaki Babu is a talented person. His greatness becomes evident when we see him felicitating another talented person irrespective of his or her social status. Although he has adorned very high position in his life, nobody has noticed any trace of pride or arrogance in him. He is basically a humble and amiable human being. He has great faith in God and is a great devotee of Lord Jagannath. He implemented a number of new projects for better management of the temple of Lord Jagannath when he was the Chief Minister. Sri Jagannath Sanskrit University at Puri too is his creation. He has always endeavored for the preservation and development of Indian culture.

I know very well that he always comes forward to help any person or organization engaged in good work. A number of literary, cultural and religious organizations have prospered with his help. Sri Aurobindo Centre for Integral Education and Shivananda Educational Institution near Khandagiri have grown because of his help.

His devout father's influence on him too went a long way in shaping his personality. He had the blessings of his pious father all through his life. His father Late Gokulananda Patnaik was an ideal teacher and a pastoral poet. Pala singers sing his numerous literary songs. He has written an epic called *Janakiballava Bilas* on the life of Maryada Purosottam Sri Ramachandra. There at the end, when he describes his own life story, he describes as to what inspired him to write the book. He, it seemed, had prayed to Lord Ramachandra wishing for a talented son and with that end in view he wrote this book.

With the grace of Lord Ramachandra, his wife gave birth to a male child the very day he completed the epic. Many people like me who have come in close contact with Janaki Babu know that there is a spiritual self behind his political personality.

In conclusion, let me briefly state my own impression on Janaki Babu's life and personality. Prosperity does not overwhelm him nor does adversity. He has a strong sense of self-confidence and will to achieve his goals. He has never been a tool in anybody's hands. He has all along maintained his self respect and dignity and has great faith in his God, Lord Jagannath.

Dear readers, with a clean conscience I narrated here whatever I know about this unique personality. I conclude here with a prayer to Lord Jagannath to give him a healthy and active life.

\* \* \*

## A Friend Forever

Satyanand Champatiray ♦

**W**hen I got myself enrolled in the eighth standard at the Khordha High School in 1940, another student from our nearby village of Rameshwar was studying in the same school, in the tenth standard. He was receiving Middle Elementary scholarship and would always get the first position in his class. The student community was naturally attracted towards him. Besides, he was an orator and a writer. We slowly got acquainted and as years passed by, our relationship too became close. Even in those early days he was a leader among the students. And he was none other than Janaki Ballav Patnaik!

Mahatma Gandhi, along with other members of the Congress Working Committee, was taken prisoner after he

---

♦ Satyanand Champatiray is an well-known poet, former Editor of 'Jhankar', 'Utkal Prasanga' and 'Odisha Review'

gave the Quit India call on 9 August 1942. This news spread like wild fire and the whole country was electrified. I recall, on 10 August, the students of Khordha High School, under the leadership of Janaki Babu, went on a strike. The students raised slogans like *Jatiya Congress ki Jay*, *Mahatma Gandhi ki Jay* and *Inquilab Zindabad* and abandoned their classes.

Rai Saheb Banka Nidhi Patnaik was then the Head Master of the Khordha High School. Despite his being a very strict disciplinarian, the students continued the strike without any fear because they were imbued with the national spirit. But after three days of continuous strike, there were no Congress leaders to tell us what to do. There was no guidance and no suggestion for the next course of action. After paralyzing the school for three days, we had no other choice but to resume classes. Janaki Babu used to wear Khadi clothes even during those days. His sartorial preference and demeanour were not ostentatious. He was friendly, fearless and generous by nature. These qualities endeared him to the students.

On receiving a scholarship after he matriculated in 1943, Janaki Babu took admission in Ravenshaw College and stayed in the West Hostel from 1945. I took admission in the same college and as fate would have it, I too became a boarder of the West Hostel. There was a fierce students' agitation to remove the Union Jack on the occasion of the annual sports meet of the college. By December 1946, Janaki Babu had played a major role in organizing the agitation referred to as the Union Jack Hatao Movement. Other student leaders who took active part in this movement were Pradipta Kumar Dash, Manmohan Mishra, Dhuliswar Bastia and Kulamani Mahapatra. Under the leadership of Janaki Babu, we declared the West Hostel as an Independent Sovereign Democratic Republic and we hoisted the Tricolour atop the hostel building.

Soon though, on the orders of the principal, Janaki Babu was expelled from the college and the students were asked to vacate the hostels. But the expulsion had the least effect on him. We did not allow the superintendent or the principal to step into our hostel. Janaki Babu had shown his fearless and unflinching leadership at that time. No student had left the West Hostel. I like to mention this here purposely to point out how these events served as a precursor of his future leadership in the State.

He did his Post Graduation from the Banares Hindu University and returned to Odisha in 1949 to join as the joint-editor of the English daily *The Eastern Times*, published by the Prajatantra Prachar Samiti. Three years later, he became the editor of two newspapers, the *Prajatantra* and the *Eastern Times*. Although he had taken up journalism as a career at that time, he never dissociated from public life. He was the leader of the State Youth Congress in 1956. Following the ideals of Vinoba Bhave, he had set up a labour camp or *Srama Sibir* and with the cooperation of students and the youth, he had built a stretch of concrete road which connected the Chauliaganj Post Office to Bhima Ice Factory at Kataka. This road came to be known as Vinoba Marg.

I along with many others joined him for this project. Nabakrushna Choudhury who was the Chief Minister at the time also got drawn to the labour camp and when he came to visit it, he himself had carried basket loads of soil on his head with the student activists.

