

Institutionalizing Participatory Democracy at the Local Level : Issues and Challenges.

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India is a country of villages. Panchayati Raj system has influenced the village life extensively as one of the most important units of democratic decentralisation. Decentralisation of power is nothing but transfer of power from one tier of governance to another and, in same way, from one segment of population to another. Power moves from the dominant to the oppressed, men to women, caste Hindus to Dalits, upper castes to lower castes and bureaucrats to people's representatives. Power will not move on its own. It has to be made move. So a driving force is needed. The task is not so easy as may be envisaged, particularly in an extremely unequal society.⁽¹⁾ The 73rd and 74th Amendments to the Constitution of India have generated a discussion on the subject of 'Decentralization of Powers'. Seventy-third Constitutional Amendment Act, "Empowering People for Prosperity", brings out a significant change in the attitude, behaviour and performance of the rustic folk in India.⁽²⁾

No programme and plan can materialize until and unless we make the villagers as partners of these programmes. More so, the people have been oriented towards developing syndrome of dependency, as a result of which they are expecting the government to interfere for each and everything. Peoples' initiatives have almost come to a halt. In India, it is totally a forgotten factor.

People were considered as a factor in the process of development.⁽³⁾

Almost all states have enacted their Panchayat Laws to confirm the spirit and content of the 73rd Constitutional amendments. Accordingly the new laws, elections have been conducted. Reservations has been provided to the excluded and marginalized groups. With these developments an impression has been created that the whole representative democracy has been transformed into a participatory democracy and the hitherto excluded have been included in governance and administration through the device of reservation of seats in Local Bodies.

The need of the hour is people's awareness towards the changes that are brought about in the local bodies. They should understand the new opportunities for them through this act. The new act has come with new hopes. For the effective functioning of the new system, people are the masters of their destiny. The real sense of the bottom up planning has come true only now. District is the viable centre for planning. Panchayat leaders should be equipped in the art of planning, execution, monitoring and evaluation of schemes. Series of steps have been taken to popularize the new Panchayati Raj system among the masses. Training has been imparted to the officials in many national institutions.⁽⁴⁾

It is observed that most states in India have implemented the new allowance only because pressure has been exerted on them either by the civil society or by the central government. So it has been perceived and termed as centralized centralization intended to weaken the state government. Many state governments perceived it as a policy to weaken the state government. Because already the power of the state governments are eroded despite fight against centralization of power. First, it reduced the power of the state government by empowering the local government in order to run the pressure from the State government to the central government and second, for effective delivery of services to the people. ⁽⁵⁾

Due to this apprehension many states have reluctantly fulfilled the formalities to satisfy the Constitutional requirements. Beyond that, they have not looked at the spirit of the Constitutional Amendments. Hence, the functioning of Local Bodies could not take a concrete shape as envisaged in the Constitutional Amendments. Still it is in a budding stage. The Local Bodies have not been institutionalised as envisaged. It will take time to institutionalize the Local Bodies in India. Even this process of institutionalization will take place only because of the pressure from the society and the central government. In this regard, the central government has got this responsibility and equally the civil society has also got a responsibility to exert pressure on the state government to devolve powers. Further, people have not been mobilized to participate in the process of development and governance. Making the people participant in governance and development is the toughest task in developing countries. Making the poor participant in governance is unimaginable. So far the people have been oriented to think and behave as beneficiaries and if they are unable to get benefits

from the government, they have to submit petitions to claim their benefits. It is in this way that people have been oriented. Necessarily people have to be engaged for development activities with a sense of responsibility. Further they have to claim their entitlements as rights for which they have to be empowered. The elected Local Body leaders have not been trained to have capacities to the level required. The bureaucracy has to be reoriented to the new assignment- "working with the elected representatives."

After the 73rd Amendment the objective of Panchayati Raj institutions has become multi-dimensional. Panchayati Raj institutions are playing an important role in social welfare, economic development, social life, political life and also religious and cultural life. They are also working for modernization and development-oriented village leadership. As a result, involvement of people in their programmes has increased.

The role of Panchayati Raj institutions in various fields in rural development can be described as follows:

(A) The importance of Panchayati Raj institutions in social life.

1. Social reforms
2. Panchayats are playing an important role in spreading education which has resulted in increase in literacy.
3. Panchayats are running a number of programmes for child welfare, providing mid-day meals in schools, sports, libraries etc.
4. To tackle the problem of bonded labour, Panchayats are playing an important role.
5. For the welfare of women, Panchayats are doing a lot of work.

6. Implementation of prohibition of liquor and other intoxicants
7. Settling of controversies and disputes.

(B) Public welfare

1. Improvement in public health;
2. Cleanliness related jobs;
3. Transport facilities;
4. Entertainment facilities;
5. Help during natural calamities;
6. Providing fresh water, construction of wells etc.;

(C) Importance of Panchayats in Economic Life

To improve the economic conditions and progress; Panchayats are contributing in many ways.

1. Improvement in agriculture;
2. Arrangement for irrigation;
3. Development of industry;
4. Improving condition of landless labour;
5. Improving breeds of animals;
6. Encouraging animal husbandry;
7. Developing cooperative institutions;
8. Development of handicrafts and small-scale industry;
9. Arranging fodder,
10. Afforestation;
11. Decide buying and selling;
12. Maintenance of public property;
13. Arranging markets and ghats.

(D) Roll of Panchayats in Political Life

1. Developing village leadership;

2. Political awareness among the people of villages;
3. Developing feeling of peace and security;
4. Helping administration;
5. Providing justice;
6. Explaining importance of vote and right to vote;
7. Educating people about the meaning of citizenship;
8. Training them to solve their problems themselves;
9. Creating awareness among villagers about democracy;
10. To see that leadership has representation from all sections of the society;
11. Population Census.

Impact of Panchayati Raj System on Rural Life.

Panchayati Raj System as a means of democratic decentralization has a deep impact on the rural life of India. The impact of this system based on various studies in the rural areas are given below:

1. Changes have taken place in the caste structure. Villages where all castes were living as separate groups in the past are now coming closer and with the lessening of negative aspects of casteism, a process of cooperation has started. Evelyn Wood has clarified that as a result of the Panchayati Raj System, villagers have now got the right to vote, and different castes now get many chances to get closer.

Dr. Srinivas has stated that in the early days of Panchayati Raj, lower castes, especially Harijans, experienced evaluation in their status and self-respect.

2. Power structure in villages is acquiring a new phase. Now the power structure in villages is not confined to older persons only.
3. Leadership in villages is now with the people who come from the middle class or those who have no traditional family background in the power structure. According to G R Reddy, village leadership is increasing in favour of younger people and political ambitions have weakened the traditional base related to caste, religion, and kinship.
4. Many studies reveal that a definite change is taking place in the criteria for leadership. Andre Beteille, in his studies, observes that political power in villages and outside villages is not connected with the ownership of land and, up to certain extent; it is also independent of any caste and group. Possibly the important factor in this change is the numerical support.
5. Spread of education in villages is mainly taking place due to Panchayati Raj;
6. Panchayati Raj has lessened the importance of Caste Panchayats;
7. Villagers receive health and medical facilities;
8. Necessary arrangements have been made for housing for poor people;
9. Increase in groups in, confrontation and individualism;
10. Sense of responsibility has increased among the villagers;
11. Due to various programmes related to Panchayati Raj system; there is an improvement in the life style and per capita income has increased;
12. There is an increase in the movement (social and professional) of villagers;
13. There is a decrease in the exploitation of villagers by the landlords, money-lenders and upper castes;
14. Traditional professions now have no importance after the implementation of Panchayati Raj;
15. Host system now exists as a symbol only;
16. A new social and economic order has risen due to Panchayati Raj and new classes have appeared. As a result, social structure is also changing;
17. Participation of Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, and Backward Classes has increased in rural development. With the introduction of new Panchayati Raj system;
18. There is an increase of women's participation in leadership;
19. Legal system has also improved;
20. There is an increase in the administrative power of the villagers;
21. Due to Panchayati Raj, the influence of bureaucracy has come down;
22. If the new Panchayati Raj system has resulted in increased participation of lower and backward castes on the one hand, it has also created discontentment among the higher castes on the other. They point out that what is the use of this system when all the powers are reserved for the lower castes. It has given birth to a new dimension of difference among different castes. It is now higher castes versus backwards, versus Scheduled Castes and Tribes and it has given rise to a new type of groupism in the villages;
23. With the greater participation of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, and Backward Classes and Women, there is increase in the participation of uneducated, untrained

people in power. Because of this, practically to a greater extent, the power equation is still in the hands of higher castes.

24. Role of political parties has increased in the village leadership;

25. The new Panchayati Raj system, which has increased participation of women in power, has helped in the breaking down of traditional joint family system.

With the passage of 73rd Amendment Act, 1992, which became law on April 24, 1993, peoples' participation in the process of planning, decision-making, implementation and delivery system in rural India has been recognized. It is, therefore, worthy to note that the Government is now very keen to involve local people and Panchayati Raj institutions for implementing this scheme and make them responsible to achieve the underlying objectives. In India rural local government comprises 2,32,278 village Panchayats; 5,905 intermediate Panchayats, and 499 district Panchayats, making a total of 2,38,682 at all the three levels. Total number of elected representatives of Panchayats at various levels are 2.92 million of which about one million are women and a large majority of them are first-timers. Impact of the provisions of the 73rd Amendment Act concerning reservation for women and disadvantaged sections of the community has been that it has improved women's awareness and perception and had created an urge in them to assert for their rightful share in the decision-making exercise at the local level. ⁽⁶⁾

For the first time in the history of Post-Independence India, Panchayati Raj institutions are expected to be directly involved in this scheme in such a way that they would implement the scheme as an integral part of rural development plan. Gram Panchayats and Gram Sabhas would decide types of work to be undertaken in the

village and use of funds earmarked under the scheme. Gram Sabhas would discuss and approve this plan. Gram Sabhas would also supervise and monitor the implementation of the programme.

While it is laudable that Panchayati Raj institutions are now roped in the implementation of the scheme which concerns to them. It is worthwhile to understand the present status of their functioning and initiating the most desired and essential components viz, participation, empowerment and capacity building of Gram Sabhas and Gram Panchayats through need based training and evolving human resources development policy. Following studies pinpoint the immediate need for this.

Political decentralization does not mean participation only in the electoral process. It calls for active involvement of elected functionaries, Gram Sabhas, women and other marginalized groups in the functioning of rural local self-government institutions and pursuit of collective decision-making process, and their own transparent governance.

Effective planning at the grassroots level can only be envisaged if a large number of Gram Sabha members actively participate in the planning process. At present 50 per cent members (women) are virtually remaining outside the Gram Sabha meetings because they are not allowed to participate by their male family members and another big chunk mostly SC/ST and other weaker sections do not attend due to some compulsions. These members are less motivated to attend meetings because they do not expect any gain from such meetings but lose their one-day wage.

No doubt 73rd Amendment Act has given a new role and responsibility to the Panchayati Raj institutions in India. However, the most crucial

and significant drawback/deficiency in the Act has been that, the functions and powers of Panchayati Raj institutions have been left to the discretion of the state governments, instead of having been clearly specified and defined. In fact the Article 243G should have been like this “the legislature of a State should, by law, endow the Panchayats with such powers and authority as shall be necessary to enable them to function as institution of self-government and should contain provisions for the devolution of powers and responsibilities upon Panchayats at the appropriate level with respect to the preparation of plans for economic development and social justice and the implementation of schemes for economic development and social justice as may be entrusted to them including those in relation to the matters listed in the 11th Schedule. Thus, the Article 243G of the Constitution should have envisaged Panchayats as “institutions of self-government” and should have given full functional, financial, and administrative autonomy in their working. ⁽⁷⁾

Underlying the possible role of Panchayati Raj institutions in effective implementation of Bharat Nirman Programme at grassroot level, we strongly feel that the proposed objectives of the programme could be achieved in the stipulated time if Panchayats be made as institutions of self government i.e. they should enjoy functional, financial and administrative autonomy at their level and the plan formulation of these components should emerge from the Gram Sabhas for onward consideration in the Gram Panchayat. Gram Sabha is very important to decide projects under the six components of the Bharat Nirman and their proper monitoring and evaluation. ⁽⁸⁾

The very character of our democracy can be changed from representative only through the

direct participation of people in the Gram Sabha. Gram Sabhas have been bestowed with enormous power in the decision making process. The evidence from the state suggests that people’s participation has remained low. Efforts to make the grassroot level institutions viable and significant have remained a mere formality. Nevertheless, a process of political socialization has begun within the society. The bureaucratic resistance is visible in many matters. The stereotype and routine mind-set of local bureaucracy has understood that the Panchayat will remain forever and the bureaucracy has to work within the changed scenario. The process of financial devolution from the states could not get momentum despite creation of State Finance Commissions to allocate funds to Panchayats. Panchayats are still dependent on state governments for funding. The untied funds are very limited and the resource generation at local level is also not very encouraging. A perusal of a decade of functioning of Panchayati Raj has put forward a mix scenario with enough evidence of positive movement and several hurdles. Nevertheless, a hope for the best can be expected at this juncture. ⁽⁹⁾

In the post 73rd Amendment phase, Indian States have responded with varying degrees of enthusiasm. Orissa responded with innovativeness and remarkable commitment to making the system sustainable and successful. The State’s effort to institutionalize the system is evident in the number of amendments that were effected by the Government to the State Panchayat Act as a dynamic response to the problems at the ground level. During the implementation of the Panchayati Raj system, Orissa has faced several opportunities and difficulties. The experience of the State is extremely rich and provides vital insights into the process of institutionalizing Panchayati Raj. In the negative side, the major

impediments include the bureaucratic resistance, functional problems, political and institutional challenges, financial inadequacy, and mismatch of capacities and roles. On the other hand, it involves the grassroot level people in a democratic and participative governance system, an involvement that unleashes the stored energy of the people.⁽¹⁰⁾

People's Participation through Grama Sabha: the Direct Democratic Device

Participation cannot be imposed on the people from above; it should be voluntary and based on will to participate. Here by participation we mean direct involvement of people and not indirect involvement through their representatives. This is because of the existing socio-economic and political structure of the society in most of the developing countries. The so called "representatives of the people are most likely to represent the rich, rather than the interest of the poor majority. However, in such a large country like ours, direct participation of the people is possible only at local level and as such our focus of discussion is limited to direct participation at local level. This is also in consonance with the assumptions that an equitable sharing of the benefits of development by poor is possible only when there is equitable participation by them in the process of development. By doing so, people can influence the decisions at the higher levels through their joint efforts and common voice. This may be termed as "bottom up approach to integrated rural development."

However, under the existing social system, equitable participation of the poor in the process of development can be regarded as a gradual process. The process can be accelerated only when the poor become conscious on their rights and privileges and build up strength to achieve justice for themselves in the sharing of benefits of development.

Peoples' participation or involvement can better be understood as:

- (1) participation in Decision-Making;
- (2) participation in implementation of development programmes and projects;
- (3) participation in monitoring and evaluation of development programmes and projects and
- (4) participation in sharing the benefits of development.

Presently there is no actual participation of the rural poor in any kind of decision-making at the village, block, and district levels. The government planning is defective as the normal procedure is that the guidelines for resources utilization, budget allocation to different sectors and regions and the programmes and projects for area development are prepared by central government. However, direct participation of the poor in decision making is possible only at the village level. Even at the village level, discussion regarding community development projects such as drinking water, social construction etc, are confined in the hands of small caucus of so called village elites. These schemes must be discussed freely in the open assemblies in the presence of all the villagers so that poor sections have some say in the decision-making and execution of these schemes.

The legislative empowerment of the Gram Sabha in India is a political development of utmost importance because it marks the clearest break from the most dominant political orthodoxy of this century. This recent faith in Gram Sabha is based on the belief that the objective conditions of the poor are directly involved in the process of formulation and implementation of decisions affecting their lives⁽¹¹⁾

At least two meetings of Gram Sabha should be held in a year. But in some States like Orissa, frequency of holding meetings of the Gram Sabha four times in a year. More specifically, most of the SC representatives are facing the problem of non-cooperation from the official and upper castes / dominant sections of their Gram Panchayats. These problems have not only been obstructing developmental works but also not enabling elected representatives to participate in the Panchayats. This problems are not confined to Orissa only but exists everywhere in different degree of intensity. ⁽¹²⁾

However, experiences gained so far also show that the affirmative action for women and marginalized group in local governments has resulted in social identities and political awareness among them and created an urge to become a part of mainstream - political, economic, and social life. After initial clashes between higher castes and lower castes, there are no indications of social cohesion at local levels. The political space given to marginalized sections has to some extent dealt a blow to the asymmetrical social structure and given greater space for their participation and involvement in decision-making at the local level. ⁽¹³⁾

On the basis of the above, it may be said that the Panchayats at village, block, and district levels are close to the masses and provide ample opportunities to local people to solve their problems collectively in a participatory manner and thereby strengthen the process of human development. The successful experiment of participatory planning through mobilization of several thousand of people in the implementation of the Ninth Five Year Plan in Kerala is an unique example of these and become household name across the country. Similar sorts of experiments have to be initiated by other States also for making

Panchayats the effective vehicle for fulfilling expectations and aspirations of the people.

The State government transferred nearly all the powers previously exercised by Gram Panchayats to Gram Sabhas through the introduction of Gram Swaraj on 26th January 2001. It has thus gone from representative democracy at the grassroots to direct democracy. More than 60 countries worldwide have experimented with some sort of democratic decentralization over the last 15 years or so. But evidence currently available indicates that none has gone for direct democracy at the local level to the extent that West Bengal has now done. Gram Sabha or People's Forum has always been an integral part of the concept of a Gram Panchayat.

The significance of Gram Sabha has not as yet rubbed upon the villagers. Their eyes are still focused on the Gram Panchayat as the hub of all activity. Not only this, even Panchayat officials and the local elites have evinced little interest in the functioning of the Gram Sabha. After Gram Swaraj, all the powers are transferred to Gram Sabhas instead to Gram Panchayats. At Gram Sabha, committees are formed to look into different issues. A Gram Kosh is also constituted which will include both cash and kind. Conceptually the Gram Swaraj system is a form of direct democracy where the people are directly held accountable and responsible to deal with all local issues. Though it is the beginning of an experiment, the evidence suggests that it has all the potential to perform the roles assigned to it, provided the people at local level are made aware and understand the multifaceted role of Gram Sabha.

Conclusion

The whole exercise of decentralization of powers is equivalent to that of transfer of power

from the British to the Indians. The task of doing such an exercise is not so easy as it has to be carried out internally within our society. It requires a movement of the masses. For mobilizing the masses for the new task, the leaders are to be trained. Different stakeholders are to be prepared perceptively. Without support of the civil society organizations, the full potentials of the decentralization of powers can not be harnessed and hence preparing the civil society is the need of the hour.

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Panchayati Raj in Orissa : Some Reflections

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Orissa experienced first land settlement during the last decade of 12th century. The second settlement was initiated by emperor Akbar, when one-third of the produce was fixed as the tax. Maratha rule since 1751 introduced multiple tax system. The total revenue of Orissa was 11 lakhs. The State came under British rule in 1803. The year following, land settlement was further examined to raise further revenue. Zamindari was put to auction. This created Land Boards in the State. The Great Famine of 1866 was a severe blow to the continuing village administration.

Colonial administration set up a Commission in 1880 to investigate famine in India which understood the importance of rural local self-governance. This helped introduction of local self government. The Royal Commission (1907) laid emphasis on the establishment of Gram Panchayat. It recommended that the members of the village Panchayat should be elected by the villagers and village head be made Chairman of the Panchayat. The Reform Act (1919) provided that the provinces would legislate on Panchayats. Thus, among others the Bihar Local Self Government Act was enacted in 1920. Orissa was covered under this Act.

Orissa became a separate province in 1936. The only significant step in the

decentralisation process came after independence in 1948 when the Orissa Gram Panchayats Act was passed. During the Chief Ministership of Sri Naba Krushna Choudhury a new innovative attempt was made through the Constitution of Anchal Sasan and Creation of Anchal Fund under the Orissa Estates Abolition Act of 1951. The Anchal Sasan Act (1955) intended to accord full powers to Anchal, a local authority which was at a higher level than the Gram Panchayat so that representatives of the villagers could have played visible role in the working of the system related to Public Health, Education, Agriculture, Cottage Industries etc.

The Anchal Sasan was designed to be a body corporate having fund raising out of land revenue, fees, tolls, cesses and taxes. Besides provision for Education Fund was made to finance educational programmes of the Sasan. The institutions of Anchal Sabha and Anchal Adhikari were made and it had its own cadre of officers to be paid out of Anchal Fund.

The Anchal Sasan Act was not implemented which prevented Orissa a pioneering role in the democratic decentralisation process much earlier to the Balwantraji Mehta Committee Report. But the painstaking role of Sri N.K.Choudhury can not be forgotten.

The fate of Gram Panchayat during 1950s and early 1960s was under the mercy of several departments. Till 1956 it was under the Board of Revenue and the Revenue Department. There was a post of Superintendent of Panchayat which was abolished to facilitate an IAS cadre officer to become Director of Panchayats in the rank of Joint Secretary and later elevated to the rank of Additional Secretary. The auditing power was snatched away from Registrar and it was given to the Board of Revenue. The Panchayats came under the Department of Agriculture and Community Development in 1956 and then moved to the Political and Services Department which was under the Chief Minister. In December, 1959 it was placed under the Department of Planning and Coordination with a Secretary to head the Department.

The B.R.Mehta recommendations were given effect in the State. Both Panchayat Samiti and Zilla Parishad Acts were enacted. In July 1962 under the new, young and dynamic Chief Minister Sri Bijayananda Patnaik a new Department of Community Development and Panchayati Raj was created. The Panchayats, Samitis, Parishads and former District Boards came under its purview. The Panchayat wing was separated and it was kept under Commissioner, Panchayati Raj who also looked into functioning of the Community Development. Two posts of Directors from IAS cadre were also created. Afterwards the Commissioner post was abolished and the Departments were kept under one Secretary. Thus, the three-tier Panchayati Raj system introduced in Orissa took few years to get stabilised.

In 1967 Orissa came under Swatantra-Jana Congress coalition government. As a part of poll promise to end conflict between Parishad and Samiti, the State Legislature abolished the

Parishad and a two-tier system was in operation. This enhanced the role and responsibilities of the Panchayat Samitis.

During late 1960s both plan regime and Panchayat dispensation were given low profile. Whereas the 5 year plan was given a holiday, there was visible stagnation followed by decline of the Panchayat system which was very dear to the people.

After the abolition of upper tier of PR system, the District Advisory Committees of which the Collector was the Member-Convenor started functioning. A non-official member is elected to preside in the DAC as and when it met. Besides the DAC there was district development committee presided over by the Collector. Both these bodies were largely attended by the district officers. In Orissa these were in violation of the B.R.Mehta Study Team observations.

The PR bodies in the State were criticised as inefficient and centres of nasty politics. They were replaced by bureaucratic wing of the government. According to analysts the PR institutions should not merely be judged by their efficiency in improving the administration but also by other factors such as instruments of political education and training in democracy. Efficient local government is one thing but efficient and representative local government is quite another. Even Jaya Prakash Narayan observed that the scheme of Panchayati Raj originally came not only from the motive of broadening the base of our democracy or laying the foundations of 'participating democracy', but also from the anxiety to obtain full public cooperation in the execution of development programmes.

Orissa, which introduced legislations on grassroot democratic bodies ahead of many states, could not retain the tempo. It somehow

relegated itself to the background for two decades including the second generation PR bodies suggested by Ashok Mehta.

Sri Bijayananda Patnaik, after a gap of 27 years, became Chief Minister in 1990. By that time attempts had been made at the national level to form a grassroot body so that the planning can operate from below. Ultimately, it was agreed that none other than the ageold Panchayat system with a new face and constitutional recognition can help twin objectives of equity and social justice to eradicate poverty and cause growth. The P.K. Thungon Committee recommended for such type of PR bodies. The governments under Rajiv Gandhi and V.P. Singh tried but ultimately it was PV Narasimha Rao's government which could initiate 72nd Constitutional Amendment Bill which became 73rd Constitution Amendment Act with effect from 24th April 1993.

But Orissa under Biju Patnaik acted ahead of the New Delhi initiative. 27 years ago a young Biju could create a pro-active government for democratic decentralisation. He had also introduced the concept of Panchayat industry and award to Samiti for visible industrial development. His short tenure prevented Panchayat System to get his dynamic vision and wisdom being translated into action.

He started a new slogan based action - work for village and respect for ladies. These were in-built into his democratic decentralisation model introduced and elections held in 1992. The three-tier PR body was in position with the restoration of Zilla Parishad. Three landmark legislations enacted in 1991 with many radical provisions and devolution of powers to the PR bodies to bring about rural development through people's participation and cooperation. Biju Babu realised that the devolution of power to the PRIs is a prerequisite for the development of rural Orissa.

He was a statesman with unbelievable optimism and always opined that the rural population's effective participation can change the face of Orissa. A new silent social revolution in village Orissa ushered under his able stewardship through one-third reservation for women in all the tiers of PR bodies. He also pressed for transfer of eight important departments like small scale industries, food processing, rural housing, poverty alleviation programme, women and child welfare, social welfare and public distribution system. Thus, the devolution of powers envisaged in the 73rd Amendment Act and the women empowerment scheme were already incorporated by visionary Biju Patnaik.

In Orissa, the 73rd Amendment Act and its important provisions were incorporated through conformatory legislation by J.B. Patnaik and fresh elections were held in 1997. Orissa has experienced regular elections for PR bodies in 2002 and 2007. The reorganisation of districts by Biju Patnaik increased the number of Zilla Parishad to 30. Now we have 314 Panchayat Samitis and 6234 Gram Panchayats in the State. Three State Finance Commissions have transacted their duties on devolution of funds to PR bodies. There is State Election Commission which impartially conducted elections to these institutions.

While making an analysis of origin and growth of PR Institutions, we cannot forget the seminal contributions made by late Naba Krushna Choudhury and late Biju Patnaik who not only realised the basic issues involved in the rural poverty, but also made serious attempts through institutional intervention to tackle the issue through people's participation and cooperation.

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Grama Sabha Scenario in Orissa and West Bengal

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Grama Sabha, the ideal of direct democracy, is an element of Grama Panchayat, the lowest tier of Panchayati Raj Institution. As each of the Indian state has legislated its own Panchayat Act attempting to incorporate the central theme of Constitutional Amendment, it is worthwhile to take glimpses of Grama Sabha of two neighbouring states, Orissa and West Bengal.

Provisions in Orissa

Orissa Grama Panchayat Act, 1964 amended from time to time provides the constitution of Grama as a village or a group of contiguous villages, assigning a name which shall be of one of the villages comprised within the Grama. A Grama Sasan is constituted for every Grama, composed of all persons registered by virtue of the Representation of the People Act, 1950 in so much of the electoral roll for any Assembly Constituency for the time being in force as relates to the Grama. The Grama Sasan is a body corporate having perpetual succession and common seal, with power to acquire, hold and dispose of property and to contract and may by the said name be sued. The chairperson of the Grama Panchayat is designated as Sarapancha and is directly elected.

Grama Sabha of Orissa (As depicted in Orissa Grama Panchayat Act)

Grama Sabha is the general body meeting of the Grama Sasan composed of members as

per the electoral roll in respect of the Grama. But Grama Panchayat is constituted for every Grama Sasan as the executive body of the latter.

There is provision for at least two meetings of the Grama Sasan in a year called Grama Sabha, one in February and the other in June. The quorum of the Grama Sabha is fixed as one tenth of the members of the Grama Sasan. In the event of there being no quorum, the Grama Sabha shall stand adjourned to a future day for which notice will be given in a prescribed manner and no quorum is necessary for the meeting on new date.

The duty of the Grama Sabha is to consider

- (a) At the February Grama Sabha each year, the programmes and works to be undertaken by the Grama Panchayat for the ensuing year and the annual budget for the Grama for that year having regard of the recommendations of the different Palli Sabhas within the Grama and give its recommendations to the Grama Panchayat.
- (b) At the Grama Sabha, held during the month of June each year, the report of the programmes and works undertaken by the Grama Panchayat and their progress during the preceding year along with the annual audit report are submitted by the Sarapanch.

(c) At any Grama Sabha, proposals for levy of taxes, rates, rents and fees and the enhancement of rates, organisation of community service, drawing up and implementation of agricultural production plans and any other matter as may be prescribed.

Orissa's Palli Sabha: A Lower Tier of Multi-Village Grama Sasans

Orissa Grama Panchayat Act, 1964 provides constitution of Palli Sabha where the area constitutes a Ward of the Grama i.e. when multiple contiguous villages constitute one Grama, the neighbouring villages will have Palli Sabha. Each Palli Sabha shall consist of all persons registered in the electoral roll for Assembly Constituency for the time being in force as it relates to the area in respect of the Palli Sabha.

Palli Sabha shall meet in February every year. The Ward Member of the Ward for which the Palli Sabha is constituted (if more than one such person, one from the list of all such persons in order of preference to be determined by the Grama Panchayat) shall preside over the Palli Sabha. In absence of such a person at the meeting at the appointed time the President may be elected from among the members.

The members present at any Palli Sabha will form the quorum of the meeting and the proceedings of the meeting shall be recorded and authenticated by its President. It is the duty of the Palli Sabha at its annual meeting in February each year to give its recommendations to the Grama Panchayat in respect of the matters like:

- (a) development works and programmes that may be taken up during the ensuing year.
- (b) annual budget estimate submitted by the Grama Panchayat.

Provisions in West Bengal

Each Gram Panchayat comprises a number of villages and is divided into mouzas.

The election of Pradhan, Upa-Pradhan and Members is conducted as per the provisions of the West Bengal Panchayat Election Rules. The Chairperson of the Gram Panchayat is designated as Pradhan in West Bengal and is indirectly elected from among the Gram Panchayat Members.

West Bengal Model of Planning for Gram Panchayat:

The Gram Panchayats in West Bengal were vested with lot of powers and functions even prior to the amendments and therefore, the Panchayats in the post- amendment period can be considered as third generation Panchayats with adequate experience.

As the Gram Panchayats in the state are quite large in size having a population of twenty to thirty thousand, the Gram Panchayats have been sub- divided on ward basis amending the Gram Panchayat Act, and for each ward constitution of Gram Sansad has been made mandatory. Gram Sansad is a body constituted with all the voters in a constituency of the Gram Panchayat. These are the lowest level units where the participatory planning exercise for Gram Panchayat is envisaged.

Gram Sabha Story of West Bengal

The Gram Sabha is the most powerful foundation of decentralized governance by ensuring elected representatives directly accountable to the people. The aim of the government has been to strengthen the Gram Sabha by introducing some favourable policy changes as the attendance in this ideal meeting of direct democracy is always low.

Some of the key features in relation to Gram Sabha are as follows:

- The quorum for a Gram Sabha meeting remains one tenth and it is essential to have one-third of the quorum of women members.
- The Gram Sabha can approve as well as audit expenditure up to three lakhs of rupees.

- The Panchayat Karmi (Panchayat Secretary appointed by the Panchayats but drawing salary from the State Government) can be removed from his/her post only if the Gram Sabha approves it.

- Each of the villages within one Gram Panchayat can have its own Gram Sabha.

- The Gram Sabha has the right to recall the Pradhan of the Gram Panchayat after two and a half years since the date of commencement of his/her tenure.

The key roles entrusted to the Gram Sabha are:

- Micro-planning,
- social audit of Panchayat functioning,
- ratification of Panchayat accounts,
- balance sheets,
- identification and approval of beneficiaries, and
- supervisory and regulatory functions.

Gram Sansad Constituted in Each Ward of GP (Village Constituency):

The Gram Sansad or the Village Constituency meetings are instruments of direct participation of the people in the planning process as well as monitoring elected representatives. Under the laws, the Gram Sansad is supposed to:

- guide and advise the Gram Panchayats (village councils) in regard to schemes for economic development and social justice undertaken or proposed to be undertaken in its area;
- identify or lay down principles for identification of the beneficiaries for various poverty alleviation programmes;
- constitute beneficiary committees for ensuring active participation of the people in

implementation, maintenance and equitable distribution of benefits of schemes in the area;

- mobilise mass participation for community welfare, and programmes for adult education, family planning and child welfare; and

- record its objections to any action of the village council chief or any member of the village council for failure to implement development schemes properly or without active participation of the people of the area.

Panchayat Affairs in West Bengal:

The introduction of the institutions of the Gram Sabha (annual meeting of the voters) to review the proposed budget for the next year and the previous year's performance and the Gram Sansad (constituency level six-monthly meetings of the entire electorate of a constituency) to discuss local needs, new programmes, and choose beneficiaries of existing programmes, to review the past and proposed programmes, and inspect the accounts of expenditure and budgets in the Panchayat. Wards are social innovations after the Constitutional Amendment.

The Village Constituency meetings are thus an instrument of direct participation of the people in the planning process as well as monitoring elected representatives. Under the laws, the Gram Sansads are supposed to (i) guide and advise the Gram Panchayats (village councils) in regard to schemes for economic development and social justice undertaken or proposed to be undertaken in its area; (ii) identify or lay down principles for identification of the beneficiaries for various poverty alleviation programmes; (iii) constitute beneficiary committees for ensuring active participation of the people in implementation, maintenance and equitable distribution of benefits of schemes in the area; (iv) mobilise mass participation for community welfare, and programmes for adult education,

family planning, and child welfare; and (v) record its objections to any action of the village council chief or any member of the village council for failure to implement development schemes properly or without active participation of the people of the area.

Ground Realities in Grama Sabha Functioning in Orissa and West Bengal :

The functioning of the Grama Sabha can be assessed from the following parameters:

- Participation and level of awareness of the Gram Sabha
- Issues of discussion and the process of decision-making
- Pattern of leadership
- Capacity of Gram Sabhas
- Transparency and accountability of the three tiers (GP, PS & ZP) to the Gram Sabha

The functioning of Grama Sabha and Palli Sabha / Gram Sansad in Orissa and West Bengal reveal a dismal figure of attendance, lack of leadership and decision, lack of vision and activity mostly due to want of attendance.

India is exemplary in its democratic trend despite its very strong history of aristocracy. Present democracy of India can be viewed as centrifugal trend as it had spread from Delhi to its periphery.

What is needed is demand based democracy, from periphery to centre, the centripetal way of democratic functioning. It is Gandhian oceanic circle of villages constituting India. We, the citizens have certain obligations of attending the Grama Sabha in large numbers spontaneously and fulfilling the democratic ideology. But surprisingly, this is vitally lacking everywhere.

Presently, the Grama Sabha strongly needs attendance of villagers, in the spirit of democracy, with all sections and cross-sections of villagers. Barring attendance, proxy management without quorum cannot manage the village affairs long. Each one of us must be motivated to glorify Indian democracy by paying due worth to Grama Sabha, at least by attending it.

One warning for apathetic in democracy is heard in Greece, where Pericles speech disclosed the vital element of democratic instinct, 'here (in Athens) each individual is interested not only in his own affairs, in the affairs of the State as well; even those who are mostly occupied with their own business, are extremely well informed on general politics.... This is peculiarity of ours, we don't say that man who takes no interest in politics is a man who minds his own business, and we say that he has no business here at all.

In context of Grama Sabha, it can be interpreted as, affair of Grama Sabha, as the affair of every citizen villager, each attendant can seek social justice and accountability, suggest plans and programmes of the Grama Panchayat. In case he abandons it, he has no voice, none of his allegations is going to be heard as regards to village politics and BPL selection and the likes. Rather, his choice of road, water, electricity will not be honoured.

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Effectiveness of Panchayati Raj Systems, Problems and National Declaration

Harihar Sethy

Particularly, in the developing countries, to operate a highly democratic form of government, local self government institutions can play very vital role in the process of political legitimisation and develop a sense of public participation for the best implementation of the political as well as the social and economic integrity of the local environments. The effectiveness of democracy greatly depends on the association of the people at diverse administrative fields. The Panchayati Raj has been introduced in India with a view to associating people with administration at the grassroot level and people have been assigned an active role in the formulation and implementation of their plans.

The Panchayati Raj has been introduced in India in pursuance of article 40 of the constitution which directs the government to take necessary steps to organize village panchayats and endow them with such power and authority which may be necessary to enable them to work as units of self government. Accordingly, the government appointed a committee, under Balwantrai Mehta which recommended a three-tier system of rural local self government institutions. On the basis of these recommendations, Panchayati Raj institutions were introduced in a number of states.

Meheta's Three Tier System

The Panchayat is an executive body of the village ward members headed by the

Sarapanch. It mainly consists of the representatives elected by the people of the villages. There is also a provision of two women and one schedule caste and schedule tribe if they do not get adequate representation in the normal course. The panchayat is a body accountable to the general body of the villages known as Gramasabha. As regards the main function performed by the village panchayat, they include maintenance of roads, wells, schools, burning and burial grounds, sanitation, public health, street lighting, libraries, reading rooms, community centres.

The panchayat also keeps records of birth and deaths. It takes necessary measures for promotion of agriculture and animal husbandry, Cottage industries, Co-operative societies etc. Some times minor disputes among the denizens of villages are also settled by the village panchayat.

Panchayat Samitis or Block Level Bodies

The block is the intermediary in the three tier system and is the centre of developmental work. The panchayat samiti consist of by taking

- (a) about 20 members elected by all the panchayats in the block;
- (b) two women members and one member from SC and one from ST, if they do not posses adequate representation otherwise by the process.

Panchayat Samiti is headed by a chairman elected by the members of the samiti.

The main work of the panchayat samiti is to co-ordinate and to supervise various activities of the panchayats. It also looks after the developmental aspects within its jurisdiction.

Zilla Parishad

Zilla parishad is at the apex of three tier systems and treated as the higher developmental agency in the State. The organization of zilla parishad differs from state to state. Still, it consists of the elected members of the panchayat samitis, members of the state legislature and parliament, medical officers of the district, district collector, officers of agriculture, veterinary, education engineering, public works, public health etc. Being a developmental body, its main function is supervisory within its areas. It approves budgets of the panchayat samitis in certain states and also gives necessary advice to the government regarding the implementation of programme and developmental works. Besides this, it deals in maintenance of education, dispensaries, hospital minor education etc.

Significance of Panchayati Raj

The democratic decentralization took its shape with a view to better administration and developmental perspectives for quick rural development and co-operations of local people. State government does not possess adequate wisdom of local affairs and problems. In this sense, it constitutes a significant contribution to the theory and practice of nation building activities in the developing areas.

Problems

Diverse and huge problems in the functions and working patterns of the Panchayati Raj system which we are facing in the day to day activities can be broadly described as mentioned below.

Initially, the domination of the bureaucracy over PRIs. The agent of implementation of all major programmes (CDP or IRDP) has always been the State administration, various parallel bodies that have grossly undermined the importance of the PRIs.

Secondly, inadequate financial resources to carry out the administration is a serious problem. The grant-in-aid is the major component of the PRI revenue. The government should realize this difficulty and try to solve it permanently.

Besides, other major problems are also affecting the structure. These are

- (a) incompatible relations among the three tiers;
- (b) undemocratic composition of various P.R. institutions;
- (c) political bias; and
- (d) un-cordial relation between officials and people.

National Declaration for Local Self Governance

In the year April 2002 there was a conference regarding Panchayati Raj held in New Delhi. It was significant for two reasons.

- (a) It diagnosed the problems of panchayats.
- (b) Recommended the prescriptions which, if implemented, can ensure proper devolution of power from the State Governments to the grass root levels.

Inaugurated by the Prime Minister, the conference was attended by 1600 elected heads of 3,40,000 panchayats from across the country. The conference called for amending the constitution if necessary. So that the panchayats could become autonomous both financially and functionally.

The vital theme of the conference was the adoption of a 15 point recommendation or the national declaration for local self governance. The major highlights include :

1. The District Rural Development Agency (DRDA) and other parallel bodies should be brought under the control of respective Zilla Parishad with the chair person of the parishad as head.
2. The State Government should implement the recommendations of the state financial commissions and enable the Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) to raise requisite resources.
3. The centre should provide non budgetary resources as loans to PRIs.

4. The panchayat should have a panchayat planning committee to advise the panchayats in formulating the developmental plans
5. The district planning committee should be made functional by December 31, 2002.
6. The centre and state will make provisions for training panchayat representatives

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Panchayati Raj : People's Parallel Executive Apparatus

Speech delivered by Biju Patnaik in the Orissa Legislative Assembly on November 20, 1961

He [the-then MLA, Kamakhyanagar] went on defining with great care the duties and checks and performances which should from now, after the passage of this Bill, become the responsibility of the Panchayat Samiti. It is only because these mistakes are there, errors are there, these flaws are there in the general administration of the country that the Panchayati Raj movement was initiated. In this house all of us are aware of the deficiency of the Administrative apparatus. Knowing that we have created a parallel executive apparatus made up of the representatives of the people with the hope that all these weakness will be overcome and representatives of the people at the village level or at the Panchayat level, etc., would be able to perform some jobs far better than our present administrative apparatus. If it was not so, Sir, there would be no case for bringing in this Panchayat movement. We are on the threshold of a very great experiment, perhaps the last experiment whether we can trust our people or not whether our people with proper guidance and assistance can prove to be more efficient collectively than our present administrative apparatus is in those fields. All these are matters of experiment ... Every member of the Samiti will have to work harder, take more interest providing the brain power and the executive power to enable this massive progress to go through. If he does

not do that, then all I would say is that another great experiment would fail and in the process the machine may be put back for many generations.