I myself was also inspired by this labour camp. Later, when I was a Member of the Legislative Assembly (MLA) from the Begunia constituency, I had initiated the Shatamarga Movement with the participation of volunteers who had completed the construction of a hundred village roads. After



I completed my post graduation, I began working as a labour officer in the Joda-Barbil region. I never liked the job though. So Janaki Babu persuaded me to leave the job and participate instead in active politics. Soon I became a Congress candidate from the Begunia-Bolgarh Assembly Constituency in the General Election of 1957. He was always with me, canvassing for my victory. I contested and won the election and was elected as an MLA. Later on in 1961, I became the Managing Editor of the *Jhankar* on the advice of Mahtab Babu. It was then that I got to work together with Janaki Babu. He was the main source of inspiration behind the widespread anti-corruption students' movement of 1964. *Prajatantra*, the newspaper, was functioning as a mouthpiece of that movement.

Janaki Babu soon gave up his job as the editor of the *Prajatantra* and entered the arena of active politics. He became a Member of the Parliament and joined the Central Council of Ministers. He took charge of the State Congress Party in 1976. He then contested the General Elections of 1980 from Kataka and having won, became a Cabinet Minister for some time in 1980. Then he became the Chief Minister of Odisha. All through these years, he and I have been in continuous contact. He offered me the editorship of the *Utkal Prasanga*, the mouthpiece of the Odisha Government. Before I joined the *Utkal Prasanga* and the *Odisha Review*, they used to publish stereotype articles which advertised and talked about only government programmes. But after my joining them, they started carrying literary and cultural articles besides reports regarding the successful implementation of government schemes and programmes. Both the publications had gained popularity among the public. Janaki Babu was the Chief Minister of Odisha for three terms and through that entire period he had proven his administrative ability. He succeeded in introducing dynamic programmes in the fields of

agriculture, industry and education. The people of Odisha are now enjoying the fruits of his work.

In the meanwhile, I have distanced myself from active politics. But Janaki Babu has remained a friend to me all these yours. He has braved many a storm in his life but never lost his patience and strength of conviction. I am still tied to him by the affection of our long drawn friendship. In 1942, Janaki Babu had written a poem and I still remember it. Today I make an effort to felicitate him by reproducing his own poem:

*Oh friend ever unbent,  
You have held your head high  
No despair or disdain had ever weakened you  
Fighting a hundred battle with adversaries new  
And facing storms and gales of every hue  
Your heart is big and patience great,  
Have taken everybody by your friendly gait.*

\* \* \*

# a n n e x u r e s



## Janaki Ballav Patnaik: Assam's Reformist Governor

Wasbir Hussain ♦

**A**pril 4, 2010. Assam Governor Janaki Ballav Patnaik decided to visit the district town of Barpeta, in Western Assam. An erudite Sanskrit scholar, and someone who is very well read, Governor Patnaik's destination was the Patbausi Sattra, a famed Vaishnavite monastery where Sri Sankardeva, the fifteenth century philosopher-saint had spent 18 years of his life.

When the Governor's motorcade reached the Patbausi Sattra premises, he was warmly welcomed by the Sattradhikar, the head of the Sattra, the *bhakats* or disciples, and the local people. The traditional welcome touched the octogenarian leader who had been Odisha's Chief Minister for nearly a decade and a half. Everything seemed hunky dory but there was something that caught Janaki Babu's attention. "I found women standing in groups at the entrance of the Sattra. They informed

---

♦ Wasbir Hussain, a well-known author, political commentator and television talk show host, is Executive Director of the Centre for Development & Peace Studies, Guwahati ([www.cdpsindia.org](http://www.cdpsindia.org)).

me they are barred from actually entering the Sattrā,” he told me later during a conversation.

From his readings on Sri Sankardeva, his philosophy and teachings, Governor Patnaik concluded the women were discriminated against. So, he immediately requested the Sattradhikar and members of the Patbausi Sattrā management for a meeting. “I simply reasoned with the Sattrā authorities that Sri Sankardeva never discriminated between men and women and encouraged women to take part in all rituals,” he told me.

The Sattrā authorities were put in some difficulty. After all, such iconic women like Indira Gandhi, Amrita Pritam, and celebrated Assamese litterateur Mamoni Raisom Goswami (Indira Goswami) were not allowed entry into the Patbausi Sattrā earlier. This has been a traditional practice and the Sattrā had been out of bounds for women for ages perhaps because menstruating women were thought to be ‘unclean’.

The Sattrā authorities knew at the same time that there was enough merit in Governor Patnaik’s argument. Finally, Janaki Babu had his way. The Patbausi Sattrā authorities allowed the entry of women, breaking the age old glass ceiling. Wasting no time, the Governor entered the hallowed precincts of the Patbausi Sattrā’s Kirtan Ghar, accompanied by a group of 20 women and offered prayers. The very next day, a group of five women from Guwahati visited the Sattrā, entered the premises, offered prayers, and donated an amount of Rs 51,000.

The media went to town with the story. A ‘reformist Governor’, some journalists wrote. Governor Patnaik, however, was not to remain satisfied with just this. Some weeks later, he saw me at a public function from the dais and gestured, wanting me to come up. Janaki Babu does not believe too much in convention, and so I walked up to the dais, watched by a packed audience. He asked me if I could spare some time and see him

the next day. When I met him at the Raj Bhawan the following afternoon, he said he was planning a visit to the Dargah of Azaan Pir, the seventeenth century Muslim saint-preacher, located near Sivasagar, in eastern Assam.