... This is a movement of building up leaders of men from the lowest rung of our society and it is not going to be easy. It is almost a people's movement. We are only trying to give it some shape, some direction or some authority. But the movement can only succeed if we give that authority to the people right down from the bottom of our social ladder who can exercise effective leadership. It is a big question and we have in this House got to think with far greater sympathy and prospective looking at a distant future and planning from now how you want the future to be built. This Bill has tremendous import for the future generations of our State. A great deal of thought and care has gone into this Bill. The Select Committee have provided one or two points in their deliberations to which I personally do not agree and one of the major things is I do not see any reason why the members of this House or Parliament should have any direct interference in the normal administration of the Gram Panchayat movement. We from this House by our own judgement are creating a new child, a new democratic child, with the hope that with the growth of this child it would be able to develop

the leadership which our people need, the leadership of execution. We come as representative of the people after getting votes here, but mostly we legislate; we have no other executive work; we have no time to function. Whereas we shall legislate in this House for years to come with justice and fairness, with wisdom, we must also build an army of men and women who would develop a capacity of execution from small to big jobs. In the process of development. I submit that we would hamper if we do not allow that developmental movement to grow in its own way without attempting directly to interfere or directly interest ourselves in the affairs of that movement. Therefore, whereas I heartily welcome the association of the members of this House in the deliberations of the Committees of Panchayat Samiti and Zilla Parishad, I would not like that members of this House would participate in the elections or the voting of the office bearers of the Panchayat Samitis and Zilla Parishad or even vote for a decision of some creative activities or the locations of such activities. It would not be proper that this House which has given rise to a movement with one hand and would take the powers and its own apparatus of development by another hand. It would be wrong in principle; it would be wrong in concept. Therefore I would urge upon the House to consider that portion of the Select Committee's Report which desires that the members of the House and the members of the Parliament, etc. can directly participate in voting of Panchayat Samitis or Zilla Parishads.

Another matter which some of our members feel is that if we have no voting right; if we have no power of direct deliberations like any other members, we may not be respected, we may not have any hold in our constituencies; wells, tanks, roads, schools and hospitals are to be built by the Sarpanchs or the Panchayat Samitis without reference to us. Who are we? I would like to tell

those hon'ble members who think on those lines that we are taking a terrible restricted view of a movement to which we ourselves give birth. I would like the hon'ble members to think with me and feel with me that we are unleashing or attempting to unleash the greatest latent powers of the people by giving an authority to Panchayati Raj conceived by the Father of the Nation long long ago, we have already originated this idea and this thought. We are merely trying to give it some shape. Let us not pollute that idea by trying to put our fingers in the heart of that movement by trying to directly intervene. We in this House have the powers of the budget, of control of treasury, control of projects, control of public opinion and several other controls which are given to us by democratic thinking. If an Executive Officer in the Panchayat Samiti or a Sarpanch of a Panchayat or the Zilla Parishad does not function well they are open to fullest criticism in this House by the representatives and the Government have the full power to supersede such institutions if they are not going on the right way in the same spirit with which this House has decided to give powers to these institutions. This House remains and shall remain the sovereign House of the State. Every other institution shall be sub-servient to this House. There is no question about it. Therefore let us not think individually; let us not think of our little immediate inconveniences or expediencies. We shall be able in our collective wisdom to devise ways and means as time goes on and development goes on to achieve far greater results through our peoples' confidence and peoples' leadership than we are able to do by ourselves with our existing administrative apparatus.

Excerpts from *Orissa Legislative Assembly Debates*, Vol.I, No.33, 1961.

Women and Panchayati Raj- A Study

Dr. Dayanidhi Parida

Gender Equality and empowerment of women is recognized globally as a key element to achieve progress in all areas. In order to promote development of women the UN adopted “Convention on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women” on 18th December 1979, which came into force on 3rd September 1981.

In spite of many conventions and time bound measurable goals world statistics speak of deplorable state of women and they are marginalized from enjoying the fruits and benefits of equality and independence status. Women in both socio-economic and political levels has been inferior to men in the context of Indian Society. The Constitution of India talks about equality of men and women. But family status in Indian context is judged on account of male seniority and not of the female. Women are yet to be accorded equal status by the Society through Panchayati Raj. However realizing the needs of women empowerment, since Independence special emphasis was laid on the practical needs of women. Its purpose was to bring women into development as passive beneficiaries of development.

It was sad but not shocking to find that even the functions and duties of Gram Sabha are not known to a large majority of respondents. About 80 percent of women are not aware of rural development schemes like NREGS, GRY and funds received under these schemes. Dependence on their husbands, low-level of

education, lack of interest, inadequacy of training etc. appear to be the causes of women’s low-level of awareness.

Women reservation has led only to formal and not real empowerment of women in the Panchayats. It is seen that the participation of the women shall have to get co-operation from their family members. Participation of women in preparing budget and plan is also not to the desired extent and it is dissatisfactory. It is only due to less weightage given to the women due to patriarchal and male dominated social system and age old social taboos against women in the rural area.

Suggestions :-

Here are some suggestions for the better involvement of women in Panchayati Raj for the betterment as well as the progress of the State.

(a) An important requirement for bringing about empowerment of rural women is to bring about an attitudinal change in both men and women. The feeling that women are meant for household activities and bearing children needs to be replaced by a feeling of equal partnership of women and men. To inculcate this, they should be imparted education for bringing about social and political awareness among both.

(b) Studies on women in politics have emphasized the contact with outside in the political process. There could be two ways of doing it. Firstly, interaction between enlightened rural women and illiterate elected women leaders be

encouraged. Secondly these women could be taken out to the urban areas and their interaction with educated urban elected women representatives be arranged.

(c) There should be increased emphasis on ensuring the participation of women in the meetings of Panchayats at all the levels. This is needed to promote and enhance their leadership qualities and self-confidence. It will help them to perform better in the Panchayats to ensure their participation in the meetings. Attendance of all women must be made compulsory from Gram Panchayat to Zilla Parishad.

(d) The women should also be encouraged to organize themselves. It can be effectively used as instruments to mobilize women of the village. Some successful women's organizations can also act as catalytic agents for encouraging women's participation in social and political activities. The Government should provide financial support and infrastructure to some of the successful women organizations to take up the responsibility of encouraging the women elected representatives. This task could also be taken up by the leaders of women's movement in the State. They can also provide support to sensitize the rural women.

(e) Incentives play a vital role in ensuring the participation of elected representatives in decision making. It has been noticed that there are very active and enlightened women leaders at all the levels of Panchayat, who have been successfully implementing the developmental scheme and have ensured over all development of their constituencies. Such leaders need to be encouraged by publicizing their leadership qualities and honoring them in public meetings. It will certainly encourage other women representatives and their success stories and good practices will get publicised.

(f) The genuine NGOs be identified for entrusting them the tasks of training, encouraging, organizing, emblazing and guiding the elected women representatives.

(g) National Literacy Mission and other organizations engaged in the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan should also be assigned the responsibility of educating the rural men and women regarding the significance of Panchayati Raj and empowerment of women.

(h) The media, both print as well as electronic can play vital role in restructuring the rural society. It can act as an agent of political socialization for inculcating the values of gender equality and gender justice.

(i) The curriculum for the students at the primary, secondary and higher secondary levels should be so modified as to promote gender sensitivity among the students. There should be chapters on Panchayati Raj and Women Empowerment in all the classes at the school level and compulsory questions be set on these in the examination.

(j) The unfinished agenda of Women Empowerment be finished by enacting an Amendment for providing reservation for women in the National Parliament and State Legislatures. The reservations at local level are not enough for the Women Empowerment.

Thus women's engagements and participation began virtually from a scratch in Panchayati Raj institutions. The journey of women leadership in local governance is not long. She is still in her learning phase to take up roles that were never of her concern in the past.

It is true that only women can effectively voice their pent up feelings, requirement and perspective in development processes. Thus preparation of women is important to voice needs and ideas of this fraction of society in development.

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Grama Panchayat in Orissa

Dr. Johani Xaxa

“The State shall take steps to organise village Panchayats and endow them with such powers and authority as may be necessary to enable them to function as units of Self-Government” -Article 40 of the Indian Constitution.

A democratic political system involves the decentralisation of power to the Local Government. Local Government is the representative political institution, which is concerned with the local conditions, local needs, local opinions. It is an essential part of the fabric of democratic Government. It is not possible on the part of the Central Government situated at Delhi or any State Government situated at State capital to understand seriously and properly the problem of rural areas. The decision makers should hand over power to solve local problems and implementation of the local developmental programmes in the hand of the elected leaders of the local area. Power must not be concentrated in the hands of a few persons in a democratic system. According to Lord Acton, “Power corrupts and absolute Power corrupts absolutely.” Considering this statement the Government decided for the decentralisation of power. It implies the extension of democracy depends on the popular and active participation of its people in the process of administration.

The System of Local Administration through people’s popular bodies especially Gram Panchayat is not new. It had its origin in the ancient times. In the ancient times, Village Panchayats

were consisting of five elected elderly members of the village. They were deciding the disputed issues and solving local problems in the villages. During Rig Vedic period “Grama” was formed by a number of families. It had popular bodies called the “Sabha” and “Samities”. During later Vedic period there was also “Sabha” and Samities”. The presiding officer was known as “Sabhapati” and its members were known as “Sabhasad”. People were ventilating their grievances through discussions in the Sabha and Samities. Kautilya has described the autonomy of the village communities in “Artha Sastra”. The idea of Rural Local Self-Government was revived seriously by the Government after Independence. Gandhiji was strongly in favour of the revival of village Panchayats. He wanted for the establishment of democratic decentralization through devolution of power. During drafting of the Constitution, the members of the Constituent Assembly were in favour of the introduction of Panchayati Raj Institutions to make the dreams of Mahatma Gandhi fruitful.

According to the recommendations of the Balwant Rai Mehta Committee, the Government decided to delegate more power, responsibility and finance for planning and execution of the developmental programmes to the Grama Panchayats. The main objective of establishing rural local bodies like Grama Panchayat in India is based with the principle of democratic decentralization and direct participation of the

people in administration. Grama Panchayat is at the bottom of the three tier Panchayati Raj Institutions. It is situated at village level. The village is an integrated and viable economic, social, cultural and political unit. It is the only effective organ of people's power.

The Grama Panchayat in Orissa constitutes the basis of rural local government. 86.6% of people in Orissa live in rural areas. The Grama Panchayat was started in Orissa as per the Orissa Grama Panchayat Act, 1948. According to the recommendation of the Balwant Rai Mehta Committee, the Grama Panchayats in Orissa were re-designed and Orissa Gram Panchayat Act was passed in 1964. However, the Janata Government in 1991 brought a sea change in the working of Panchayati Raj in Orissa. The 73rd Amendment Act 1992 of the Indian Constitution is very remarkable. This Act empowers the State Legislature to make laws for the organization of village Panchayats. Article 243-G of the Indian Constitution states that, the legislature of a state by law, endow the Panchayats with such powers and authority as may be necessary to enable them to function as institutions of self-government and such law may contain provisions for the devolution of powers and responsibilities upon Panchayats at the appropriate level, subject to such conditions as may be specified therein with respect to the preparation of plans and implementation of schemes for economic development and social justice and other matters listed in the Eleventh Schedule.

Structure

Grama Panchayat is the bottom of three tier Panchayati Raj System in Orissa. It was constituted as per the Orissa Grama Panchayat Act, 1964. A Group of contiguous villages constitute one Grama. The population of a Grama is more than 2000 and less than 10,000 for each

Grama there shall be a Grama Sasan. The Grama Sasan is a corporate body. The office and headquarters' of the Grama Sasan is situated within the limits of the Grama. Grama Sasan is otherwise known as 'Grama Sabha' in Orissa. It meets at least two times, one in February and the other in June, every year. The quorum for the meetings is one-tenth of the total members of the Grama Sasan. There is one Grama Panchayat for each Grama Sasan. It is the executive authority of the Grama Sasan. After the constitution of a Grama the Collector of the District determines about the number of wards in accordance with Article 243(C) of the Constitution. Normally a village is composed of one or more than one ward. The total number of wards of a Grama Panchayat cannot be less than 11 and more than 25. Each Panchayat area is to be divided into different territorial constituencies (wards). It should be divided in such a manner that the ratio between the population of each constituency and the number of seats allotted to it shall be same throughout the Panchayat area. Grama Panchayat is constituted with one Sarpanch, one Naib-Sarpanch and Ward Members. Sarpanch is elected by the electors of whole Gram Panchayat. One Ward Member is elected from each ward by the electors of the ward from among themselves. Soon after the publication of election result of Sarpanch and Ward Members a special meeting is convened to elect one Naib-Sarpanch. Naib Sarpanch is elected from among the Ward members. If the post of Sarpanch of the Grama Panchayat is not reserved for woman then the post of Naib-Sarpanch shall be reserved for woman of that particular Panchayat. One-third seats (including the number of seats reserved from S.C. and S.T. Women) shall be reserved for woman. This reservation of seats shall be allotted by rotation of different wards of a Gram Panchayat. Besides these elected members, one Secretary is being appointed by the State Government for maintaining the records.

Qualification

Any person to be eligible to contest for election of the Grama Panchayat must be: -

- (a) a citizen of India,
- (b) an elector of that Grama Panchayat and ward,
- (c) Attained 21 years or above,
- (d) Able to read and write Oriya,
- (e) Not an unsound mind,
- (f) Not a deaf-mute or suffering from tuberculosis or leprosy,
- (g) Not holds any office of profit under Central or State Government,
- (h) Not a teacher in any School,
- (i) Not a defaulter from Co-operative Societies,
- (j) Not having more than one spouse living,
- (k) Not having more than two children,
- (l) Having any arrear dues payable by him to the Grama Panchayat.
- (m) Not disqualified by or under any law made by the State Legislature.

Sources of Revenue/ Finance

As per section 93 of the Orissa Grama Panchayat Act, for every Grama Panchayat there shall be a fund known as 'Grama Fund'. Grama fund is placed to the Grama Panchayat. All money received from the Government and income of the Grama Panchayat shall be deposited in the Grama Fund. The Grama fund shall be deposited in any Nationalised Savings Bank or nearest Post Office or Treasury. Following are the main sources of revenue of the Grama Panchayat. It raises money through taxes, fees and Government taxes.

- (a) Vehicles tax,
- (b) Latrine or conservancy tax,
- (c) Water- rate where water is supplied by the Gram Pachayat.
- (d) Lighting taxes, where the lighting of public streets are provided,
- (e) Drainage tax,
- (f) Fees on private markets, cart sheds,
- (g) Fees on animals sold in a public market controlled by a Grama Panchayat,
- (h) Fees for regulating the movement of cattle for the protection of crops,
- (i) Fees for use of any building, shops, stalls, pens of stands in the market,
- (j) Rent from contractor's temporarily occupying open grounds or any building maintained by the Grama Panchayat.
- (k) Any other tax, fee as may be decided by the Grama Panchayat subject to the approval of the State Government.

According to Article 243 H, the legislature of a State may authorise a Panchayat to levy, collect and appropriate such taxes, duties, tolls and fees. Besides this the Grama Panchayat receives funds like Jawahar Rojgar Yojana, Kendu Leaf Grant for developmental works. The Sarpanch prepares a budget and place before the Grama Panchayat for consideration in the financial year. The Grama Panchayat after consideration submit the budget to each Palli Sabha and then to the Grama Sasan for recommendations. After this process of modification and recommendation the budget is being submitted to the concerned Panchayat Samiti for approval. If the Panchayat Samiti is not satisfied with the budget then it has power to modify the budget. As per 73rd Amendment Act, 1992 inserted in the Article 243-1 of the Constitution the Governor have to constitute a Finance Commission to review the financial position and to make recommendations for maintaining sound financial position of Grama Panchayat.

Control Over Grama Panchayat

The Grama Panchayat functions under the control and supervision of the Orissa Government. On behalf of the Government the Collector or any officer authorised by the Collector has the power to inspect, supervise and control over the Grama Panchayat. They can inspect any book, register, record or document of the Grama Panchayat. Besides the M.L.A of the area, Chairman of the Panchayat Samiti and President of the Zilla Parishad have the power to inspect their respective Grama Panchayat. As per section 11 (i) of the Orissa Panchayat Act, the Grama Panchayat is bound to provide all registers, documents and records to the above mentioned personnel. The Panchayat Raj department through Collector, Sub-Collector and District Panchayat Officer controls the Grama Panchayat. If the State feels a Grama Panchayat is not working as per the Orissa Grama Panchayat Act and Rules, then by notification the State Government can dissolve it. If the Sarpanch or Naib-Sarpanch refuses to carry out or violates the provisions of the Orissa Grama Panchayat Act or rules or abuse the powers vested in him then the District Collector after inquiry have the power to suspend the Sarpanch or Naib-Sarpanch and send a report to the State Government. As per section 112 of the Orissa Grama Panchayat Act the Collector has the power to depute any Officer related with developmental work within the district to attend any meeting to advise and assist the Grama Panchayat.

Functions, Power and Duties of the Grama Panchayat

The main objective of the Grama Panchayat is rural development. Section 44 and 45 of the Orissa Grama Panchayat Act specify the functions and power of Grama Panchayat. The functions of the Grama Panchayat have been divided into two, like obligatory or compulsory and optional or discretionary. The following are

the obligatory or compulsory functions of the Grama Panchayat.

1. It constructs, repairs, maintains and improvises the public roads.
2. It makes provision for lighting and cleanse of public roads and other important public places.
3. It constructs, maintains and cleanse drains and public latrines, urinals etc.
4. For the purposes of supply and storage of drinking water, it constructs, repairs and maintains tanks, wells or tube wells etc.
5. It makes adequate arrangements for scavenging, removal and disposal of filth, rubbish and other obnoxious polluted matters.
6. It takes steps for preventing and checking the spread of epidemic or infected diseases.
7. It maintains records of birth, death and marriages.
8. It prepares the census reports of human being and animals and registration of animal sold.
9. It protects, maintains and develops all properties entrusted to the management of the Grama Panchayat.
10. It regulates and controls the movement of cattle for protection of crops.
11. It demolishes the stray and ownerless dogs.
12. It renders all reasonable assistance to the Panchayat Samiti for establishing and maintaining primary education.
13. It supervises and maintains social conservation work.
14. It regulates 'melas', fairs, and festivals and maintains markets, hats and cart stands.
15. It implements schemes for agricultural extension.

16. Minor forest produce.
17. It takes steps for Small Scale Industries, food-processing industries.
18. It takes measures for rural housing.
19. It undertakes poverty alleviation, women and child welfare programmes.
20. It takes steps for social welfare including welfare of the handicapped and mentally retarded persons and public distribution system.

Optional or Discretionary Functions

The main optional functions of the Grama Panchayats are as follows:

1. Maintenance and Planting of trees on both side of the public streets and maintenance of village forests.
2. Establishment and improvement of livestocks.
3. Construction, maintenance and regulation of slaughter houses.
4. Steps for assisting and advising farmers in reclaiming waste lands and cultivating fellow lands.
5. Management and development of different Co-operative Stores.
6. Relief from famine or other natural calamities.
7. Opening and maintenance of Libraries and Reading Rooms for villages.
8. Organisation of fire services and protection of life and property in case of fire.
9. Establishment of maternity and child welfare centers.
10. Establishment and maintenance of Akharas, clubs and other recreation centers.
11. Establishment and maintenance of works for providing employment in time of scarcity and establishment of Grainaries.
12. Promotion of cottage industries.

13. Maintenance and construction of Dharmasalas and rest houses.
14. Maintenance and organisation of agricultural industrial exhibitions.
15. Collecting statistics of unemployed.
16. Provisions for adult education, Establishment of Primary Schools with the prior approval of the concerned Panchayat Samities.
17. It can organize a body known as Grama Swechha Sevaka for assisting the Grama Panchayat during the time of emergency.
18. Prevention of gambling and implementation of the programme for prohibition.

Besides the above mentioned functions it has to perform such other functions, which are given on compulsory basis or optional basis by the State Government.

Power, Functions and Duties of Sarpanch

Section 19 of the Orissa Grama Panchayat Act deals with power, duties and functions of Grama Panchayat. The following are the functions of Sarpanch. All the executive powers of the Grama Panchayat are vested in him.

1. He convenes and presides over the meetings of the Grama Panchayat.
2. He is responsible for the proper maintenance of the record and proceedings of the meeting.
3. On behalf of the Grama Sasan, the Sarpanch execute documents relating to contracts.
4. He is responsible for all securities, properties, asset, records and documents of the Grama Sasan. He has control over it.
5. He is responsible for proper working of the Grama Panchayat.

6. He prepares all required statements and reports.
7. He exercises supervision and control over the acts, rules and proceedings of all officers and employees of the Grama Panchayat.
8. If the Sarpanch feels that any decision of the Grama Panchayat is subversive of peace and order in the area, he has to refer the matter to the concerned Sub-Collector.

Sarpanch have to exercise such other power, discharge such other duties and perform such other functions as may be assigned to by the Government from time to time.