Azaan Pir also preached humanism and universal brotherhood and is among the most revered Muslim saints that Assam has had. Hindus and Muslims alike visit the Dargah, located across the Dikhow River. I thought Janaki Babu must have read about Azaan Pir sahib and wanted to see the Dargah for himself. But the reformer in him had a broader idea. "Why can't Assamese Muslim women offer Namaz alongside the men at the Masjids. Is there any bar?" He asked me. There is no bar but the Masjids do not have the necessary facilities like a separate entrance or a partitioned space for the women to say Namaz under the male Imams. Governor Patnaik wanted a beginning for women to pray alongside men and managed to convince the authorities of the Masjid within the premises of the Dargah of Azaan Pir. Makeshift arrangements were made and a group of women offered Namaz alongside men. A small step, but historic without doubt.

After a long hiatus, Assam has come to have a proactive Governor. Janaki Babu has made a number of direct interventions in recent months on issues that are of vital interest to the State. The veteran leader knows exactly how to administer a state and in dealing with key problems. No wonder, he has been trying to resolve a few ticklish issues confronting Assam.

In December 2012, he held a meeting with leaders of the Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC) at the Raj Bhawan. The BTC is the politico-administrative autonomous structure that administers the Bodo-dominated Kokrajhar and other districts in western and northern Assam. He told BTC deputy chief Kampa Borgoyari and State Transport Minister Chandan

Brahma, who belongs to the Bodoland People's Front (BPF), the party that is an ally of the ruling Congress, in no uncertain terms that the Council administration should resolve the issue of resettling the uprooted Muslim settlers and others on the basis of their names figuring in the voters list of the area. The Governor, after all, enjoys certain special powers under the Constitution's Sixth Schedule and can, therefore, directly intervene in affairs in Sixth Schedule areas.

Up to 400,000 people were displaced from their homes during the rioting between Bodos and Muslim settlers during July-August 2012 in which a hundred people were killed. When the issue of rehabilitation of these uprooted people came up, the BTC leaders insisted that land documents should be the criterion. Accordingly, the district authorities started a drive to check the land documents, particularly of the Muslim settlers. As expected, many of the uprooted people did not possess any land documents whatsoever. Many such people were reported to have disappeared from the relief camps fearing harassment.

The Bodo leaders sought to contest the Governor's suggestion saying the voters' list could actually be erroneous as it could well contain names of illegal migrants and, therefore, resettling the uprooted people at the places from where they had fled on the basis of the voters' list may not quite be the right thing to do. But Governor Patnaik knew statecraft only too well. He pointed out that the BTC elections were held twice on the basis of the same voters' list and, therefore, if that was to be the logic, then their own election could also be a questionable issue. Not being content with just the verbal directive, Governor Patnaik called the Assam Chief Secretary to make sure the uprooted people were resettled on the basis of their names figuring on the voters' list.



Governor Patnaik knows only too well how to strike at the root of a problem. As the riots continued for days in the Bodo heartland, he was trying to diagnose the problem. "I realized that unless the illegal arms, found in abundance in the area, were seized, violence was not going to end." The Governor then gave a clear directive to the State Director General of Police to conduct a house-to-house search in the area for illegal weapons and not spare anyone, irrespective of his or her status or position. The Bodo Council authorities resented the move but the action paid dividends. The scale of violence was reduced drastically, specially after a local people's representative was arrested for possessing illegal arms.

Again, Union Rural Development minister Jairam Ramesh made news in Assam towards the end of 2012 by publicly stating that the Government must declare the two eastern districts of Tinsukia and Dibrugarh as Maoist affected. This, he said, would make the two Maoist affected districts eligible for special benefits.

"Dibrugarh and Tinsukia (in eastern Assam) may join the list of (such) districts as the ministry has moved a proposal to the Planning Commission and we expect an announcement soon," Ramesh was quoted as saying. "There are intelligence reports that Maoist activities are on the rise in the two districts." News reports said Dibrugarh and Tinsukia will receive a package of Rs.30 crore each annually for developmental activities under the Planning Commission's Integrated Action Plan (IAP). As many as 82 districts in the country were covered under the plan as of 2012.

But it was on 11 June 2012 itself that Governor Patnaik wrote to Jairam Ramesh (letter No GSAG.OFF/1/2010) urging the Rural Development minister to improve connectivity to remote areas like Sadiya in Tinsukia district, which is now a

Maoist hotbed. The Governor wrote: "...Taking advantage of this isolation (of Sadiya), Maoist activists made it their target. Assam as you know is almost free from ULFA extremists. Now, the Maoists seem to have taken their place...Sadiya has poor communication facilities. There is no road worth the name. MNREGA is poorly implemented. Unemployed rural youths are convenient targets of Maoists. According to the district administration, about 150 young men are missing from their homes and there is strong suspicion that they might have been recruited by the Maoists..."

Having made a strong case, the Governor sought Ramesh's intervention. "Repetition of your bold initiative for the roads of Manipur is very much needed here for the interest of the development of a very neglected area of the country and an antidote to the Maoist activities taking roots in Assam..." This is activism on the Governor's part and such activism for the interest of the State is something that is very necessary for a state like Assam.