Power and Functions of the Naib-Sarpanch

The Naib-Sarpanch shall exercise such powers, discharge such duties and perform such function as delegated by the Sarpanch from time to time. In the absence of the Sarpanch the Naib-Sarpanch presides over the meetings of the Grama Panchayat. If the post of Sarpanch falls vacant the Naib-Sarpanch performs the functions of the Sarpanch until a new Sarpanch is elected.

Power of the Ward Members

Every ward member of the Grama Panchayats have the following right. Those are right to (a) access to the records of the Grama Panchayat after giving due notice to the Sarpach during office hours, (b) right to move resolutions and question any office bearer about the administration of the Grama Panchayat, (c) right to inspect all works undertaken by the Grama Panchayat. The members have the right to inspect all the institutions, controlled, managed and directed by the Grama Panchayat and to brought to the notice of the Sarpanch about any irregularities. In the absence of Sarpanch and Naib-Sarpanch at a meeting, any other member of the Grama Panchayat present may be elected to preside over the meeting.

Conclusion and Suggestions

The establishment of Grama Panchayat at the bottom is a praise-worthy step to facilitate decentralization of power. The system of participation of the people in solving their own problem makes democracy more democratic. Steps taken as per 73rd Amendment Act of 1992 like constitution of rural local bodies by directly elected representatives on identical pattern of rural local government, an uniform term of five years, elections in time, adequate representation of women, S.Cs, and S.Ts for constitution of Election Commission and Finance Commission are laudable. It brought a sea change in the structure and working of rural local bodies in Orissa. No doubt it has achieved a lot. Still more freedom, power and financial autonomy should be given to Grama Panchayats for greater efficiency and competence. That will be entirely in keeping with our professed goal of democratic decentralisation. The primary objective of the rural local government is to protect democratic values and ensure social justice to people.

Some suggestions may be forwarded for the successful working of Grama Panchayat.

1. The success of the Grama Panchayat depends on the good and harmonious relationship between the elected representatives and other office bearers. The office bearers like District Panchayat Officer, Grama Panchayat Officer, and the Secretary of the Grama Panchayat should render guidance and help for better implementation of the developmental programmes.
2. Control over the Grama Panchayat by the Government and Collector or Sub-Collector should not be excessive, as this will kill the zeal and initiative of the members.
3. Grama Panchayat should be entrusted with power to collect almost all taxes of the area to strengthen its financial position.

4. After getting elected and assuming office of Sarpanch, Naib-sarpanch and Ward Members, they should be given special training about the proper implementation of different developmental programmes. Training should be given to both elected representatives and other office bearers related with the Grama Panchayat activities jointly.
5. Minimum standard of education is required for successful working of rural local Government. So Government should take steps to prescribe a minimum standard of educational qualification for Sarpanchs and Ward Members.
6. Government should provide all the Acts, Rules and directions in Oriya to the Sarpanchs and Ward Members for successful working and implementation of programmes.
7. The Sarpanch, Naib-Sarpanch, Ward members should work honestly and sincerely as they are the representatives of their own local people. They should not waste time for their respective party politics. They should be thorough about the rules, regulations, instructions, direction and Grama Panchayat manual for better participation in the meeting and supervision of developmental programmes.
8. As in several other States like Gujarat, Kerala and Tamil Nadu, Panchayats in Orissa should be endowed with more financial power. The Panchayats should be empowered to collect holding, rural water supply and other taxes.
9. The various developmental programmes, which are now being carried out through rural development department, like rural water scheme and sanitation programme and the center-sponsored Swajaladhara

Yojana should be transferred to the Panchayati Raj Department, to empower the local rural bodies.

The life of the people is very complex at present. Hence, there is necessity of rural local government to solve local problem/ complexity. Local people can know better about the problem and if entrusted it can be solved by them properly. As it is stated that "The wearer of the shoe know better where it pinches". Since Grama Panchayats work as grass-root of democracy at the rural level, they should be given proper care.

Here it can be concluded with the words of Jaya Prakash Narayan that " Unless people realize that they and not the Government can take the country forward, no matter what amounts are spent on plans, the goal will not be achieved".

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Revitalising Orissa's Rural Communities by Kalinga Hero

A.V. Swamy

The independent India had already completed a decade of development by launching two five year plans by 1960. Despite the constraints of a newly independent country with unreliable data and absence of planning experience the targets were very satisfactory in the first plan that gave emphasis on agriculture. The second plan with industrialization on priority also saw a fairly large number of basic industries (Nehru's temples of modern India) dotted the entire country. Orissa had its share – the Rourkela Steel Plant and Hirakud Dam.

Despite implementation of Community Development Programmes and National Extension blocks, there was discontentment amongst the rural people that they had no involvement in planning and implementation of National Plans.

The third Five Year Plan was on the anvil when Late Biju Patnaik took over the reigns of the State. The major challenges for the administration were involvement of the people at large more importantly the rural masses in planning and implementation, and catching up with major States like West Bengal, Tamilnadu, Punjab, Maharashtra etc. because of at least two decades of delay in development.

Biju Patnaik was acknowledged as a great patriot, courageous, accomplished

industrialist and a person who took great pride in glorious past of Kalinga Empire and ever kept resurrection of that great Kalinga as his motivation.

The year 1960 saw the golden confluence of Sri A.K. Khosla, the world famous engineer as Governor, Sri Sivaraman, one of the most brilliant administrators of the country as Chief Secretary and the dynamic Sri Biju Patnaik, as Chief Minister in Orissa.

Strengthening Village Panchayats as Unit of Self Governance

As an ardent admirer of Mahatma Gandhi coupled with his own faith on the capacity of the rural communities to manage their own affairs, his priority of action was laid on activation of rural communities through village Panchayats. The acceptance of three-tier system of Panchayati Raj enunciated by the Balwant Rai Mehta Committee by the Government of India came handy to implement it in Orissa. The necessary amendments were brought in the State Acts to make Panchayats at the village level, Panchayat Samiti at Block level and Zilla Parishads at the district level as instruments of planning and implementation of rural development activities. The minimum necessary provisions were made

under the amended Acts to perform the function assigned to them i.e entrusting the implementation of Community Development Programmes by Panchayat Samitis, management of primary schools, sevashram, rural welfare programmes including rural communications, rural drinking water supply, grain golas and local development works. ZPs and PS were involved in distribution of loans under specific loan schemes besides regular encouragement to successful gram panchayats by giving sizable amount as cash prize to strengthen the Panchayat industries which was the most novel experiment introduced by him.

The plan was to further intensify the efforts to make these decentralized form of governance at the district level emerged into an integral part of India's democratic structure at the state and national level. To achieve this goal it was pertinent for the State Government to take-up one specific block and implement three tier systems to find out the constraints in gradual evolution of the PR institutions at different levels into sustainable units of self governance so that the district panchayats become acceptable as part of the federal system of India.

By amendment to the Panchayat Samiti Act-1961, Biju Patnaik chose Mr. A. V. Swamy (the Author), a young technologist with Sarvodya background and working for post Gramdaan constructive programme in Koraput to become the first non-official BDO in the country.

Resurrecting Lost Livelihoods of the Rural Artisans

In the mid 19th century Orissa was ranked as one of the most developed States in the country. More than 50% of its population were engaged in rural industry as primary source of livelihood. The rural industrial products were exported to

different countries of which textiles formed major commodity through sea-routes navigated by our own men to South East Asian countries including Sumatra and Java. Britain was the largest buyer of the cotton textiles. Other products that were on demand were filigree, jewellery, stone carvings, terracotta, horn works, patta chitra etc. There was gradual disappearance of majority of these avocations due to change in consumer taste and replacement by factory produced goods and articles. This has forced migration of artisans who were mostly land less and small/marginal farmers the seek sustenance as agricultural labourers in to cities as unskilled labourers. The pauperization of rural areas began including disintegration of communities.

Eventhough the state and central governments have launched special programmes under the aegis of Khadi and Industrial Boards, Handloom Boards and others to prevent them from extinction they could not be made an integral part of the socio-economic milieu of the communities nor made competitive enough against commodities produced from higher technology in the urban areas.

The book "Small is Beautiful" by E.F. Shumachar, basically inspired by Gandhian Ideology pleading for an intermediate technology by enhancing the indigenous technology and downgrading the prevalent sophisticated technology of the west was a theme of major debate around the world. Such a technology, it was argued, would reduce the drudgery inherent in indigenous technology making it competitive remaining within the comprehension and competence of rural artisans for continued evolution. With this goal in mind Panchayat industries programme was initiated across the State. Keeping the emerging demand for building programmes like Panchayat Ghars, Anganwadi

Centres, schools etc, light engineering units, carpentry units etc were started by organizing cooperatives of the artisans engaged in the same activity as individuals. The technology used for production was by and large intermediate that was easy to adopt by these traditional artisans. The State Government as well as the Banks besides the artisans' own shares formed the foundation capital for initiating these industries that catered immensely to substitute materials brought from outside market like grills, window frames, doors, nails etc locally. There was tremendous enthusiasm amongst the artisan members as it had given them a sense of ownership of the unit as well as remunerative wages. Similarly the other units took up processing of agricultural produce like sugarcane processing into crystal sugar. Tile and brick-making units established under the Panchayat industries have offered yet a different venue for use of enhanced technology and better wages. Plans were drawn up to expand Panchayat industries programme to cover processing of other agricultural produces and forest products and even preparing lime surkhi mixture as substitute for cement. To involve the PR institutions a novel scheme of awarding cash prizes for their best performance in other sectors like agriculture, health, education and allied

activities was introduced for establishment of Panchayat industries. The industrial training and production units promoted earlier did not serve the purpose of imparting adequate skills nor in production of marketable products. They were closed down and converted into Panchayat industries.

The Firm Foundation laid for a secured socio-economic base for a sustainable rural prosperity was cut short by the successive government.

An Appeal

The present government which swears by their commitment to fulfill the dreams left half accomplished by Biju Patnaik should take up this programme with renewed vigour without compromising on its basic principles as an indispensable initiative to avoid the massive modern industrialization not becoming an antithesis of the novel Panchayat industries programmes.

A. V. Swamy, BISWAS, Khariar Road, District Nuapada-766104.

Brain Storming Deliberations of Biju Patnaik

(I)

At the Meeting of the National Development Council on June 18-19, 1990

This is an important meeting of the National Development Council as we have assembled here today to finalise the approach to the Eighth Five Year Plan which will certainly be a significant milestone in our path towards social change and transformation. I compliment the Planning Commission for preparing a pragmatic Approach Paper which will be the blueprint for our future growth. This, of course, will need to be supplemented in various ways for drawing up operational schemes for removing disparities and the sources of discontentment among various sections of the people as well as for instilling in them a sense and self-confidence as self-respect to achieve the objectives.

2. There is no doubt that excessive obsession with target and target-oriented growth during the past plan periods has led to the

emergence of imbalances in various spheres. It has also led to a slowing down of employment opportunities, sickness in industry with consequential loss of jobs as well as increasing disparities among various sections of the people and regions of the country. Widespread dissatisfaction among the people has resulted in a



change of the Government through the democratic process. It is, therefore, in the fitness of things that the Approach Paper for the Eighth Plan has identified generation of employment alongwith integrated Rural Development with active involvement of the rural people and Panchayat Raj institutions and Voluntary Organisations as the prime thrust areas. We welcome this change.

3. The challenge before us is to break out of the various circle of low productivity, unemployment and poverty. Our primary emphasis should be on increased efficiency and productivity in all sectors of development. Economic growth should be seen not merely in terms of a "rate" - the emphasis should rather be

on the content of development than on a “growth rate” per se. Growth has to be combined with equity, a reasonable minimum standard of living and provision of an essential social amenities to every one as speedily as possible. It should ensure special attention to the needs of the disadvantaged and the vulnerable sections of the society and at the same time ensure more rational and wide spread diffusion of the fruits of development across regions and classes. In other words, growth with equity and diffusion of the benefits of development in a balanced manner among the regions as well as among various sections of the society should be our primary goal in tackling the twin problems of poverty and unemployment. I may mention in this context that we are formulating a programme for making two of our districts viz., Bolangir and Kalahandi as “Zero Unemployment Districts” within this plan period by integrating various sectional schemes.

4. In this context I would specially suggest the need for particular attention to the weaker regions and the backward States and for devising special measures to enable them to play their appropriate role in the mainstream of economic development. Take for instance, the case of Orissa. After 40 years of planning and development the State has not been able to improve the relative position vis-a-vis other states in the matrix of economy development. Orissa’s economy has retained its predominantly agrarian status and the contribution of agriculture to the Net Domestic Product has been stagnating around 60% or thereabout, throughout the Sixth Plan and Seventh Plan periods. Another striking feature of the economy is that there has been no substantial change in the pattern of inter-sectoral contribution to the Net Domestic Product over the years. Obviously the pace of structural change is relatively slower compared to that at national level. This is reflected in a comparison of per

capita income of Orissa with that at the national level. Though there has been an increase in the State’s per capita income both at constant and at current prices, this has not been adequate enough to keep pace with the level of development achieved at the national level. The gap between the per capita income of Orissa with that at the national level started widening significantly during the Sixth Plan. This was aggravated during subsequent plan periods indicating a slower pace of growth at this State level. At current prices, a gap of Rs.376 in the year 1980-81 increased to Rs.623 in the year 1985-86; it rose further to Rs.934 in 1986-87 and is about Rs.1,397 in the year 1988-89 (quick estimate).

5. The relative backwardness of Orissa as compared to other States both in regard to extent of poverty and its intensity are reflected in the available data. In fact, the intensity of poverty is much higher in Orissa than in many other States. This calls for appropriate remedial measures particularly in regard to the devolution of financial resources between the Centre and the States. I would suggest that the existing Gadgil Formula might be supplemented by a composite index of backwardness, appropriately devised, which might benefit relatively backward and poverty-stricken State like Orissa.

6. I am sure, you will agree with me Mr. Chairman, that situation like this deserves special attention for devising specific measures for bridging such widening gaps. I would not like to go into details at the present stage but I am confident that such problems would be tackled and solved appropriately when we finalise our 8th Plan.

7. I would now like to give my comments briefly on several important issues raised in the Approach Paper. It has been suggested that many of the existing problems can be corrected by

transferring a substantial part of the responsibility for planning and implementation of economic and social development programmes, e.g., minor irrigation, soil conservation, primary education, health, drinking water, housing etc. to the elected representative institutions of local Government alongwith provisions of necessary financial resources and staff. It has been further stated that the local area plans at the village or Panchayat level will first aim to expand employment, production and income in various economic activities. While agreeing with the approaches, we must remember that employment generated must be productive and relevant. The job seekers have a legitimate right to work; at the same time, those who are already in employment have a duty to work sincerely and generate assets. The objective of our planning should be to work more and produce more so that in the process the nation gets benefited.

Decentralisation of the planning process including formulation and implementations of relevant schemes at the district level and below is necessary for utilising the latent energy of the people in our plan efforts as well as for plugging the loopholes. It would be rational in this context to entrust the elected Panchayat Raj institutions with implementation of all rural employment schemes like J.R.Y. etc. This brings into focus the urgent need for introducing a proper system for human motivation as well as a clean and impartial system of administration at the grass-root level. In the absence of these inputs, a combination of other resources - men, material and capital - will fail to achieve the desired objectives.

8. Agriculture still being the main-stay of the people deserves our particular attention. In my view the entire gamut of activities in this sector requires a thorough reorientation with particular attention to the needs of agriculturally backward

regions as well as needs of refined tacts, dry lands and wastelands. I strongly feel that greater attention be paid to development of horticulture, sericulture and cash crops so that we can build on it a network of suitable agro-based industries. This will be of great help to the farmers in remote, rural and tribal areas not only in terms of employment but also in terms of generating higher income by ensuring a better price for the produce. There is also a great scope for development of our huge untrapped potential in complementary sectors like Dairy Development, Poultry Development, Fishery Development, Sericulture etc. These have to be taken up in an integrated manner for promoting rural employment and for reducing urban bias. This is particularly relevant for accelerating the pace of development in our Scheduled Areas which still suffer from lack of communication and marketing facilities exposing them to exploitation by various agencies.

9. Irrigation as an input to agriculture must receive the highest priority. All on-going Major and Medium Irrigation Projects should be completed as quickly as possible. Greater emphasis should be given on Minor Irrigation and Lift Irrigation during the 8th Plan period. Here, as in many other sectors, we have a tale of missed opportunities. Had we been fortunate in translating into reality Pandit Nehru's dream and commissioning the Tikarpara Project on the Mahanadi river in Orissa in the early sixties, Orissa's economy would have been transformed. However, we can still retrieve a part of the vision by implementing quickly the irrigation part of the Rengali Multi-purpose project in our State. I mention this particularly as Irrigation canals have to be completed within the next 7 years or earlier if possible, for taking full advantage of the Dam and Power Plant which has already been constructed. I would further suggest that for ensuring optimum utilisation of our water

resources, investment in irrigation sector should be proportionate to the availability of irrigation potential in various regions. How can a State like Orissa progress when the investment on irrigation is as low as 2% against its potential of 11% ?

10. I firmly believe, Mr. Chairman, that in consonance with our accepted objectives for the 8th Plan, the social services sector, particularly, education and health, deserve a much higher priority. This is necessary for ensuring that the benefits of development percolate down to the poorest of the poor and the vulnerable sections, specially women and S.C./S.T. population. Such a change will also significantly help in making our population limitation measures more effective. We agree that a major overhaul of our Education Policy is necessary to achieve the goal of greater equity as well as the necessity for providing adequate technical inputs at various levels. Greater thrust on our programmes of mass literacy with skilled development as well as elementary and secondary education is essential for achieving the goal of complete eradication of illiteracy by the end of 1990s. I have already started a scheme for involving all secondary school students in the literacy campaign.

I am glad to announce in this context that we would be launching a special drive for making two of our districts, viz. Kalahandi and Bolangir "Full Literacy Districts" within this plan period.

11. On the health front, it is heartening to note the adoption of multi-disciplinary approach for tackling the problems. It has been rightly stated that education, specially women's education, has a great deal to contribute to the health delivery system. Similarly in our strategy for population control, it is accepted that the focus should be on women's status, female literacy, responsible motherhood and control of infant mortality. I would suggest that Malaria, Filaria, Kalaazar and

Encephalitis should be integrated into a single programme of control of vectorborne diseases. The Universal Immunisation Programme should be implemented vigorously to reduce infant mortality. As malnutrition is one of the important factors leading to high infant mortality, additional inputs would be necessary for the Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS) so that nourishing food may be served to the children. I fully agree with the suggestion in the Approach Paper that the better off sections of the community should pay adequately for the services utilised by them both in the sphere of Education and Health.

12. In the social services sector, our main aim should be to increase the purchasing power of the poor through employment preferably in rural agro-based industries. However, we must provide a minimum of food security through a restructured, more efficient and decentralised Public Distribution System (PDS). Its coverage particularly in the rural areas has to be expanded and local Panchayati Raj institutions and voluntary organisations involved to a much greater degree. Stopping the present leakages and cutting down costs are equally important. As rightly suggested in the Approach Paper, we should also explore the possibility of procuring those food-grains that are relevant to the food basket of the lower income groups in particular areas.

13. The strategy for industrial development as spelt out in the Approach Paper. Mr. Chairman, deserves particular attention. This is an area where we have to take an integrated view taking into account of various relevant sectors, viz., the need for developing our resources, the requirements of balanced regional growth, the balance of payment problem, the need to ensure a minimum 12% annual volume of growth in export, the need for modernisation and updating of technology, promotion of technological innovation, environmental issues as well as provision of

requisite infrastructure facilities particularly in the energy and transport sectors. It is imperative to ensure that our resources are optimally used to promote product quality and cost effectiveness in all spheres and more efficient use of energy and other infrastructure inputs. Employment need not, as rightly stated in the Approach Paper, necessarily be the primary consideration in certain areas. However, even in areas where additional demand generated for consumer goods is expected to be met through labour intensive processes of production on a decentralised basis, our motto should be improvement in productivity and cost effectiveness.

14. We should encourage building up of a network of viable and efficient Small Scale Industrial Units - both modern and traditional - which would work in a regime free of irksome regulations utilising local resources and manpower. We must aim at larger value addition to all our primary produce and raw materials. Just as we are trying to step up agricultural production by re-organising it according to Agro-Climatic Zones, industrial production should similarly be raised by utilising the natural resources of various regions to the fullest extent. In other words, we must develop those sectors where we have a comparative advantage in a most appropriate manner. Infrastructure support like provision of power, roads, railway lines, port facilities etc. should be tailored to meet such requirements. For example, in many parts of the country including Orissa, there are vast reserve of mineral resources, marine wealth as well as convenient locations for off-shore and on-shore facilities. In a scenario where the world situation is changing fast we should be poised to grab the opportunities that come our way and do away with dilatory bureaucratic fetters which stifle initiative and growth. A determined effort must be made in this direction both by the Central and State

Governments, so that national requirement is met in the most efficient manner. The multiplier effort of such growth centres will obviously quicken the pace of development.