On security issues, too, the Governor has been forthright. Marked 'secret', Governor Patnaik's 13-page address at the conference of Governors held at the Rashtrapati Bhavan in New Delhi on 29-30 October 2011 clearly showed that the security situation in the State was far from normal. In three of the pages, the Governor gave a detailed presentation of the insurgency scenario in Assam that makes disturbing reading and reinforced the fact that the State administration cannot afford to relax on the plea that peace efforts were on with rebel groups like the ULFA and some other ethnic rebel armies.

Take a look at the following facts presented by the Governor in his address on the activities of the Paresch Baruah-led anti-talk faction of the separatist United Liberation Front of Asom or ULFA: "...In lower Assam, the Goalpara-West Garo

Hills corridor has been used by the Bangladesh-based residual group of ULFA (anti-talk) under (the) leadership of Drishti Rajkhowa and providing all logistic support to (the) Garo National Liberation Army (GNLA). Paresh Baruah has set up his camp in a place called Tagagumsa on China-Myanmar border in Yunan province (of China). It is reported that they have a large number of sophisticated weapons like T-81, Heckler and Colts (rifles), Chinese bottle grenades, RCIED etc., which are very dangerous weapons adding new dimension to the security scenario in the State. Still some unemployed frustrated young men are recruited by ULFA led by Paresh Baruah...”

What was most disquieting was the Governor’s detailed observation in his address on the Maoist uprising in Assam. The State, the Governor said in his address, has already been included in the ‘Eastern Regional Bureau of the party’ (CPI-Maoist). The following observation makes interesting reading: “The frontal populist organizations which are playing a provocative role in fomenting public sentiments by raising issues against construction of big river dams etc have become the nurturing ground for potential cadres of the Maoists...” In Assam’s context, this observation casts doubts on several outfits opposing the building of dams in the State.

The Governor goes on to say that the party (CPI-Maoist) “has formed regional leading committees for upper Assam, middle Assam and lower Assam of which the upper Assam committee has been found to be mostly active in areas of Dhemaji and Tinsukia districts bordering with Lower Dibang Valley and Lohit districts of Arunachal Pradesh...” There has been ample evidence, the Governor went on in his address, to suggest that Maoists in Assam have sent cadres to Odisha and Jharkhand for undergoing training under Maoist and to Manipur under tutelage of NSCN (IM). “Their support

bases are from the remotest and less governed areas...” What is significant also is the Governor’s observation that “these groups also acquired number of sophisticated weapons through the PLA (People’s Liberation Army of Manipur) contacts” and that “the Maoists of Assam have their overt organizations in the form of Assam Students and Youth Organization, Mega Dam Resistance Forum and the Assam Chah Janajati Suraksha Samity...” Of course, these names figure in reports by intelligence agencies as well.

Governors are usually people who believe in not speaking out their minds, lest their comments turn out to be politically incorrect. But, Janaki Babu seems to believe in plain-speak, calling spade a spade and can be quite candid. He was in a reflective mood during a lengthy conversation with me once at the Raj Bhawan in Guwahati.

“The riots in Assam have pained me. It is indeed unfortunate that people should be killing people,” Patnaik said of the rioting between Bodo tribes-people and Muslim settlers in western and northern Assam in July-August 2012. The root cause for the ethnic strife between the Bodos and the Muslim settlers, he felt, was the pressure on land. Yes, whether these settlers had come to the Bodo belt of their own or brought there by some Bodos to plough their land, the fact remains that their settling down in such areas did increase the pressure on land that was fast becoming scarce.

Bangladeshi migration, the Governor said in no uncertain terms, is a major issue in Assam, something that cannot be brushed under the carpet. “The Border Security Force (BSF) is guarding the border but what I call for is a second line of defence, may be by the local police. After all, the local police can identify the illegal migrants better and differentiate them from the old settlers.”

Asked to comment on the demand of parties like the Bodoland People's Front (BPF) and the BJP to first verify the nationality of the Muslim refugees before rehabilitating them back at their villages, the Governor said: "This is the stand of the Assam Government also. Verification will be done but genuine Indian citizens will not be harassed."

What the Governor also agreed was that there have been attempts by political forces to cash in on the situation and add fuel to the fire. "Yes, there are reports of some politicians playing an undesirable role during the riots. I would like to appeal to politicians cutting across party lines to desist from making provocative statements." Well, only Janaki Babu could have said this so forcefully: "The people must vote out such politicians whenever they get a chance. After all, attempts to communalize a situation cannot be tolerated."

He said unless the situation returns to normal soon, 'outside forces' could take advantage of the situation. "Forces inimical to India must be already fishing in the troubled waters (of Kokrajhar, Chirang, Dhubri and elsewhere)."

Governor Patnaik did not just observe the situation, but had been taking out of the box initiatives to bring about lasting peace in the riot-hit area. At his initiative, more than 20 Gandhians from various parts of the country had gathered in Guwahati to consider his proposal to set up Gandhian ashrams in the troubled Bodo tribal belt. "I have invited prominent Gandhians to work in the troubled area and set up ashrams. The response has been positive," the Governor said.

Well, he even admitted not having seen reports of enquiry commissions instituted by the Assam Government that had gone into several such rioting in the past. "I have not seen any earlier reports. But people are free to go for RTI," he said. Some candid observations those!

Another troubled Sixth Scheduled area that has fascinated Janaki Babu is the Dima Hasao district in southern Assam (earlier the North Cachar Hills district). Insurgency aside, the area was best known for a village called Jatinga, near Haflong, the district headquarters. Every year, thousands of birds flock to this village and mysteriously crash on the ground to be beaten to death by the locals. The phenomenon was loosely called the 'bird suicide'. Governor Patnaik, during his visit to the Jatinga Festival, a regular event, appealed to the local people not to kill the birds. And yes, the people did listen to his call and the killings have stopped or have reduced drastically.