15. One brief word on Plan Finance before I conclude. Even after taking into account the devolution of financial resources recommended by the 9th Finance Commission, some State still emerge as deficit State on Plan Revenue account. I, therefore, strongly endorse the Finance Commission's suggestion in their report that the Planning Commission should consider granting special long term loans for bridging such deficit so that the Revenue deficit States do not have to divert their borrowings for meeting their Plan Revenue needs.

16. Mr. Chairman, planning by its very nature, implies imposition on our selves of a certain degree of discipline and self-restraint. This also involves a common vision and a common heritage of dreaming together and working in unison utilising all our resources endowments for the common good. We need not be daunted by the magnitude of the task that lies ahead. Well-begun, as they say, is half-done. I am sure, Mr. Chairman, the Planning Commission under your guidance will rekindle the spirit of objective self-reliance, which was the essence of Pandit Nehru's vision of planning for development with equity.

Thank you.

Sources : *Orissa Review*, August, 1990.

(II)

Conference on Human Rights on September 14, 1992 at New Delhi

Mr. Home Minister and Friends,

I must congratulate the Union Home Minister for the comprehensive agenda papers he has sent us. I would like to make a small suggestion before I respond to proposals

contained in the agenda papers. The issues referred to are extremely important and we must devise strategies based on mature deliberation. Some of the suggestions in the agenda notes have a bearing on Centre-State relations. Some others have serious financial implications. Some others, it seems to me, do not take sufficient note of ground realities. Before any specific decision is taken, it will be appropriate that our response based on years of experience and first-hand acquaintances with problems under discussion are carefully considered. We should avoid the temptation of coming out with solutions at the end of the meeting and producing the impression that these solutions were always round the corner and all that was needed was the will to find them. I would advise that the proposals contained in the agenda notes are reviewed in the light of today's deliberations : we can meet again to discuss the results of the review and design strategies inspired by pragmatic perceptions rather than summons issued by self-appointed defenders of human rights from abroad and from within the country.

It is odd, and certainly humiliating that we should be treated to lessons on human rights by foreign organisations whose good will towards India is not at best doubtful. They accuse the Indian state of abridging human rights of terrorists and of scoundrels intent on dismembering India with the help of foreign arms and money. For these organisations, human rights of terrorists and secessionists and sacrosanct and indubitably superior to those of the innocent people they kill and of the women and children who are forced into a life of penury, anguish and insecurity. Their conscience, if any is inexplicably dumb when thousands of families are forced to abandon their homes and properties and become refugees. These organisations and their high priests have not thought it fit to condemn terrorism or secessionism or systems of governance that

openly subordinate human rights to what they think are laws of their religion. They have also desisted from condemning interference by one state in the internal affairs of another, leading to enormous human rights abuse. While the erstwhile Soviet Union was accused of human rights violation in eastern Europe, open support for armed rebellion in Afghanistan resulting in mass killing and exile of millions of Afghans was viewed differently and kindly. Our neighbour's dirty work in Kashmir and in Punjab has also been viewed with extraordinary indulgence. Is it because Indians, Afghans and people of other Asian and African countries have no human rights unless they are murderers, robbers, or on foreign pay rolls ? Why is it that there is such clamour when one of these species is killed and none when the basic human right-the right to live - is abrogated every day in Somalia, Ethiopia and the erstwhile Yugoslavia ?

I submit that throughout the ages as well as today India can boast of human rights record which is superior to the record of any other country. This will be evident from the fact that minority populations have grown and flourished in India whereas in the history of the west, they have often been victims of relentless carnage. Those who raise an outcry over the reported death or torture of a terrorist in India have no word of sympathy for a Malkankit Natt who was mercilessly bashed up by the London Police or for a Rodney King who was administered 56 video-taped blows by the Los Angeles police or for the Korean immigrants who lost practically everything they had earned in the race riots that followed the acquittal of policemen who had assaulted King but who the Jurors thought were simply doing their duty.

Let us therefore say, and say it openly that we do not mean to take these experts at doublespeak seriously at least not until they have

taken up defence of human rights in their own countries and not until they have launched an impartial campaign against outside inspiration for militancy and terrorism.

The basic objective of our freedom struggle was to restore to the Indian people the human rights they were deprived of by colonial rule. Our constitution guarantees these rights and also provides for their enforcement. I frankly do not see much merit in the proposal to set up a Human Rights Commission. I can understand a commission going into certain issues in greater detail than the Government which has its hands full with everyday problems and recommending policies, laws and procedures of implementation but actual implementation has to be the function of Government and not of an agency outside it. It is not correct that a Government elected by the people should assign its functions to an organisation outside people's mandate. Such institutions, I am afraid are not legitimate in terms of our Constitution. This is precisely what has been happening over the past few years. We have Commissions for the Scheduled Castes and Tribes, for women and for minorities. Is the Government incapable of looking after India's Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, women and minority communities? The proposed Human Rights Commission will also, I am afraid, impinge on the powers of State Governments public order, police and prisons fall under the State list. Clause(3) of Article 246 vests in State Government to "exclusive power to make laws" in respect of matters enumerated in the state list. It is no doubt suggested in the agenda notes that the commission will be a fact-finding and advisory body, but I would also have the mandate to recommend prosecution of the offenders and to advise authorities about the steps they should take to uphold human rights." There is absolutely no doubt that it will function as an authority that

believes that State Governments are accountable to it, especially when it is set up as has been suggested by an Act of Parliament. We may perhaps have a Commission to enquire into human rights questions and submit its report to Government, but it should cease to exist after a specified period during which it must submit its report. To go beyond this will lend strength to the thesis that the Union Government and the State Government cannot be trusted in the matter of human rights. Let us be clear that it is the Government's duty to uphold human rights and it will do so at all costs.

Agenda item No.2 is far more important. Custodial crime is utterly reprehensible and must be curbed regardless of the status of the offender. We should however look at the problem in its perspective. In large number of cases, policemen responsible for such offences have been punished. This is the position in my State and is, perhaps true for other States. What this means is that the State in India does not take an indulgent view of custodial crime. We should also take note of the fact that in a large number of cases, allegations of custodial torture are motivated, the motive being to force the investigating officer into a position of self-defence and thereby deflect him from single-minded pursuit of the case. The motive may also be to win the court's sympathy. This phenomenon has been observed in several countries.

A disciplined and motivated police force is seldom guilty of custodial crime. Such crimes are committed by a few deviant members of the force, but their proportion to the number of correct and responsible policemen is no higher than such proportion in other profession.

The most effective insurance against custodial crime is the morale and the attitude of the force. Unfortunately police morale had suffered serious erosion both due to politicisation

and unionisation. For the first evil, we ourselves are responsible since we would like to use the police to protect people whose only virtue is that they are with us and persecute people who have different loyalties. As long as we persist in this behaviour, no system can be effective against custodial crime. The offending police officer may have done us some service in the past or may promise to do in future. This distortion is matched by a corresponding distortion caused by unionisation of the force. If an investigation into an alleged custodial crime is taken up against a police officer, there is a tendency on the part of others to combine and protect him. We must make up our mind that we shall not suffer this impediment and must proceed against every police officer, guilty of such crime.

While allegations of custodial death and torture are exaggerated, such allegations are widely believed to be true because there is very little openness in enquiries and because the results of enquiry are seldom published. We can consider a system that would ensure expedition and objectivity in enquiries. There is no advantage in a mandatory judicial enquiry in such cases. Section 176 of the Code of Criminal Procedure already vests in Magistrates the power to hold an enquiry into cases of custodial death including death allegedly due to suicide. We can examine whether the provisions of the Code cannot be enlarged and made more effective so that cases of custodial death and rape are enquired into by authorities other than those of the police. Greater authority to the District Magistrates or to functionaries nominated by the State Government would go a long way in investing transparency and credibility both to enquiries and follow up actions.

Award of financial relief should be informal and left to State Governments. I do not see why State Government that provide financial relief to victims of natural calamities and communal

riots cannot be trusted with this task and must act in pursuance of a central law. We can agree on certain guide-lines, but their implementation is best left to State Governments. Let us consider setting up a task force to formulate the guide-lines, but let us desist from doing under law what can be done through an attitude of concern and compassion.

I have said earlier that there is a correlation between the incidence of custodial crime and erosion of police morale. In addition to the two aforesaid causes of declining police morale, there is another, the alarming fall in convictions due largely to the present system of prosecution. The earlier system of prosecution which had succeeded in securing convictions for the larger number of criminals was replaced in 1973 by the new Code of Criminal Procedure. After the new system came into force, acquittals have far outnumbered convictions. The result is that, the law breaker is no longer afraid. Citizens are afraid of the law breaker. So great is the citizens' fear that they have lost the capacity to resist the most heinous crimes committed in broad daylight. So great, again, is the erosion in the State's will to govern that several such crimes go unpunished although there is no doubt either about the identity of their perpetrator or the distress of their victims. The powerful and the rich have acquired the capacity to abuse the judicial process and to be immune to retribution under the law. We are fast moving into a situation which Shakespeare described as follows :

Through tatter'd clothes small vices do appear
Robes and furr'd gowns hide all. Plate sin with gold,

And the strong lance of justice hurtless breaks,
Arm it in rags, a pigmy's straw both pierce it.

(King Lear, Act 4. Scene 6).

I would submit that it would be artificial to dislink human rights from punishment of crime. It will be artificial for two principal reasons. Firstly in a situation in which the system of punishment for crime is ineffective the criminal has the licence to trample upon the human rights of hapless victims. Secondly in such a situation, society which includes the police, will be compelled to devise other methods of containing crime. The police are accountable when the crime situation deteriorates. If the normal system of investigation and prosecution does not yield results, there will be a tendency to resort to other methods; so that the police can give a good account of itself. I should think that the incidence of custodial crime should be seen in the perspective of our system of administration of Criminal Law. If amendment of the Evidence Act and the Code of Criminal Procedure is being contemplated so that those responsible for custodial crime are punished adequately and quickly, there is clearly a stronger case for contemplating amendments so that criminals and killers do not acquire the power to dominate the society.

The need for educating police officials in human rights is both great and urgent. It should be possible for us to devise a programme of training the cost of which can be shared between the Union and State Governments designed to promote human rights literally. Financial support to State Government is also necessary for expanding and modernising jails.

As for crimes against disadvantaged sections of society including women all that we need is a strong administrative will. Crimes against these groups have come down significantly when there is clear evidence of the State's will to punish the offenders. These criminals do not belong to the under-world. They have social status, being either land-owners, or Government employees, or employees of the corporate sector or persons

who are prospering in their own business. I have recently issued instructions to the effect that a Government servant against whom a prima facie case of dowry offence is made out shall be placed under suspension and if his responsibility for the offence is established, he shall be dismissed from service. I am aware that this will not have more than marginal effect on crimes against women but this is an illustration of State will. We do not unfortunately have a worthwhile social movement that creates awareness against such crimes. During the days of our freedom struggle the goal that inspired us was not only political independence but a society in which the individual whatever his religion or caste or sex or income status, could live with dignity. Gandhiji who gave direction to the freedom struggle integrated issues like removal of untouchability, rights of tenants to land and freedom from poverty with the issue of political independence. We are incapable today of understanding his integral philosophy and have assigned the task of social engineering to thousands of non-Governmental organisations supported with munificent Government grants. Societies do not change through the work of persons who are paid to bring about change. We, regardless of the parties we belong to, and the political goals we cherish, must combine to create an awareness which will not condone any crime against a Harijan, a woman, a poor man or a person who calls his God by a different name.

I am sorry I have taken a lot of time but then the issues you have raised do not admit of a summary response. I would make a final submission. Human rights are important not because foreign human rights organisations have asked us to honour human rights but because our culture and our history have embedded respect for man in our soul. We should devise methods consistent with realities of our situation to operationalise this respect. If these methods do

not conform to the prescriptions of some self-righteous organisations, there should be no cause for distress.

Sources : *Orissa Review*, October, 1992.

(III)

Chief Ministers' Conference on Administration of Criminal Justice November 13, 1992

This conference, in my view, is not merely a conference to discuss administration of criminal justice; it provides us all with an opportunity to review the manner in which the Indian State is functioning. The basic function of the State is protection of the life, liberty and property of citizens and prevention of their harassment by any individual or group. The State has now come to acquire several other functions, but these are clearly not in lieu of its basic function. A society in which the security of life and property of its members is under frequent jeopardy is clearly not a well governed society. Such societies are characterised by the emergence of individuals and groups who assume to themselves the illegitimate and wholly mercenary authority to compel others to live in terror and deprivation and to punish what, according to laws fashioned in their imprudent imagination, is deviant behaviour. The larger the extent of such wicked authority, the greater is the irrelevance of the State which, in course of time, becomes so feeble that assorted scoundrels and criminals, instead of dreading its instrumentalities, take control of them. Since the State is unable to punish crime, they coerce a hapless society into giving them the honour and status it used to assign to the wise, the brave, the honest and the industrious. The law-breaker is no longer afraid; citizens are afraid of the law-breaker.

Such a society is clearly reprehensible. All enlightened Governments have, throughout

history, endeavoured to ward off such distortions in the social process through installation of a system in which crime is quickly punished. Where they have succeeded, individuals have striven to realise their higher aspirations and have not been driven into diminutive cocoons by fear or insecurity. Societies that have ensured freedom and security have made remarkable advance in material and intellectual development; societies that have failed in this basic task have remained underdeveloped and have frequently had to surrender political sovereignty, for mercenaries and criminals who had acquired positions of pre-eminence were the most unlikely defenders of freedom.

We had, in this country, a reasonably effective system of punishing crime. It certainly had several drawbacks, but it had the merit of denying the criminals the sense of impunity they have lately come to acquire. Immediately after independence, we thought that the whole system was evil and started a romance with exotic concepts. One such concept was the separation of the judiciary from the executive. We forgot to take note of the fact that this concept had evolved in an altogether different situation and was administered by altogether different people. In those societies, it is a functional distribution, whereas in ours, the judiciary is convinced that the entire authority of the State vests in it alone.

The overall result, as the agenda papers for this conference show, has been a disturbing rise in acquittals and a disturbing fall in convictions. It is significant that these trends became manifest after the new Code of Criminal Procedure, which effected the separation of powers and installed a new system of prosecution in Courts of Magistrates, which came into force. Our first duty should be to contain this development and reverse these trends. We should give some time and thought to evolving implementable strategies so

that no Indian citizen lies in fear and so that whoever transgresses the law is quickly and effectively dealt with. If these strategies requires a change in the law, we should be prepared to effect these changes without being hamstrung by shibboleths. The illustrative areas where the law may have to be changed are : the system of prosecution; empowering executive magistrates to try offences under certain chapters of Indian Penal Code and under some minor Criminal Act and Special Acts; and provisions relating to preventive arrest and bail. With regard to the prosecution system, I would like section 25 of the Code of Criminal Procedure to be amended so that the State Government can appoint a police officer to conduct prosecution subject to the condition that he has not taken any part in the investigation into a case under trial. This would go a long way towards eliminating lack of co-ordination between prosecution and investigation which has benefited criminals. Some States have amended several sections of the Code of Criminal Procedure. In order that we have a uniform Code of Criminal Procedure, these amendments, along with certain others which are found necessary, can be incorporated into a Central amendment which can become the law for the whole country.

Delay in completion of investigation is another major contributor to the worsening crime situation. It not only creates a public impression that nothing much is going to happen to a criminal, at least for quite some time, it also enables the criminal to tamper with evidence, win over or liquidate witnesses and in effect decide the case. There are three major reasons for delay in investigations. Firstly, the police manpower is inadequate. Secondly, the available manpower has several other pre-occupations, such as performing security duty for a horde of dignitaries who relish the illusion that their lives are in danger. Thirdly, investigating officers do not have adequate

mobility or access to modern techniques of investigation. The first and third factors would require financial and technical collaboration between the Centre and States. If this collaboration materialises immediately, we should be able to register improvement in the immediate future. As for the second factor, demanding security cover has become a status symbol. It is time that self-appointed luminaries of our political firmament realised that, in the unlikely event of some madcap disposing them of, the only cost to the country would be a by-election.

I would reiterate that improving the administration of criminal justice should be the collective responsibility of the Union and the States and that it would be disastrous to leave resource-deficit State to meet the full cost of desired improvement. Cost-sharing should extend to enlarging accommodation in jails. There has been no significant enlargement of such accommodation which has been under great strain due both to the increasing number of convicts and of under-trial prisoners. A few days ago, we met here to discuss human rights abuse and, in particular, infringement of such rights in custody. Such infringement becomes inevitable when we have to pack 500 people in space meant for 50.

There are two further points I would like to make. An increasingly significant factor in the present crime situation is crime by organised groups whether subscribing to terrorism as a political activity or bound by a common criminal intent. The distinction between these two groups is very often a fiction since, for the first group, politics is a veneer for crime and the second group has little compunction in seeking political patronage when driven to a corner. I would like it to be understood that as long as organised crime is not effectively dealt with, no refinement in dealing with individual criminals would improve the crime situation. Individual and small-time crime is

yielding place everywhere to organised crime. While the individual criminal offends an individual victim, criminal gangs offend society at large and challenge the authority of the State. Let us not, in dealing with them, be shackled by international prescriptions on human rights. Innocent citizens of this country and their society have certain rights and if conglomerates of criminals assault these rights, we have to protect the larger and superior rights. If necessary by abridging and indeed even extinguishing inferior and irrelevant rights. If we act otherwise, we would bring about a situation in which no true human rights exist. I have to say this because it is necessary that we are not overwhelmed by the latest inspiration doled out by human rights activists.

Secondly, some amount of introspection on the part of the community of politicians is overdue. Quite a few crimes occur because we ourselves organise agitations on a number of non-issues with a view to keeping ourselves in limelight. Since we have been in power and since it is not unlikely that we will come back to power, the law enforcing machinery is handicapped in dealing with our proteges in the manner they deserve to be dealt with. Let us be frank and admit that we ourselves have inducted into legislatures and endowed high offices on a number of persons whose legitimate place is in the jail. This criminal aberration afflicts all political parties and the result is that no political party today has the moral authority to suggest any reform. By far the larger part of my life is behind me. I would hope to see, in the remainder of my life, that the profession of politics does not admit persons who find in politics protection for their past and present criminality. This may cost us a few votes, but the voting system itself may cease to exist very soon if such persons enjoy the immunity and prestige they have come to enjoy for sometime past.

Sources : *Orissa Review*, December, 1992.

(IV)

Orissa of My Dreams :

I have been commissioned here in the memory of my dearest friend Binod Kanungo - not to speak but to dream. I have been told that I should project Orissa of my dreams. What would I dream ? Once Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore said, "When you dream, dream big. It is only by dreaming big things that big tasks are accomplished." We are born to die. While dreaming think of big things - Dream the biggest dream of all. In his poetry, what did he say ? "Sapan dekhi tulab ami badi, prabal dwipe manimuktar" This was the dream which urged the young people of those days to dream big. I have not forgotten these lines of Rabi Thakur.

When I want to dream of Orissa what should I dream ? Orissa has become a small little place. One day it was the greatest empire of India. Its army defeated Alexander's Army and threw them across the border of India. Kalinga was the largest maritime power ever known in the world. That Kalinga spread her civilisation throughout the South East Asia; relics are found in all these countries even today. What better dream can I have than dream of those magnificent days, when Orissa was vital, when Kalinga was vital, when Kalinga was the greatest empire of India, when the sailors of Kalinga did not know fear, when the soldiers of Kalinga did not know fear, when the mothers of Kalinga were known as "Biranganas". That was Kalinga. Therefore that is a dream worthy of Kalinga.

In my dream of the 21st century for the State, I would have young men and women who put the interest of the State before them. They will have pride in themselves, confidence in themselves. They will not be at anybody's mercy, except their own selves. By their brain, intelligence and capacity, they will recapture the history of

Kalinga. I would like my Orissa of 21st century to have excellent artisans, superb craftsmen and sculptors, greatest musicians and poets. After all it is we who built Konark. It was in Orissa or Kalinga where the great Geeta Govinda was composed. It is the same place where Great mathematicians like Pathani Samanta looked at the sky and created astronomical wonders. A place where we have mathematical genius, great sculptors and artists, great musicians and dancers and men and women of great culture, this should be the dream of my Orissa, should be the dream of my life.

There is no English word for "Karuna". When a young woman goes to pray before her God she asks for one blessing. "O' Lord, fill my soul with 'Karuna', I ask for nothing else." That is the epitome of culture, which Orissa of my dream would have.

We men and women of today, have shrunk. Because we do not dream big, we have become little men and women with little problems, little conspiracy, little likes and dislikes, little gain or loss. Orissa can be lifted by collective will. We are the descendants of great ancestors. Look at my beautiful hills, beautiful rivers, beautiful sea, rich forests which are gifts of God, given to our people. I would like my men and women, young people of my State, in the coming years to take all these gifts that God has given and produced the greatest machines that produce wealth for all and provide employment and productive work to all. In my dream of Orissa no cultivator would go with his field dry. Every drop of water that percolates through our soil is recovered. In my dream of Orissa of tomorrow, I will not like to hear a whisper about oppression to women. I dream of a day when women would play equal role with men. They will exercise with men equal power and enjoy the same privilege. This should

be my dream of tomorrow the 21st century. In that time no child of my State will go hungry without food or suffer from malnutrition. And all over my land, there will be no illiteracy or ignorance.

For my farmers, I would like to dream that never and never his crop shall perish for want of water. Each drop of water will be conserved and used. Natural calamity, the scourge of Orissa, would be a thing of the past. All the rivers would be tamed, all the water storages reconstructed so that parched lands get that water when needed.

Yesterday I inaugurated an exhibition of the Adivasis. Those of you who have not gone, I would recommend that you spend a couple of hours there, see their style of living. You realise that 30% of our people live in this condition. I will like to see that every citizen of my State has a decent roof over his head, every family gets drinking water and all-weather protection. They must have all weather roads and bridges, schools properly manned with able teachers and hospitals with adequate number of excellent doctors. It has to be ensured that every nook and corner of my state has proper health care, proper schooling, proper road system and communication systems like telephones, like electronics - all that the modern science has given, the average villagers must have.

The wealth of minerals that nature has endowed us will sustain many major industries for long years to come, whether it is steel, whether power from coal, whether aluminium or oil refineries and petrochemicals. All these will come to us. We should make our State a place of attraction to all people from all over the world. In India, today we have no social harmony, no religious tolerance, no caste tolerance. Certainly we cannot grow with all these divisions. In my dream of Orissa, there should be harmony, broad-

mindedness, greater tolerance all around and fellow feeling from neighbour to neighbour.

In conclusion, I would like to say what Max Muller said long time back, “If I have to look over the whole world to find out the country that nature has bestowed its best, I would point to India”. We all together can make our State such that the whole world would say that Orissa is our dreamland.

(First Binode Kanungo Memorial Lecture delivered extempore on January 27, 1992 at Soochana Bhawan, Bhubaneswar.)

(V)

Soft State, Hard Decisions

It is unfortunate that hardly any government in this country has had the courage to adopt a tough line as far as austerity measures go. And this is because no one in the government wants to give up his own benefits - even when hundreds and thousands of our countrymen are getting no benefits at all. Running the Government is getting more and more expensive. Be it the civil, military or police administrations, hundreds of million people are employed. And who pays for them ? The already over-burdened tax payer.

The public sector corporations are also a part to it. Heavily overstaffed, they employ five men where one is required. And the unions ensure that they are well protected. So the government continues to ball them out.

We should emulate the example of Mexico. The President there took a stern position. He broke the unions and as a result of that, Mexico is already looking up today. It is about time that we recognised that if we are losing in a particular area, government funding should be discontinued.

We have reached such a pathetic stage that as a nation we are now forced to borrow in

order to pay wages and salaries. And if we want to develop a plan, we have to pay even more. At the same time, the public services that the government should be funding—such as schools, health services and other activities — are being ignored. In Korea, to produce 15 million tonnes of steel, the country employs 20,000 people but here to produce 15 million tonnes of integrated steel, we employ 300,000 people.

No nation can survive like this. Our overstaffed administrative machinery is too expensive. The bureaucracy is negative all over the country—both at the Centre and in the States. There is absolutely no initiative at any level to change this—all they are interested in is cushioning their interests with precedents and authority.

The political machinery is even more expensive. The upkeep of the Prime Minister, the Ministers, the Cabinet, Parliament is maintained by the contributions of the tax payers. These people are supposed to serve the people but instead they only serve as rulers. It is absolutely ridiculous that an MP should be entitled to 28 flights per year to his constituency. Their pensions also keep increasing. An MP is not part of the administrative service yet they, their wives, their widows, their children are all recipients of benefits from the government.

It is a sickening spectacle for a person like me who has fought for the nation’s Independence and suffered for it. Today the entire patronage system encourages corruption at all levels. In fact, corruption has been in-built into the system where even men in high places are corrupt. Quite simply, the common perception is that power is for the self.

Even Nehru never thought seriously about controlling the country’s population in terms of incentives and disincentives—no one with more than two children should have been entitled to a

government job or an elective position. Instead, we have been converted into a nation of 90 crores from one of 34 crores. The whole world is laughing at us. Every other country is increasing its per capita income but we seem to be getting poorer each year.

It is time that we took some hard decisions. Of course this will be resented. Once benefits are taken away from the political class, these “secure” men will feel naked as if they are no longer the representatives of the people. We should also redefine the concept of security - today there are 10,000 applicants for a peon’s post in the government because it is perceived as a secure job. The Centre will also have to truly respect the federal nature of our Constitution. For example, it is ridiculous that even though agriculture is a state subject, the union agriculture ministry employs over 40,000 people. And for whose benefit ?

In the old days, nobody received any special benefits. Not even the Prime Minister. I remember even Nehru did not have peons at his beck and call. On one occasion, I dropped in to see him at 8 p.m. - I had just returned from a wonderful film at Rivoli. I told him about the film and suddenly, on an impulse, he decided that he wanted to see it. His devoted assistant Mathai, went down to fetch the driver but he had left. So without any fuss, we hailed a taxi and proceeded to the cinema—no security nothing. And even at the cinema hall, there was no fuss, people were happy to see him but that was all.

We have to blame ourselves for making life so cheap today. Why is there no peace in this country today ? Because even though the economic czars have left the country we continue to buy goods at ten times the price. What is this

freedom about ? To abuse, to kill each other, to stab ? I am not disillusioned because I have no illusions. Yet I can not lose hope. This is my country, I was born here I fought for it, I have served it.

But half of our population is below the poverty line with no food, no water, no education, no shelter, no literacy. And every year, the negatives only multiply. If I were to run the country and if I were 30 years younger, I would certainly impose Draconian laws and punitive measures to ensure that corruption does not pay. I would lay down that if a person has more than one child, then he would not be eligible for a government job or an elected position even in the Panchayat. And if Parliament is not supportive, I would acquire the power to suspend Parliament and pass this law. Yes I would do that. Because, Parliament is far too expensive, anyway.

Hard decisions are a must. No development is possible without human sacrifice. Be it Ashoka or Peter the Great, human lives perished but that is how their great empires flourished. In Chernobyl or Bhopal, human sacrifice was the cost that one had to pay for development. When aeroplanes first started, people were sacrificed. The development of rockets sacrificed scientists. So for any human development, there have been human sacrifices galore. So why do we shy away from paying a price for development ?

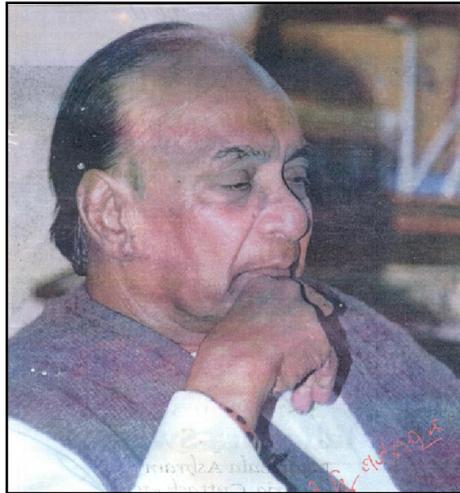
(As told to Sabina Sehgal and published in the National Daily, The Times of India on June 13, 1993)

Source : Orissa Review, July-1993

Panchayati Raj and Biju Babu

Dr. Tushar Kanta Pattanaik

Panchayati Raj in Orissa has a hoary past. Orissa had the tradition of community organization in different forms since very ancient times. The Moghul and the British administrations were mostly responsible for the deterioration of the traditional community organization in the State. After independence, the Constitution of India in the Directive Principles of State Policy declared “the state shall take steps to organize village panchayats and endow them with such powers and authority as may be necessary to enable them to function as units of self government.” In Orissa, village panchayat, District Boards, and Local Boards were formed as the first stage of democratic decentralization. The land Revenue Committee in their report to the state government in 1948 recommended a scheme of “*Anchal Sasan*” as the process of democratic decentralization of administration after working of the Gram Panchayats Act. *Anchal Sasan* was the plan of setting up a local authority at a higher level than the Gram Panchayats so that popular representatives would have a decisive voice in



the activities in the different fields of development. The Orissa Anchal Sasan Act was passed covering the recommendations of the Land Revenue and Land Tenure Committee in 1956. This Act provided to divide the entire state into certain administrative units called Anchals. Each with an Anchal Sabha as the administrative authority consisting of Anchal Sasan and Anchal Adhikari. During the Chief Ministership of Naba Krushna Choudhury, the Anchal Sasan Act was passed. He was very enthusiastic to implement this progressive scheme but to his bad luck in the same year 1956, when the Anchal Sasan Act was passed, Mehta committee appointed by the Central Government submitted their report of a scheme of decentralization of administration. It was a three-tier scheme-Zilla Parishad, Panchayat Samiti and Gram Panchayat and started working successfully in an auspicious note.

Arrival of Biju Babu

When Biju Patnaik took over the reign of administration in sixties, he strived passionately

for vitalizing the Panchayati Raj System, which according to him is the basis of Indian democracy. He described each Sarpanch as Chief Minister of his Panchayat. His policy had been to progressively delegate more and more functions and to fully assist the three tiers of the system of administration to develop into effective popular institutions for implementation of various development works, schemes and programmes. On November 20, 1961, Biju had given a historic speech in Orissa Legislative Assembly on Panchayati Raj which was highly applauded by Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru. In his monumental speech he said. ...”This is a movement of building up leaders of men from the lowest rung of our society and it is not going to be easy. It is almost a people’s movement, we are only trying to give it some hope, some other direction or some authorities. But the movement can only succeed if we give that authority to the people right down from the bottom of our social ladder who can exercise effective leadership. It is a big question and we have in this house got to think with far greater sympathy and prospective looking at a distant future and planning from now how you want the future to be built.”

Works started with feverish zeal and renewed vigour to restore Panchayati Raj in Orissa under dynamic leadership of Biju Patnaik. He made sincere efforts to vitalize Panchayati Raj. The implementation of the Community Development Programme was fully entrusted to the Panchayat Samitis in 210 blocks. The management of primary schools including sevashrams of the Tribal and Rural Welfare Department was transferred to Panchayat Samitis. Other programmes entrusted to the samitis include grain golas, local development works, rural communications and drinking water supply. Even under loan scheme like “Pisculture” and “other remunerative scheme” of the Gram Panchayat

Department, the Parishads and Samitis had been associated for distribution of funds allotted under this scheme. First and second prizes of Rs.50,000 and Rs.25,000 respectively were awarded by the Government to 34 Gram Panchayats every year and the prize money was meant to be utilized as the share in the Industrial Co-Operative for starting Panchayat Industries. Shares had been given to the three-tiers of Panchayati Raj Administration for maintenance of their administration.

One of the most novel experiment introduced by Mr. Biju Patnaik was the concept of Panchayat Industry in 1962 for rural Industrialisation. The State Government initially started 48 Training-cum-Production centers which were being maintained under block programmes and converted them into Panchayat Industries. These industries include tile units and small crystal sugar units. It was related to the scheme known as Gram Panchayat Prize Competition, which was introduced by the State government in 1962. But unfortunately, after his exit, his vision on Panchayati Raj was not emulated by successors.

More Pragmatic in Second Tenure

Biju in his second spell as Chief Minister of Orissa was more determined and exhibited sheer self confidence and unremitting zeal to streamline Panchayati Raj. Recalling his abortive bid for rejuvenating Panchayati Raj in sixties, he once said “32 years back, when I was the Chief Minister of the State, I got incredible support from them. At that time I tried to assimilate every people of village into democratic ideals. For this numerous steps had been taken and various new laws were passed. Unfortunately the political storms of the sixties could not able to accomplish this noble mission. So when I am ruminating about the past I feel hapless and realized a lot has remained to be done”.

In fact under his leadership Orissa became the first state to streamline the Panchayati Raj and Local-self Government Institutions to make democracy Participatory and not the aristocracy of a few nitpicking intellectual. For him “Let the people rule themselves, let them check out plans/ schemes for the improvement of their respective areas and let them execute their plans” was the hallmarks of Panchayati Raj administration. According to Biju Babu the goals of Panchayati Raj cannot be fructified unless there is proper devolution of financial powers to Panchayats. His Government made concerted effort for appointment to a special finance commission to look after the domain of devolution of financial powers.

Biju was most emphatic about the participation of women in the Panchayati Raj system. He announced that for the first time in the history of independent India, women will be given 33% reservation in the three-tier Panchayati Raj institutions. And true to his word, he saw to it that the Orissa Zilla Parishad Act of 1991 and the Gram Panchayat Samiti Amendment Act of 1992 were passed by the Orissa Assmely that provided for 33% of reservation for women including SC and ST women. So for the first time, more than 28 thousand women were elected to various Gram Panchayats, Panchayat Samities and Zilla Parishads. It was further provided that one third of Zilla Parishads would have exclusively women chairpersons. In the case of the Panchayat Samities and the Gram Panchayats, one of the two office-bearers, i.e Chairpersons or Vice-Chairpersons must be woman. Biju also emphasised that all the elected representatives of the PRIs should receive adequate political and administrative training. It must be pointed out that Biju Patnaik’s policies on reservation for women were followed by many other state governments in India that culminated in the 73rd and 74th

Amendment Acts to the Constitution of India, which provided for similar provisions for rural and urban local bodies respectively. Under his leadership, the Orissa Gram Panchayat Act, 1964 and the Orissa Panchayat Samiti Act, 1959 were amended on 1991, 1992 and 1993. The Orissa Zilla Parishad Act was also enacted in 1991 to constitute Zilla-Parishads at the district level. This Act was extensively amended to bring it in conformity with the provision of the Constitution Amendment Act, 1992. It also adds to the credit of Mr. Patnaik that after a lapse of eight years, it conducted elections to Gram Panchayats in the year 1992 for 5264 Gram Panchayats in the State. Some salient features of Gram Panchayat Samities and Zilla Parishad deserve mention as these were the out come of the amendment made during Biju’s Chief ministership. In case of Gram Panchayat three mentionable points are:

- a) ‘The post of Naib Sarpanch is reserved for the women members, if the Sarpanch is a male’
- b) ‘One third of the total wards are reserved for women candidates including S.C and S.T candidates.
- c) Gram Panchayats have been vested with the power of supervision of women and child welfare programme, social forestry, rural housing, small scale industries and public distribution system to other normal functions.

As regards Panchayat Samities the following feature deserves mention:

- a) One third of the total seats are reserved for women members including women members of S.C and S.T. category.
- b) Provision has been made to reserve the office of the Vice- Chairman for a woman in case the chairman is male.

The Zilla Parishad ceased to exist in the state with effect from 1968. The state government enacted the Orissa Zilla Parishad Act, 1991, in order to transfer the power of planning, control and supervision of developmental activities to Zilla Parishads at the district level. Obviously, credit is due to Biju Patnaik for reviving Zilla Parishads and endowing them with power in district level. After the enforcement of the Constitution Amendment Act, 1992, it became necessary to amend the Orissa Zilla Parishad Act, 1991. The following important necessary changes were made:-

- a) Reservation of seats for S.C and S.T members has to be done on the basis of their ratio to the total population of the districts.
- b) One third of the seats are to be reserved for women members including S.T and S.C. women.
- c) The post of Vice-President should be reserved for women if the president is not a woman.

The State Law has provided that no person having more than two children will be eligible to contest in the election to Zilla Parishad. Similarly persons having more than one spouse

have been disqualified from contesting the election. The government headed by Biju Patnaik also set up quite a few commissions of finance for the Panchayati Raj institutions in order to offer methods and mechanisms for resources funding thus unleashing some genuine purpose to the decentralization of power.

Thus Orissa under Biju Patnaik made meteoric progress in the field of Panchayati Raj, whose contribution was prodigious. When his government held elections after a lapse of eight years, it shows Biju's commitment to restore status and dignity for this valuable unit of self-government at the grass-root level. Biju's inspiration, no doubt rejuvenated the Panchayati Raj and local self-government institutions to function as meaningful units of self-government by endowing them with power and authority in the process of development.

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Biju Patnaik : The Legendary Hero

Dina Krishna Joshi

Bijayananda Patnaik popularly known as Biju Patnaik was born in Cuttack, Orissa on March 5, 1916. His father was Laxmi Narayana Patnaik and mother was Ashalata Ray. Although his father was in judicial service, he was a great nationalist and a prominent leader of the Oriya Movement. He was closely associated with two architects of modern Orissa - Utkal Gourav Madhusudan Das and Utkalmani Gopabandhu Das. Biju had his early education in Mission Primary School (Christ Collegiate School) at Cuttack. In 1927 he joined the famous Ravenshaw Collegiate School, where Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose was once a student. In 1932 he passed Matriculation with first division and got admitted into the intermediate science class of the famous Ravenshaw College. During his College days Biju first saw Mahatma Gandhi in 1927 during the 'Khadi Tour' to Orissa and came under his spell. He was assaulted by a British police officer as he tried to get a glimpse of the Mahatma, who was visiting Cuttack. Biju discontinued studies for B.Sc. Degree to undergo training as a pilot at the Aeronautic Training Institute of India, Delhi Flying Club. In fact, as a child Biju was fascinated by aeroplanes and from his school days, he had decided to make a career in flying. A small aeroplane had landed at Cuttack's Killa Fort, when he was a student of Mission School. Biju ran away from school to

touch his dream object. But he was chased away by the security police. "At that time I had only seen pictures of aeroplanes in books" - He recalled later.

During his study at Ravenshaw College he was athletic champion for three times. While he was a student of Ravenshaw Collegiate School at Cuttack he joined hands with Mahatma Gandhi to remove the British. After studying Aeronautics at the Aeronautical Training Institute of India, he started his career with Indian National Airways. Subsequently, he became a Pilot of Indian Air Force and earned great deal of reputation for his adventure during freedom movement. The Indonesia Government had honoured him with *Bhumi Putra* (Son of Soil) title. In 1961 he became the Chief Minister of Orissa. He started his career in Politics in 1946 and hold the following posts at different times as follows.

- 1952 - M.L.A., Bhanjanagar
- 1957 - M.L.A., Jagannath Prasad
- 1961 - Chief Minister, Orissa
- 1968 - M.P., Rajya Sabha
- 1974 - Opposition Leader
- 1977 - Minister, Steel & Mines, Govt. of India
- 1980 - M.P.

1985 - Opposition Leader, State Assembly

1990-95 - Chief Minister, Orissa

Contributions:

The following were some of his outstanding contributions.

1. The Choudwar and Barbil Industrial Belts
2. The Cuttack-Jagatpur Mahanadi Highway Bridge
3. The Bhubaneswar Airport
4. Regional College of Education at Bhubaneswar
5. The Orissa Aviation Centre
6. Paradeep Port
7. The MIG factory at Sunabeda
8. Thermal Power Plant at Talcher
9. Hydro-Electric Project at Balimela
10. The Orissa University of Agriculture and Technology
11. Engineering & Medical Colleges at Burla
12. The Orissa State Planning Board
13. Reorganisation of districts
14. Ferro Silicon Complex at Theruvali
15. Engineering College at Rourkela
16. Express Highway linking Daitari with Paradeep
17. Sainik School at Bhubaneswar
18. Regional Research Laboratory of the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research, Orissa

Besides, He established the Kalinga Foundation for dissemination of knowledge in Science. He also founded the Kalinga Prize for promoting scientific knowledge. The idea behind setting up of Kalinga Prize was that every one should have at least a basic understanding of

science. The prize, given away by the UNESCO every year, is considered a prestigious award by the international scientific community. When Biju Patnaik contemplated this prize, he gave it the name KALINGA, an empire which existed two thousand years ago. It is a matter of pride and distinction for the people of the State that so much could be done in such a short time with so much of feeling and involvement and so much of passion and concern for the people of the State. Like Nehru, Biju passionately advocated inculcating scientific temper in the minds of the people. A second steel plant in the State remained one of his unfulfilled dreams.

Role in Indian Freedom Struggle:

In 1942, Biju decided to join the Quit India Movement under the guidance of the Father of the Nation to make India free. He became a leader of Congress movement with Jay Prakash Narain and Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia and underwent imprisonment. In 1943, he was sent to prison for about two years for participating in the Quit India Movement. Aruna Asaf Ali recalling Biju's role during this period mentions : "Among the thousands who came forward to take up the challenge, Biju Patnaik, Chief Pilot of the Dalmia-Jain Airways was one of the most fearless who mobilised the fellow pilots."