Yes, Janaki Ballav Patnaik has many qualities. But, perhaps, it is his candid plain speaking that has set him apart from most of India's political veterans.

\* \* \*

## An Interview

# Serving Nation My Life's Only Philosophy: J. B. Patnaik

(This interview was conducted by television talk show host Wasbir Hussain at Guwahati on 5 May 2010 for his weekly show, **Talk Time with Wasbir Hussain**, on News Live, Northeast India's largest satellite channel)

\*\*\*

*Hello and welcome to Talk Time. My guest today is the Governor of Assam, Mr. J.B. Patnaik, a veteran political leader who had been the Chief Minister of Odisha for 14 years.*

**Wasbir Hussain** : Your Excellency welcome to my show.

**JB Patnaik** : Thank You.

**Wasbir Hussain** : How do you feel leaving almost eight decades of active politics behind you and taking up a gubernatorial assignment?

**JB Patnaik** : I had no regret...for coming here as Governor, in fact I considered it as an opportunity to serve the country. You

should serve your country wherever you are. You may be a Chief Minister, you may be a Central Minister, you may be Governor also...

**Wasbir Hussain** : So, you look out for every opportunity to serve the nation. That has been your philosophy in life.

**JB Patnaik** : Yes, the only philosophy of my life.

**Wasbir Hussain** : Can you take us back to the time when you started, fifty years ago, as a young man?

**JB Patnaik** : I started as a...person dedicated to the freedom struggle when I was a student.

**Wasbir Hussain** : Absolutely yes!

**JB Patnaik** : There I was wearing *khaddar* from Class XI and in 1946, one before the...

**Wasbir Hussain** : ...Independence.

**JB Patnaik** : ...Independence, we students of the Ravenshaw College, that famous college... at Kataka, we joined the famous '*Union Jack Hatao Fight*'...

**Wasbir Hussain** : O.K...

**JB Patnaik** : ...and in fact we...

**Wasbir Hussain** : ...1947 that was...

**JB Patnaik** : ...yes...we, we...that time removed the Union Jack, and we unfurled the *Tricolor*.

**Wasbir Hussain** : It has been almost six months that you have been the Governor of Assam, my question to you is how easy or how difficult it for you to discharge your duties as a Governor, because party loyalty is something totally



different and as Governor you have to discharge your duties as some kind of an independent person. Is it very difficult to do the job?

**JB Patnaik** : For me...no difficulty at all. I took to this Governorship as a fish takes to water. I got myself prepared mentally...

**Wasbir Hussain** : Mentally?

**JB Patnaik** : ...to take up this assignment.

**Wasbir Hussain** : O.K...when you first learned that you are being sent to Assam as a Governor...aa... what thoughts came to your mind? I am asking you this question because Odisha and Assam...there are many similarities, whether it is culture, whether it is the state of the economy etc. What were some of the thoughts that crossed your mind when you learnt that you are sent off as the Governor of Assam?

**JB Patnaik** : I entirely agree with you, you see Odisha and Assam are so akin you know, in every respect of life. Culturally they are one, linguistically...they are almost one and as far as religion is concerned, most of the people of Assam are Vaishnavites...

**Wasbir Hussain** : Absolutely...

**JB Patnaik** : ...and the people of Odisha are also Vaishnavites and the bridge between the two states was Srimanta Sankardev himself...

**Wasbir Hussain** : ...absolutely...

**JB Patnaik** : ...in his two pilgrimages outside Assam you know...

**Wasbir Hussain** : ...that was to Odisha...

**JB Patnaik** : ...that was to Odisha. He stayed in Puri... almost 15 years...during his pilgrimage days.

**Wasbir Hussain** : When you came to Guwahati...headed off to Guwahati, did you have an open mind or did you have some kind of a plan, did you see what were the key problems facing the State, like insurgency...did you think you have to guide the State in a certain way?

**JB Patnaik** : You see there is no straight idea...no straight idea when I came here as Governor. I knew very well the problems of Assam. I knew insurgency is the worst problem of the State. I knew it. I didn't have any ready solution you know...

**Wasbir Hussain** : Right...

**JB Patnaik** : I...I came...

**Wasbir Hussain** : But how...but when you landed here, it is six months now, did you try to give your own ideas on how to do, how to deal with this issue of insurgency, did you give some suggestions?

**JB Patnaik** : I have...I have tried my best, I am trying my best also...that there should be contact with these people...

**Wasbir Hussain** : Contact?

**JB Patnaik** : ...who are not coming to the conference table...

**Wasbir Hussain** : Ya

**JB Patnaik** : ...and I think there is a sign of these people coming to the conference table. I cannot talk of Paresh Barua because I do not know what is in his mind, and where he is, but he is being isolated from the masses, from the people.

**Wasbir Hussain** : So you feel that this is the call of the time, the people of Assam are in the mood for peace, and both the government as well as the militants on their sides should take this opportunity to push the peace process forward.

**JB Patnaik** : ...yes this is the most important moment for Assam.

**Wasbir Hussain** : What happens to those people who are not coming forward to talks at this juncture, although the State is in a mood for peace?... People like Paresh Barua for example...

**JB Patnaik** : You cannot convert all the people to your ideas of peace or negotiate with them for peace. There may be exceptions and for an exception, peace-talks will not wait.