Role in Indonesian Freedom Struggle:

Biju Patnaik came in contact with Nehru during his participation in Indian Freedom Struggle. He became one of his trusted friends. Nehru was sympathetic to the freedom struggle of the Indonesian people who had traditional links with Indian Sub-continent especially with Orissa, from the ancient days. Indonesia is an archipelago state in the Indian Ocean consisting about 13,000 islands. It was under Dutch rule from 1816 to 1941. When it was occupied by the Japanese, the Indonesian freedom fighters declared the

independence of Indonesia on August 17, 1945 two days after the Japanese collapsed in the Second World War. The Dutch tried to regain control over these territories and started formenting trouble for the new Government. The new Government under Dr. Sukarno as President, launched a vigorous propaganda activity to gain support for their cause. Dr. Sjahrir who became Prime Minister of Indonesia on 14 November, 1945 and continued till June 27, 1947 with a gap of one month during June-July, 1946 was a trusted Lieutenant of Dr. Sukarno. He also became friendly with Nehru who was at that time the Foreign Minister and the leader of the Interim Government of India. In July 1946, Government of Indonesia concluded an agreement with India Government to supply 40,00,000 tonnes of rice in exchange of textile, agricultural implements, tyres and other goods which India would send to Indonesia for her economic rehabilitation. Even after his resignation President Sukarno chose him as his representative to mobilize international public opinion against Dutch action. He maintained contact with Nehru and consulted him when needed. He was also instrumental in signing the Linggadji Agreement on 25 March 1947 which brought an end to the Dutch hostilities in Indonesia. On March 23, 1947 Nehru called 22 Asian countries for First Inter-Asia Conference to which Dr. Sjahrir was specially invited. He addressed the conference after concluding the Agreement with Dutch on March 25. The Dutch continued to forment trouble on one pretext or the other. Finally they launched a large scale attack on Indonesia on 21 July, 1947. Immediately President Sukarno consulted Sjahrir and ordered him to leave the country to create international public opinion against the Dutch and also persuade the friendly countries to raise the issue before the UNO. He tried to come out but could not succeed as the Dutch had absolute control

over Indonesian sea and air routes. He was also under surveillance. Nehru came to his help at this critical juncture. He entrusted this task to Biju Patnaik, who was an expert Pilot and was famous for his passion for adventurous achievements. Biju Patnaik sprang up to instant action. As an avid reader of the history of Kalinga, Biju knew how Kalinga and Indonesia had a long-standing cultural link in the past and the opportunity now at hand to render some service to the people of Indonesia at their crucial hour of need should never be lost sight of. He braved all hazards. He flew to Java and brought Sultan Sjahrir aboard from Java islands on 22 July 1947 by his own Dacota and reached India via Singapore on 24 July.

On reaching Singapore, Sjahrir addressed a press conference to declare that at the behest of President Sukarno he had to leave Indonesia at a short notice and had been entrusted with the mission of visiting overseas countries with a view to eliciting help and assistance for his country. He would report personally to the President. Sjahrir strongly criticised the Dutch military action that came upon without prior warning. He was hopeful that Indonesian force would be able to thwart such atrocious design. He reached New Delhi on 24 July and had consultation with Mr. Nehru. After the meeting, Nehru issued a press statement and denounced Dutch action describing it as "an astounding thing which the new spirit of Asia will not tolerate." He also added that "No European country whatever it may be has any business to set its army in Asia, against the people of Asia, when it does so, Asia will not tolerate it." On 28 July Nehru announced that India would raise the Indonesian issue in the Security Council and forbade Dutch air trails over Indian territory. On 30th July India and Australia led the issue before the Security Council. India charged the Netherland Government with having

“embarked without warning on large scale military action on Indonesian people” and also called upon UNO to take action as it had been a situation endangering the peace and security of a country under Chapter VI of UNO Charter. Sjahrir was successful in his mission at last. The noble and heroic deed of Biju Patnaik was duly recognised by the Indonesian Government. For his act of bravery at this critical juncture, he was awarded ‘BHOOMI PUTRA’, the highest Indonesian award and a rare distinction ever granted to a foreigner. People of Orissa lovingly called him the ‘Hero of Kalinga’ and the ‘Kharavela of Kalinga.’ He was respected by the masses for his charisma. He was a man who created history, changed history and shaped history.

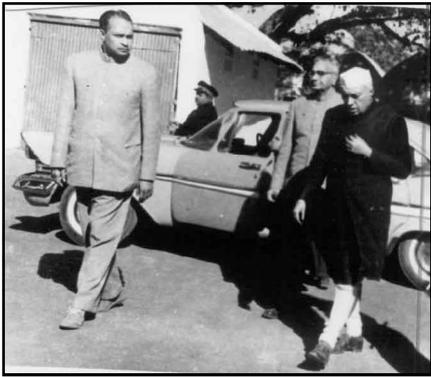
Some of his critics said that he talked much and did things impulsively, disregarding the means, but history shows that whatever work he did was not trivial but a work of monumental glory.

The Seventeenth of April 1997, the day Biju Patnaik passed away, was a sad day not only for Orissa but for the whole country.

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Biju - The Greatest Oriya in Living Memory

Rajkishore Mishra

The future generation in Orissa will hardly believe that there was once a man born in Orissa who strode into unbelievable heights.

Indeed, he did let loose legends enow. A vibrant patriarch, a renaissance rebel, a revolutionary, a statesman of international repute, a zealous industrialist, a veteran politician, a humanist, an activist even though a dreamer - and a mighty force — was all that what Biju was. The graph of his life was awe-inspiring.

As the young Ulysses of Orissa Biju pedalled away to Peshwar (4000 kms on road) from Cuttack on his bicycle with his friends Bhramarbar Sahu and Amar Dey at the age of sixteen. He topped the list of selected apprentices of the Imperial Royal Air Force in 1934 and became a dare devil pilot in 1937. The trumpeting call of the Father of the Nation to free India from the British yoke coloured his fancy. Quite surreptiously, he rendered all help to the nationalists like Aruna Asaf Ali, Jayaprakash Narayan, Achyut Patwardhan, Narendra Dev and Ram Manohar Lohia by risking his life. The alien government tried to desist him from such misadventure, but Biju paid no heed. The young rebel was arrested on 13.1.1943 and was put behind the bar for two years. He was released on parol in 1945. His hatred against colonial governance and commitment to the cause of the

Nation made him appear as a vibrant leader and Oriya patriarch. He was elected to the Orissa Legislative Assembly in 1946 from the Cuttack constituency at the age of thirtyone. The year 1947 brought special distinction to Biju. Hardly three weeks before India's independence at the behest of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, Biju startled the world by braving a perilous air voyage to Indonesia on 22.7.1947 in his post -world war vantage Dacota to rescue Sultan Sjahrir, the-then Prime Minister of Indonesia and flew him back to Delhi on 24.7.1947. A marvellous feat indeed ! His unique adventurism and commitment to Indonesia's independence (from the Dutch occupation) was gratefully acknowledged and he was crowned with Indonesia's highest national honour, i.e., *Bhoomi Putra*. Again hardly six weeks after India's independence Biju was summoned by Prime Minister Pandit Nehru to thwart Pakistan's sinister design of occupying Kashmir. The king of Kashmir had already signed the Instrument of Accession with India on 26.10.1947, but Pakistan had by then, forcibly occupied a major chunk and was advancing toward Srinagar. Even an hour's delay would have cost India heavily. At this critical juncture, Biju landed in Srinagar airport with the 1st platoon of troops on 27.10.1947 at 10 a.m. braving all possible hazard. Pakistan was forced to recede.

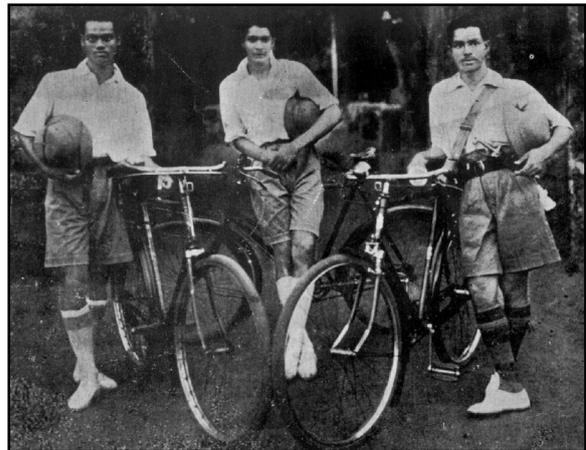
Constituencies supported Biju although from 1946 to 1995 barring aside a few occasions when forces of adversity envied him. Bhanjanagar (1952), Jagannath Prasad (1957), Patkura (1967), Rajnagar (1971), Patkura (1974), Kendrapara LSC (1977), Patkura again (1980), Bhubaneswar (1985), Aska and Cuttack LSC (1996) voted him to power with overwhelming majority. This shows how loving and endearing was he among the people of Orissa. His was a fifty-year march with unabated zeal and love for the people. When he felt that others were not sharing his grand vision and were stooping low, he hastened to wriggle out of such party folds, and did never hesitate to abandon his old veteran political acquaintances. He trusted the mute millions of the State who were struggling for mere existence, the dreaming youth who were struggling for a station in life, the skilled but deprived artisans, sculptors, musicians and scholars, who were sheepishly clinging to their past heritage, the motherland Orissa, alias Kalinga, which after historic vicissitudes was struggling for distinct identity, the untapped potentials of nature and the untamed water resources which would revolutionalise state's economy and above all, the ignominy that by and large, had permeated through all his fellow brethren which besides others, included the folk, the tribes and the female populace. For them he bled. And no crocodile tears. For them he became

restless— an untiring vigil. He scoffed at motivated administrative machinery. He disparaged the political parasites who were sucking the blood of the laity. He wished he had powers to impose Draconian laws and punitive measures to check corruption in public life. He further suggested the armed forces to take over the govt. if need be, to purge off the scourge of corruption. The over-staffed bureaucracy was constantly worrying him. Reflecting on caste-

based reservation policy, he reacted sharply : the poor have no caste.

Such revolutionary attitudes often made him friendless which he never bothered as his goal was to march alone (*ekla chalo re*), come what may. He was the uncrowned sovereign in Indian peninsula.

He was preoccupied with Orissa's heroic tradition and cultural heritage. He floated the Kalinga card to enthuse the youth. In 1951, the UNESCO instituted the Kalinga Prize for popularisation of science with a generous grant from Biju and eventually he became the Founder President of the Kalinga Foundation Trust. He even wanted the Utkal University to be named as the University of Kalinga. In his Kalinga industrial empire he had set up the Orissa Textile Mills, the



Kalinga Tubes, Kalinga Tiles, Kalinga Iron Works, Kalinga Air Lines, Kalinga Refractories etc. with a view to highlighting the state potential. His first spell of Chief Ministership was hardly for 15 months (i.e. from 23.6.1961 - 2.10.1963) and during that glorious phase he did materialise the Rourkela Steel Plant, Hirakud Multipurpose Project, Talcher Thermal Project, MIG Factory at Sunabeda, Ferro Silicon Complex at Theruvali,

Hydro Electric Power Project at Balimela, Engineering College and Medical College at Burla, Engineering College at Rourkela (REC), Sainik School, D.M. School and Regional College of Education at Bhubaneswar, Regional Research Laboratory, Orissa University of Agriculture & Technology, the Express Highway and above all, the Paradeep Port. The three-tier Panchayati Raj system was one of his sought-after visions.

The Second phase of his Chief Ministership i.e. 5.3.1990 - 15.3.1995, though not as eventful as the first phase, sowed the seeds of political stability and greater understanding. It is still on record that the Biju Janata Dal in the 10th election to the Orissa Legislative Assembly could secure 123 seats out of 147 and reduced the Chief Opposition strength to 10 as against the required number of 15. This phase marked Biju more contemplative. His thoughts squarely lay on upliftment of women, tribal development, communal harmony, participation of NRIs in furthering the state economy, implementation of austerity measures and hard decisions and creating an atmosphere of harmony, broadmindedness and fellow feeling. The Samanta Chandra Sekhar Planetarium which was inaugurated by Biju Patnaik on 15th May 1992 is a fitting tribute to Pathani Samanta, the Great Astronomer, for whom he was always feeling proud. He was the architect of India's second liberation movement as was rightly commented by Prem Vaidya. He divided Orissa into 30 districts in 1993 with a view to bringing administration to the door-step.

Biju was summoned to Kansa's Durbar during the Dhanu Yatra at Baragarh which he faithfully obeyed. He beat gongs at the Lions Gate and took up extensive repairs of Lord Jagannath's temple. A dreamer, he was to dream of big dreams. He picked up Gomati Jharia and Sabi

Majhi, the fiery tribal women activists as members of the Tribal Women's Advisory Committee and had chalked out grand plans to iron out disparities between the coastal and the hilly and verdant hinterland.

Biju Patnaik over these years has grown larger than life, for, it is apt to reflect that he was legendary. He lived a full life (5.3.1916 - 28.3.1997) of two and four score years and has left behind an indelible legacy for the posterity to feel proud. Those who shared his vision and did not believe that 'power is for the pelf' and are still committed to the cause of the people are indeed the beloved ones of Biju. He was a loner in life despite the professed allegiance of so many which he hardly took them to be genuine.

The resurrection of Bijuism is being slowly felt with the process of actualisation of some of the unrealised dreams that Biju Patnaik lifelong cherished. The Biju Patnaik International Air Port renamed by Hon'ble Prime Minister on 17.4.98, the Biju Patnaik National Steel Institute (BPNSI) and the Biju Patnaik University of Technology are some of the modern monuments which recall the spirit of Biju Babu. It was quite befitting to cherish the hallowed memory of Biju Patnaik by recently showering on him the posthumous Kharavela Award.

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Biju Baboo : The Pride of Modern Orissa

Dr. C.B. Patel

India is proud of the chivalrous and stately personality of Biju Patnaik. His career was eventful and glorious not only for Orissa but for the whole India and the world at large. He was a benevolent statesman par excellence and ranks very high in the annals of mankind. Unlike other politicians, he was the ruler of the hearts of his people and as such his mission was not to appease but to please his fellow countrymen. Verily his life was a saga of strife and glorification. By his dynamic activities he made life of his people lively and vigorous.

He was born at Cuttack in 1916. His father was Laxminarayan Patnaik and mother was Ashalata Devi. His mother Asalata Devi hails from a revolutionary freedom fighter's family. His father's ideal, fearlessness, sense of nationalism and wisdom sharpened Biju's personality to withstand the test of time.

Morning shows the days. From his school days Biju Baboo blossomed as a versatile genius. He began his education in Mission High School under the affectionate guidance of Mr. O.J. Millman, the Headmaster. Biju emerged topper in studies and extra-curricular activities. In 1932 he passed out in 1st division in the entrance examination of Patna University and took his admission in Ravenshaw College, Cuttack. He broke earlier records of the college in games,

sports and all other extra-curricular activities and became the idol of students and blessed pupil of the teachers.

After passing out I.Sc. from Ravenshaw College Biju Patnaik joined Aeroplane Flying Club. In those days it was a very costly affair. By that time his father has retired from service. Seeing the indomitable spirit of his son, Laxminarayan left no stone unturned to get him admitted in the flying club. God was gracious and Biju was destined to become a famous pilot. At that juncture a job assignment as the Dewan of



Paralakhemundi State was bestowed to Laxminarayan Patnaik by Maharaja Krushna Chandra Dev.

Biju completed his pilot training and carved out a permanent niche for himself as the most courageous and brave pilot of the country. For this he is famous as 'Great Patnaik' of Orissa. Many of his friends fondly called him 2nd Kharavela and hero of modern Kalinga.

As a student Biju Baboo marched to Peshawar by cycle with two of his friends Amar and Bhramarbar in 1932. In those days when there was no good road communication, it was a big challenge for him. Nothing is impossible to a willing heart. Without fearing the then jungle route, he completed his cherished mission with success and spread the message of Nationalism and adventurism from the brave land of Kalinga to Peshawar, the ancient city of Taxila.

Biju Baboo joined Imperial Royal Air Force as a pilot. In a short time he earned name and fame as an astute pilot. He was a born freedom fighter. So the luxurious life of did not satisfy him. The thought of freedom of India from the British yoke dominated his mind although. For sometime he was in dilemma, whether to join the terrorist movement of his maternal uncle's family for freedom of India or to join non-violent movement of Mahatma Gandhi. Ultimately he joined the later movement. While in service he secretly transported various leaders to secret destinations in disguise. Freedom fighters like Jayaprakash Narayan, Aruna Asaf Ali, Asok Meheta, Ram Manohar Lohia and Achyut Patvardhan were helped by Biju Patnaik on several occasions. Amidst hectic activities, he married Gyan Devi, daughter of an aristocratic Kashmiri family in 1939. His father-in-law's "M.N. Radhakrishnan and Co.Ltd." was a famous company of India at that time. In 1943, three

years after marriage, Biju Baboo was arrested by the British Government and imprisoned in the Red Fort of Delhi for his nationalist activities. Later on he was shifted to Ferozpur jail and then to Cuttack jail. In 1945 he was freed from imprisonment. By that time, for his sacrifice and bravery he was famous all over India and had intimate association with most of the political stalwart.

Biju Patnaik was a rare personality of valour, bravery, heroism and indomitable spirit. In 1947, under the guidance of Mahatma Gandhi, sometime in May and June, the 1st Asian Congress was held in India. In course of the meeting, Pandit Nehru observed that Nationalist Government of Indonesia under Dr. Soekarno was being harassed by the Dutch Government as the Dutch had control over most of the ports and air stations of Indonesia. Nehru looked at Biju Patnaik and requested him to help the Government of Dr. Soekarno.

He made a series of discussions with the representatives of Indonesian Government and in his Dakota plane, he virtually made several air raids and surprising adventures to Indonesia throwing dust into the eyes of Dutch authority. He played a key role in transporting leaders to Java, Sumatra and Jakarta to establish rapport and co-ordination among leaders. At the cost of his life he lifted Dr. Muhammad Hatta, the Vice President of Indonesia from the hills of Sumatra. At the dead hour of night he airlifted Sultan Sjahrir, Premier of Indonesia and his Commander from hills of Java Islands to British Singapore on another occasion for the success of Indonesian freedom movement, and brought Sultan Sjahrir to Delhi.

For his rare contribution to the freedom movement of Indonesia, President Dr. Soekarno of Indonesia drafted out a gift package of 500 crores to Biju Patnaik. But the great Oriya hero

returned the gift with humility as the token of India's good will for the people of Indonesia. Later on Indonesia conferred on Biju Patnaik the highest honour of the country "Bhoomiputra Award" for his yeomen service to their cause.

Biju Baboo is the maker of present day Orissa. He introduced an era of Industrial revolution in Orissa and founded several industries like Orissa Textile Mills, Kalinga Tubes, Kalinga Refrigeration etc. at Chaudwar. He established Orissa Flying Club in Bhubaneswar. He extended mining activities to Joda and Badbil in Keonjhar district. Under his dynamic leadership the port of Paradeep, National Highway, Express High way. Rourkela Regional Engineering College, Sunabeda MIG factory, Charbatia Military Air Force station, Balimela Dam Project, Regional College of Education, Bargarh Cement factory, Agriculture University, Talcher Thermal Plant, Burla and Berhampur Medical Colleges have been established in Orissa.

He was elected to the Orissa Legislative Assembly for the 1st time in 1946 from Cuttack. Since then he has never looked back and was a key figure of Orissa polity. In 1961, under his leadership National Congress Party came to power in Orissa with thumping majority. He was elected Chief Minister. He was Chief Minister for 14 months which is considered to be the most formative period of modern Orissan history.

Some people are born great, some have greatness thrust upon them and some other achieve greatness by themselves. Biju Baboo, the household name in India, Indonesia and Orissa has achieved greatness by himself.

C.B. Patel is the Superintendent of Orissa State Museum, Bhubaneswar.

Biju and the Media

Guru Kalyan Mohapatra

The Indian press has a long history of more than two hundred years. Look at the history : an Anglo Indian James Augustus Hicky brought out the first newspaper in India in 1780, known as 'Bengal Gazette', also known as 'Hicky's Gazette'. The history of journalism in Orissa has also got a glorious and meaningful past. The Christian missionaries have been bragging as they launched the first Oriya 'Gyanaruna' in 1849. In the year 1837, the missionaries established the 'Mission Press' (first printing press) in Balasore and Cuttack. Really, Reverend Lacey brought out this first magazine 'Gyanaruna' for propagating Christian ideas, but this could not survive long. Again Lacey brought out another Oriya magazine 'Prabodh Chandrika' in 1856. Of course, the Oriya stalwarts like Biswanath Kar (the editor of 'Utkal Dipika'), Nilamani Bidyaratna (the editor of 'Sambalpur Hetaisaani'), Brajabandhu Mishra, Damodar Mishra Padyalankar took the reins and played the meaningful role in nourishing and nurturing the press during its infancy. Raja Sudhala Deb and Krishna Chandra Gajapati also proved to be zealous patrons during that period. After enjoying a halcyon period since independence, journalism in Orissa had to pass through a critical juncture in the eighties in the last century.