**Wasbir Hussain** : And what about the politics of development? Do you believe in the politics of development? Why I am asking you this question, is that, you know Odisha... Bhubaneswar for example, was a small place where only the Government employees used to stay but during your tenure as the Chief Minister, the place got converted into a trade and business hub.

**JB Patnaik** : You see...if politics of development is not adhered to, then what is meaning of politics? Meaning of politics is politics of development. How you make the people feel about the government's oneness with them...only through development.

**Wasbir Hussain** : Yah...

**JB Patnaik** : ...Only by coming close to the people, that you can develop a state...and at the same time...

**Wasbir Hussain** : ...but, but...

**JB Patnaik** : ...make democracy a success...

**Wasbir Hussain** : ...but that is the ideal kind of situation, but more often than not, we see people indulging in a politics of a different kind. How do you feel when you see that kind of politics?

**JB Patnaik** : I don't believe in that kind of a politics. I never believed in it, when I was a Chief Minister, a Central Minister and now as well.

**Wasbir Hussain** : ...But do you get saddened when you see that kind of politics around you? Do you feel sad?

**JB Patnaik** : You see there is no meaning of being saddened, after all, people deserve the government they have...

**Wasbir Hussain** : Absolutely...

**JB Patnaik** : ...that is the point...

**Wasbir Hussain** : ...that is the point. People deserve the government...they have...

**JB Patnaik** : The government is for by the people for the people...

**Wasbir Hussain** : Do you regret leaving active Odisha politics or do you regret leaving active politics or can we see you going back to active politics at some point of time...in the future?

**JB Patnaik** : I have told you I do not no regret at all...

**Wasbir Hussain** : Ya

**JB Patnaik** : I am quite happy here

**Wasbir Hussain** : yah...

**JB Patnaik** : ...as the Governor of Assam

**Wasbir Hussain** : okay

**JB Patnaik** : ...and I feel I can do a lot of work as the Governor.

**Wasbir Hussain** : Absolutely...you can do a lot of work as Governor.

*On that note we shall go for a short break now, but stay on, when I come back I shall talk to the Governor of Assam, Mr. J.B. Patnaik on his thoughts on India, and lots more...*

\* \* \*

*Welcome back, I am in conversation with Mr. J.B. Patnaik, the Governor of Assam.*

**Wasbir Hussain** : It has been almost 60 years since India has become independent. What are your thoughts on the state of the nation as well as the state of the people in India today?

**JB Patnaik** : We must be proud today, as a nation and

I feel proud also as an Indian. We have developed a lot. We have done a lot for the people. We are a united nation today, all the states of the country, in terms of ethnicity, in terms of religion, in terms of economic development, in terms of centralization of power and decentralization of power. We are a successful nation.

**Wasbir Hussain** : Absolutely, but what are some of the problems in your list?

**JB Patnaik** : These are the problem of poverty, again, the problem of good governance, and the third is the problem of quelling the insurgency.

**Wasbir Hussain** : What about corruption? Isn't it a problem facing India today?

**JB Patnaik** : Corruption is a problem today, corruption is a problem everywhere, you see. Which state is free from corruption? Is China free from corruption? Is the United States fully free from corruption?

**Wasbir Hussain** : ...but for a huge country like India, do you think corruption should be combated and battled often?

**JB Patnaik** : No, no...corruption should also be quelled. I do not support corruption at all, but it is the human nature that prevails in everything. That is why I feel corruption will be minimized in this country.

**Wasbir Hussain** : Now, how do you look at Northeast for example because there is still a perception

today, that mainland India or the mainstream whatever we call it, look upon the Northeast as some kind of a periphery...

**JB Patnaik** : I don't agree...

**Wasbir Hussain** : ...which is buffer against foreign aggression?

**JB Patnaik** : ...I don't think there is any feeling in the rest of India that this is a buffer state. I don't think any people anywhere in India think Northeast is a buffer.

**Wasbir Hussain** : Okay

**JB Patnaik** : They think Northeast is a part of theirs, is a part of India, the mainland of India...

**Wasbir Hussain** : Right...

**JB Patnaik** : Do you think Assam is not a part of mainland India?

**Wasbir Hussain** : Absolutely, it is a part of India, it is an integral part of India, there is no doubt about it; my question to you is what are we going to do with those sections of people in the country who have such kind of an impression about the Northeast. What is to be done? What should the approach be?

**JB Patnaik** : I have not come across such people in India who feel that Northeast is a buffer one; Northeast is not a part of India. I have never come across any such persons.

**Wasbir Hussain** : How should...

**JB Patnaik** : Therefore, therefore I...

**Wasbir Hussain** : ...one tackle the problem of alienation for example?

**JB Patnaik** : ...therefore I believe that more attention should be paid to the Northeast, by government of India. Being paid now, lot of attention is being paid now, but more attention should be paid to the Northeast and only development of Northeast depends on the development of this country.

**Wasbir Hussain** : As a veteran political leader of this country...aa...has this thought crossed your mind whether the Parliamentary form of democracy is the best form of governance, is the best form of government that India can ever have or has other ideas crossed your mind ever in your long innings as a political leader?

**JB Patnaik** : I feel this Parliamentary system of government is the best government for this country. No other thought has crossed my mind.

**Wasbir Hussain** : ...best government is Parliamentary form of government.

**JB Patnaik** : ...Parliamentary form of government is the best type of government. Of course, it is not applicable to all the states. There are Presidential systems...

**Wasbir Hussain** : ...Absolutely, absolutely...

**JB Patnaik** : ...in some outside countries but for our country, our country, it is this system.



**Wasbir Hussain** : There cannot be any two opinion about it?

**JB Patnaik** : Yah...

**Wasbir Hussain** : So elections, contesting elections must have been a way of life for you all these years?

**JB Patnaik** : Yah...

**Wasbir Hussain** : So, you had a connect with the people all the time?

**JB Patnaik** : Otherwise you cannot be elected anywhere...

**Wasbir Hussain** : ...Now, let's talk about...

**JB Patnaik** : ...it is the people who elect you.

**Wasbir Hussain** : Should there be a retirement age for politicians? Some, people in politics today, very few though, are saying there should be a retirement age for politicians as well, because apart from everything else, it will also enable some of the younger people to come up and fill some of the important positions.

**JB Patnaik** : Politics is not government service.

**Wasbir Hussain** : You are against retirement age in politics?

**JB Patnaik** : There is no retirement age in politics and that is against our culture also.

**Wasbir Hussain** : Absolutely...but what about giving...

**JB Patnaik** : You...you speak of the, think of the Mahabharata days. Vishnu was in politics till his death.

**Wasbir Hussain** : Absolutely...

**JB Patnaik** : Drona was in politics...

**Wasbir Hussain** : Yah...

**JB Patnaik** : ...to his death you see...

**Wasbir Hussain** : Most of the political leaders of South India today...

**JB Patnaik** : ...most of the leaders in South India today, political leaders elsewhere also...there is no question of age of retirement in politics... and politics I think is the scared business of the society. Without politics, society would go astray...

**Wasbir Hussain** : Having accepted...

**JB Patnaik** : ...will go astray.

**Wasbir Hussain** : ...having accepted your point fully your Excellency, it is...

**JB Patnaik** : ...let me interrupt a little...

**Wasbir Hussain** : ...yah.

**JB Patnaik** : Rajneeti...what is the meaning of Rajneeti? It is Raja of Nitees. The King of the Nitees you see. So, without politics there will be no Arthanitee...There will be...

**Wasbir Hussain** : Absolutely, absolutely...

**JB Patnaik** : ...no Samajnitee...

**Wasbir Hussain** : Very well said, extremely well said. Having accepted your point fully your Excellency, my question to you is, if there is no retirement age in politics, if the veteran political leaders who have achieved everything in life continues to hold the responsible positions, how do you think the younger leaders in

this country, how...a...is this country going to build up its younger set of leaders?

**JB Patnaik** : Younger leaders are growing. Younger leaders are growing in this country.

**Wasbir Hussain** : Yah...but...

**JB Patnaik** : ...everywhere...

**Wasbir Hussain** : ...they are not reaching the top position... because...

**JB Patnaik** : No, no...they come to the top positions also...in their lives.

**Wasbir Hussain** : So, what is to be done?

**JB Patnaik** : Nothing...because...the question is, politics must be popular among the young people. You must tell them, it is your sacred duty in life to guide the society through politics, if you can, if you are really a talented person...

**Wasbir Hussain** : Absolutely...

**JB Patnaik** : ...nobody can prevent you...from doing your job.

**Wasbir Hussain** : So, ultimately it is honesty, integrity and talent...

**JB Patnaik** : Yah.

**Wasbir Hussain** : ...these are the three important factors.

*On that note, we shall go for another short break. But stay on, we'll be right back.*

\* \* \*

**Wasbir Hussain** : Welcome back. I'm still in conversation with

the Governor of Assam, Mr. J.B. Patnaik. You created history of sorts recently in the month of April by visiting the Patbausi Satra in Barpeta and convincing the authorities to do something that has never happened before; allow women to enter the Satra. My question is: How or why did you decide to take up this initiative?

**JB Patnaik** : You see it just happened. It just happened. I was there to address a Satra meet. After that, I thought that I should visit some Satras of Barpeta. Barpeta was the most important place

**Wasbir Hussain** : ...yah...

**JB Patnaik** : ...in the life of Srimanta Sankardeva. So, we visited two Satras. When I was going to visit the third Satra and third Satra was very important. It was Patbausi Satra where Sankardeva lived his... the best part...

**Wasbir Hussain** : ...yah.

**JB Patnaik** : ...of his life you know; 22 years. So, someone told me while I was in car; have you noticed in that particular Satra, it is written on the wall, that women are prohibited to enter the Kirtan Ghar. I said no, it just slipped my sight. So when I came here, I found a lot of women gathered on the, at the...

**Wasbir Hussain** : Yah..

**JB Patnaik** : ...gate of the Satra and Satra Adhikar and others also were there to welcome me. So, I went to the women. I told them, can you

enter the Kirtan Ghar? They said, no. Why? We are prohibited.

**Wasbir Hussain** : ...ummn-hmmn...

**JB Patnaik** : ...then I went to the people who are there to...

**Wasbir Hussain** : Ya

**JB Patnaik** : ...welcome me. Satra Adhikar...President of the satra and others.

**Wasbir Hussain** : Yah.

**JB Patnaik** : I told them are these people prohibited from entering the satra? They said no. They are not prohibited from entering the Kirtan Ghar. Of their...

**Wasbir Hussain** : ...very interesting...

**JB Patnaik** : ...of their own accord they are not going. I said if of their own accord they would like to go, would you prevent them. No. Then, I went to the women and told them, come with me.

**Wasbir Hussain** : So...

**JB Patnaik** : And they came with me. We entered the Kirtan Ghar. I distributed *Prasad* and *bokul-mala* to them.

**Wasbir Hussain** : So, that was...and you created history...in Assam.

**JB Patnaik** : I don't know...

**Wasbir Hussain** : That became the talk of the State.

**JB Patnaik** : I felt I have done my duty.

**Wasbir Hussain** : What is the broader message in this?

- JB Patnaik** : Broader message is that the age has changed completely. You cannot neglect women... and women power. So...you have to give them the due respect, to the womenfolk.
- Wasbir Hussain** : Are you going to take this initiative forward because there are other satras as well where women just don't enter or are not allowed to enter?
- JB Patnaik** : I think in Barpeta, I was told by a Minister the other day that Barpeta which was the most conservative of all the satras,
- Wasbir Hussain** : ...yah...
- JB Patnaik** : ... there women are now entering.
- Wasbir Hussain** : ...entering...
- JB Patnaik** : So, it will happen you see...
- Wasbir Hussain** : So, you came to Assam and within six months, I can say that you brought some kind of a reform...if one can use the word.
- JB Patnaik** : That was the desire of the Lord; probably it was Sankardeva's soul which was working.
- Wasbir Hussain** : Now let's go to something totally different. You had told me recently that...aa...you were a journalist at some point. Aa...tell me something about that and do you think that could have been an alternative career had you not plunged into active politics... long time?
- JB Patnaik** : I told you earlier I was not a journalist only; I was a journalist-politician.
- Wasbir Hussain** : Journalist-Politician? That's a very interesting coinage.

- JB Patnaik** : I was the member of the working committee of the Party.
- Wasbir Hussain** : Right.
- JB Patnaik** : Executive of the party, the State Executive...
- Wasbir Hussain** : Absolutely...
- JB Patnaik** : ...till I left my journalism and after that also when I started my own paper, then also I was in politics. I have never left politics from my life from the student days, till now.
- Wasbir Hussain** : Do you do any kind of writings now, when you get time?
- JB Patnaik** : I am trying to do some writing, not now but I will start it.
- Wasbir Hussain** : Okay.
- JB Patnaik** : From next month...
- Wasbir Hussain** : Next month you are going to do some writings? Will it be for the public, for your own collection or is it a book?
- JB Patnaik** : Writing is for public...not for one's soul.
- Wasbir Hussain** : So, we can see it in the mass media, is it?
- JB Patnaik** : I think so.
- Wasbir Hussain** : People of Assam who would like to read your thoughts. Are your writings going to be on the Northeast, or the place you have left behind or overall, general?
- JB Patnaik** : It would be on Assam.
- Wasbir Hussain** : It would be on Assam. So, we can very well see the Governor of Assam writing out

his thoughts on Assam; various aspects of life, society, culture, maybe even politics in Assam. Politics of course you cannot write.

**JB Patnaik** : Without resorting to active politics.

**Wasbir Hussain** : Absolutely, but definitely you are going to be subtle enough and all will watch out for your writings. What are your major observations about Assam now that you have completed six months here?

**JB Patnaik** : You see as I told you earlier, it is insurgency for which Assam has not developed the way it should have developed. Its development has been stunted because all through this period, you are facing the worst type of insurgency in the State. So I feel the insurgency should be over. We should all try, all Assamese people should try that insurgency gets over. Then, development should be speeded up as fast as possible because Assam like Odisha has lagged behind, it has all the resources you know like Odisha, but the State has not developed like the way it should have developed because of so many problems. So development is a must, and development, the first thing in development is agricultural development.

**Wasbir Hussain** : ...agricultural development?

**JB Patnaik** : Industrialization is not the answer...

**Wasbir Hussain** : ...because more than 80 per cent of our people live in the villages...



- JB Patnaik** : ...yes, so I feel agriculture could be developed and could be developed very fast. Agriculture holds the key to the development of Assam.
- Wasbir Hussain** : But, lots of people from the villages are migrating to the urban areas. That's a big problem in Assam as you can see.
- JB Patnaik** : Because, agriculture doesn't pay them now.
- Wasbir Hussain** : What should be done? Have you applied your mind?
- JB Patnaik** : Of course, I have applied my mind.
- Wasbir Hussain** : What are the two or three things you would like them to do?
- JB Patnaik** : You see one thing is Assam has got...aa... tremendous source of water.
- Wasbir Hussain** : Water...yah...
- JB Patnaik** : No other state has got the source of water that Assam has got. This water should be fully utilized. The people of Assam has now one crop in a year. If water is available, there can be two crops, three crops...
- Wasbir Hussain** : ...three crops...they can go for multi cropping...
- JB Patnaik** : ...multi cropping also. This is one. Number two is, they also go for commercial crop which in it is a income and number three is there are now many methods, organic, I'm not talking about chemical. There are now many organic...
- Wasbir Hussain** : ...absolutely...

**JB Patnaik** : ...methods by which the agricultural production can be doubled up.

**Wasbir Hussain** : ...yield can go up... So, it is very clear your Excellency, that your thoughts on Assam are very clear...aa...and you are going to write about Assam, we are going to read about it in the next few weeks.

**JB Patnaik** : I am going to make an experiment in some districts.

**Wasbir Hussain** : Absolutely...we'll all look forward to it your Excellency. Thank you very much for being on my show. It was a pleasure talking to you.

**JB Patnaik** : Nice of you. You are always welcome.

**Wasbir Hussain** : Thank you.

\* \* \*