When I entered into journalism in that critical phase, the Congress was ruling both at

the centre and the state. I vividly marked during the Congress regime that slanderous stories, suspecting Biju Patnaik's loyalty to Orissa were sent to the press. He seemed never puzzled at it. In 1980, I joined the 'Eastern Times', an English Weekly at the behest of Bhartruhari Mahatab and Dr. Harekrushna Mahatab. No doubt, I was a student leader, known for my writings during those days.

Dr. Mahatab's literary personality and Biju Babu's invincible spirit inspired me to choose the profession, inevitably the source of my bread and butter now.

In an article Dr. Mahatab once wrote : "I mention all these factors which are overlooked when comparison is made between Orissa and other states on an all-India level not only with regard to the profession of journalism, but to other professions as well. The scope of journalism as a profession is limited in Orissa. Even then news papers have to be run as they are now a part of the life of the society. All the limitations of the economic and social conditions have to be overcome. In fact, they are being overcome by those who are on the field. But it is gradually becoming difficult to overcome the difficulties created by political considerations of the ruling authorities."

The aforesaid statement of Dr. Mahatab enthused me. I was equally curious to see through the slanderous stories against Biju.

Dr. Mahatab's words and Biju's enigmatic and adventurous spirit influenced me a lot and I jumped at the offer from 'Eastern Times'. I came to the limelight when one of my investigative news stories appeared in the 'Eastern Times'. This front-page story: "Untold story of Indira Gram, Is Prime Minister Taking for a Ride?" attracted everyone's attention. Indira Gandhi was the Prime Minister and she was coming to Orissa to inaugurate the Indira Gram near Ollatpur in Cuttack district.

J.B. Patnaik was then the Chief Minister who was looking after the Prime Minister's programme in Orissa. The Chief Minister seemed flummoxed in my story, but, on the contrary, as heard from others, Biju Patnaik spoke highly of my attempt.

By and by I came in contact with Biju Babu, who was a towering personality in opposition in the State. I observed him thoroughly from close quarters. His style of functioning was intriguing: he would ask you the news first, if the news annoys him he would rebuke you. I was well aware of his approach and, therefore, never took his spankings seriously. Those were rather blessings in my long way to journalism.

My close observation of Biju Babu puts me in a fix, whether he was a friend or a foe to the press. We all know that he had established one Oriya news paper called 'Kalinga'. Rebel poet late Manmohan Mishra was its first editor and the writer late Surendra Mohanty was his successor. Surendra Mohanty admitted time and again (I have heard him speaking many a time) that Biju had never interfered in editorial freedom. However, he was reluctant to patronise the said newspaper, which met a premature end, in spite

of the fact that it was in popular demand. Many eminent persons of the state insisted upon him not to discontinue the newspaper, but he never listened to them and stood firm in his own decision.

I take this opportunity to corroborate some interesting facts that I have heard from my uncle Nityananda Mohapatra. In 1961 Biju headed the state of Orissa as the Chief Minister and at that time, he had some misgivings against the then newspapers. It was because he had the feeling that some newspapers of the state were misusing their power and freedom. Thus, the 'Press Bill' (1962) was tabled in the Legislative Assembly. Nityananda Mohapatra (an independent member of Orissa Legislative Assembly, then and a minister, later) objected to the Bill with the argument that the Bill once made an Act would be misused and it would also snatch away the freedom of the press. The Bill was, of course, passed smoothly because of the majority game on the floors of the Assembly. But one thing to be noted is that Biju had duly honoured the opinion of the opposition and he had never applied such an act against anybody; no news paper had been penalised so far on the basis of such an act. This is, perhaps, Biju's philosophy of life. He had stood non-committal; accolades and slanders could not affect his long innings in public life. He was a man of action-a 'Karma Yogi'. In his obsession for a clean, responsive polity tuned towards rapid development, he had given many remarks, unpalatable and also, at times, funny. The press was always after him, but he was not. It has been observed for long that the leaders across the world have remained very cautious, measured and, at times, tight-lipped in their interaction with the press. On the contrary, Biju had always been his natural self all through his public life, spanning almost six decades. When the newspapers had come forward to write about him or about his style of functioning, he had shown

no inclination to go through and record his reaction. To sum up, he was never publicity-conscious.

In our quantum jump from print media to the electronic media, there had been a sea-change in our modes and manners. But Biju has remained undeterred - as if the earlier conviction predominated in his psyche. I vividly recollect a TV programme that came my way a few years back. Biju was found narrating his life-story to a group of young school-going kids. In the said programme he was found to be very humorous, vivacious and lively. Anyone, who has an

opportunity to view the programme, must be forced to enjoy the programme vicariously.

In fine, Biju's relationship with the press is typical, which owes our interest. It is to be analysed with care. Biju has remained enigmatic, and so is his relationship with others, especially with the media.

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Biju Patnaik, the Son of the Soil

Balabhadra Ghadai

Man and women come and go and most of them became only distant memories. A few, however, leave behind an impression powerful enough to continue to remain almost a living presence long after they have gone. A front ranking freedom fighter, daring pilot, dedicated industrialist, towering politician and the architect of modern Orissa. Bijayananda Pattanaik, affectionately called “Biju Babu” has earned the epithet of “Emperor of Kalinga” by his countrymen.

Born to Laxminarayan Patnaik and Ashalata Devi at Anand Nivas, Tulsipur, Cuttack on 5th March 1916 Biju Babu, having the imagination and vision of Viswakabi Rabindra Nath Tagore pledged to revive the glory of the days of emperor Kharavela. He recalled the days when Kalinga was the greatest empire of India extending from Ganga to Godavari. Its army had thrown them across the border of India. It was the largest maritime power ever known in the world whose merchant sons had to brave the rivers and seas to establish commercial trade link with Java, Sumatra, Bali, Borneo and many other South East-Asian countries and made the Kalinga Empire affluent. The epoch also witnessed a galaxy of architectural marvels at Puri, Konark and Bhubaneswar.

Biju Babu was a patriot par excellence. It was her loving mother Ashalata Devi who moulded the emotional life and character of young Biju and had left her imprint on this personality. Her advice was, “Beginning from the dust every object of this world is working for the benefit of human beings, you will also work for the human society”. At a later stage he was profoundly influenced by Gandhiji’s call to free India from the British rule and came forward to associate himself with the underground movement led by Jayaprakash Narayan and Ram Manohar Lohia in 1942. He was arrested on 13.01.1943 and was put behind the bar for two years. Soon after his release from Jail in 1945, Biju Babu appeared as a vibrant leader in the political firmament of Orissa.

In the year 1946 Biju Babu was elected uncontested to the Orissa Legislative Assembly from North Cuttack constituency. In 1952 and 1957 he won from Bhanjanagar and Jagannath Prasad and Soroda respectively. On 13 February 1961 Biju Babu assumed the presidentship of the State Congress. The overall responsibility of the Congress Party in fighting the mid-term election in 1961 was that of Biju Patnaik. The Congress Party captured 82 seats out of 140 securing 45% of the total votes polled and he won from

Choudwar Constituency. The poll verdict was astounding and as a reward for securing absolute majority for the Congress first time in the Legislature, Biju Babu took over as the Chief Minister on 23rd June, 1961. On 7th May 1971 he was nominated to the Rajya Sabha.

Biju Babu was elected to the Orissa Legislative Assembly in 1971 in a by-election from Rajnagar. In 1974 he won from Rajnagar again and became the Leader of Opposition. In 1977 he won from the Kendrapara Lok Sabha Constituency and became the Union Minister for Steel & Mines from 1977 to 1979 and Union Minister for Steel and Mines and Coal from July 1979 to January 1980. He was the member of the Lok Sabha from 1980-85. In 1985 he resigned his Lok Sabha seat to contest from the Bhubaneswar Assembly Constituency and became the Leader of the Opposition in Orissa Legislative Assembly. In 1990 Assembly Polls he steered his party Janata Dal into victory and became the Chief Minister of Orissa for the second time. It is worth mentioning that his party could secure 123 seats out of 147 and reduced the main opposition party strength to 10 as against the required number of 15. Biju babu contested the 11th Lok Sabha election (1996) from Aska and Cuttack Constituencies and won both the seats. Later on he resigned from Cuttack Parliamentary seat.

Biju babu's first spell of Chief Ministership lasted for only 15 months but during this short period he made a mark in the history of Orissa by giving his people a powerful and efficient administration. He sought to inject a rare dynamism into the administration. He succeeded in setting up the Paradeep Port, the MIG factory at Sunabeda, a Thermal Plant at Talcher, the

Express Highway connecting the iron ore deposits of Sukuinda with Paradeep, Balimela Hydel Project, Engineering College of Rourkela, Saninik School and Regional College of Education at Bhubaneswar and Orissa University of Agriculture and Technology at Bhubaneswar.

The name of Kalinga was so dear to the heart of Biju Babu that he set up Kalinga tubes, Kalinga Airways, Kalinga Iron work, Kalinga Refractories and the Kalinga, a daily Oriya Newspaper. In 1951 he established the international Kalinga prize for popularisation of Science and Technology among the people and entrusted the responsibility to the UNESCO.

Biju Babu was well aware of the fact that Orissa was a poor and backward state in the country inspite of having good deal of natural resources and its reason was the lack of proper planning for development. He set up the State planning Board and a number of public corporations. Ayodhya Nath Khosla, the internationally reputed engineer as the Governor of Orissa gave a helping hand to Biju babu in formulating the development of the river basin of Orissa, by preparing a ten-year plan popularly known as the Decade of Destiny.

During the second term of Chief Ministership from 5.3.1990 to 15.3.1995 Panchayati Raj movement gained momentum under his dynamic leadership. He took a revolutionary step to reserve 33 percent of seats for women in the three tiers of the Panchayati Raj system and subsequently Orissa Zilla Parishad Act of 1991 and the Gram Panchayat Samiti.

Amendment Act of 1992 were passed by the Orissa Legislative Assembly, which provided 33% of reservation for women including

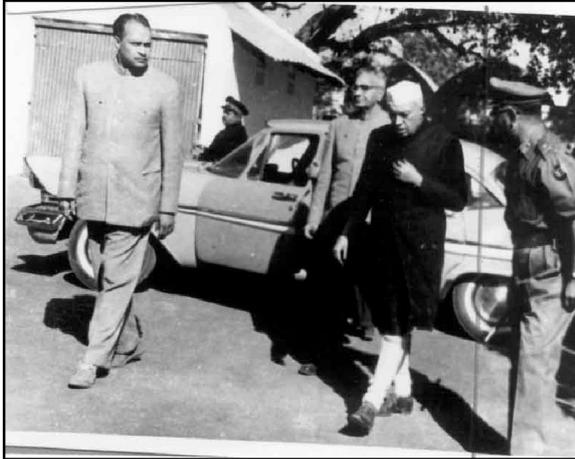
SC and ST women. Further provision was made so that one third of the Aila Parishad would have inclusively women chairpersons. In the case of Panchayat Samities and the Gram Panchayats one of the two office-bearers, i.e. Chairperson or Vice-Chair person in case of Samiti and Sarpanch or Naib-Sarpanch in case of Gram Panchayat must be a woman. As a mark of his profound love for Panchayati Raj institution the people of Orissa observe his Birth Day (March 5) as Panchayati Raj Divas.

Many of his dreams remained unfulfilled. He was rightly honoured by the Indonesian Government with the highest citizens award of that country Bhumiputra. The "Son of the Soil" breathed his last on 17th April 1997 at the age of

eighty-one. The whole country was stunned and messages condoling his death and eulogizing his contributions started pouring in from far and near. Manoj Das the eminent writer and thinker wrote on his sad demise, "Perhaps Biju Patnaik was having a developed inner-self which was known to a very few of his fellow beings. He seems to have achieved many things in one life which might be impossible to achieve in a number of lives."

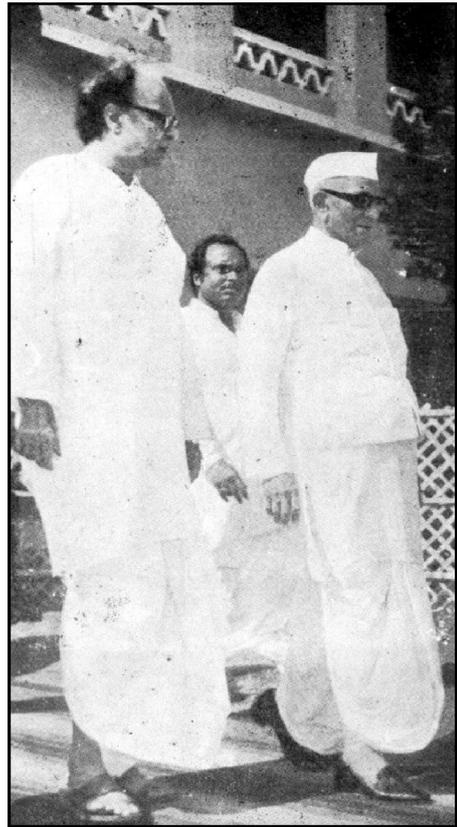
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BIJU SHARING MOMENTS WITH PANDIT NEHRU





Biju, administered the Oath of Office as Chief Minister by H.E. the Governor of Orissa, Dr. A.N. Khosla in 1961.



Biju with Shri Morarji Desai, the former Prime Minister of India



Biju with Indira Gandhi, the former Prime Minister of India



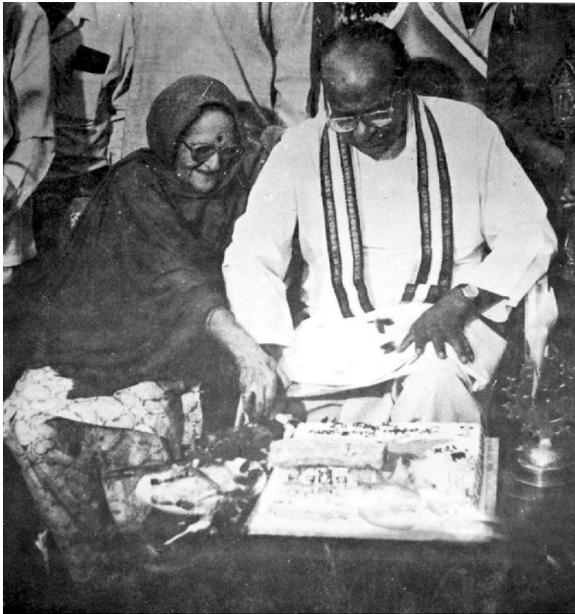
*H.E. the Governor of Orissa
Dr. Jagnyadutt Sharma administering
Oath of Office to Biju as Chief Minister of
Orissa in 1990.*



Biju with film star Shri Satrugan Sinha



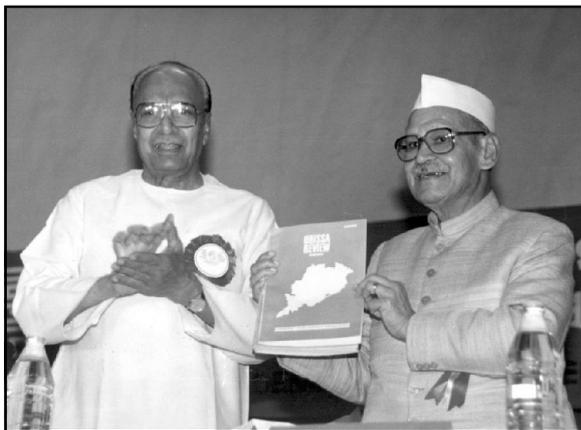
*Biju with Shri V.P. Singh, the former
Prime Minister of India*



*Biju sharing a happy moment with wife
Mrs. Gyan Patnaik*



Biju going to the State Secretariat riding a bicycle



*Biju with former Vice-President of India Late Dr.
Shanker Dayal Sharma, releasing the Orissa Day,
1992 issue of Orissa Review at Bhubaneswar.*



Biju in Indonesia

TRIPTI : Power to Women & Free from Poverty

Bikram Maharana

An innovative scheme launched on 10th February 2009 by the State Government for socio-economic development as well as empowerment of women and alleviation of poverty has been termed as **TRIPTI (Targeted Rural Initiatives for Poverty Termination and Infrastructure)**. This Scheme will help boost the activities of Self Help Groups, Panchayat and Block Level Organisations as well as various Self Sustainable Institutions in the rural sector. The scheme will have consistent effort to improve the life style and livelihood of the poor, extremely poor and helpless women in the rural area. World Bank is extending financial help to this scheme implemented by State Panchayati Raj Department. 'TRIPTI' has been launched in 38 Blocks of 10 districts in the State. 12,54,607 families are going to be covered under the Project. For this purpose, a sum of Rs. 400 crore will be utilized during the next 5 years.

How is TRIPTI different ?

- TRIPTI is a 5-year Project ensuring improvement in the life style and livelihood of the rural mass.
- The Project has to act in the direction of confirming the empowerment of the women by the way of strengthening the organizations managed by them.



- This pioneering scheme is beneficial for the unemployed youths in their capacity building and also generating more employability.
- This scheme is being implemented keeping the bare necessity of the people in view.
- In the whole, women have to sketch plans and programmes. They will also have to manage and monitor the entire process of the scheme. The employees under TRIPTI will only perform their duties as a part of the process.

Prospects of TRIPTI

- The 'TRIPTI' aims at identifying poor and helpless women in the rural area.
- Persons of different classes especially women will be assembled at one place. They will enlist the women on the basis of their financial condition.

- TRIPTI will take the help of that list.
- TRIPTI has to assist for inclusion of the poor, extremely poor and helpless women in Self Help Groups.
- In the whole process, the villagers will shoulder the main responsibility. TRIPTI employees will have to help in the process of identification.
- Self Help Groups are being formed comprising 10 to 20 women of the village. These are also managed independently.
- One group is considered as eligible for gradation and quality assessment only after 6 months of its formation.
- In the next phase, it stands selected for membership under Panchayat Level Organization.
- Panchayat Level Organisation is formed comprising all the Self Help Groups of a Panchayat.
- Cluster Coordinator and other employees under TRIPTI review the status of Self Help Groups and Panchayat Level Organisation.
- Matters relating to the condition of SHG, the main livelihood of the villagers, identification of poor and helpless women and assessment of the position of Panchayat Level Organization are discussed during the review meeting.
- If the organization is financially weak, TRIPTI will help to strengthen the organization.
- In case there is no organization, TRIPTI will extend help in formation of new organization.
- On behalf of TRIPTI the **Efficient Organization** will be provided with initial amount.

Efficient Organisation :

The organization has to prove that

- it has enrolled at least 75 % Self Help Groups of the Panchayat as its members.
- it has opened Savings Bank Account/Book.
- it has maintained records every month.
- it has held 90 % meetings of the Executive Committee.
- SHG women members have enrolled their membership with contribution and monthly savings.

Terms and Conditions of TRIPTI :

The guiding principle of the Project must not be transgressed at any place in any circumstance and must ensure:-

1. Participation
2. Inclusion
3. Accountability
4. Equity
5. Facilitation
6. Belief in Community
7. Integrity
8. Transparency

State Level TRIPTI Office :

- Prepares and executes Annual Plan (Budget and Financial Estimate) for successful implementation of the Project.
- Scrutinizes the activities of TRIPTI at District and Block level and disseminates scored experience and knowledge.
- Coordinates the activities of 'TRIPTI' at District, Block and Village levels.

- Co-operates by liason with other Government Programmes/ Organisations.
- Engages employees for State, District and Block level Offices under the Project.

District Level TRIPTI Office :

- Prepares and implements the Annual Plan for TRIPTI at district level.
- Monitors the developmental activities and submits report to State level TRIPTI Office and District Administration.
- Organizes various scheduled Programmes at District level.
- Keeps contact with different Government Programmes, Govt./Non-Govt. financial institutions.
- Verifies that the fund is properly invested at village level.
- Helps and advises Block level TRIPTI Office for successful implementation of the Project.

Block Level TRIPTI Office :

- Monitors the activities of SHGs and its Federation at various levels.
- Inspects and assists in enlisting the BPL families in Self Help Groups.
- Helps the Federation for liason with Banks and other Banking organizations.
- Assists Panchayat level organization for successful management of the fund (CIF).
- Guides the activities of TRIPTI for the improvement of the organization and groups.
- Assists and advises regularly for successful implementation of the plans by the SHGs and at various levels.

- Submits reports regularly to District level TRIPTI Office.

Name of the Districts and Blocks included under TRIPTI.

Districts	Blocks
1. Angul	Chhendipada, Angul, Athamallik, Pallahara
2. Balasore	Balasore, Bhogarai, Jaleswar, Khaira
3. Bhadrak	Bhadrak, Basudevpur, Chandbali, Tihidi
4. Cuttack	Baramba, Narasimhapur
5. Jajpur	Dharmasala, Danagadi, Dasarathpur, Sukinda
6. Jagat-singhpur	Tirtol, Kujanga, Erasama, Balikuda
7. Kendrapara	Pattamundai, Rajnagar, Mahakalpara, Kendrapara
8. Khurda	Balianta, Begunia, Chilika, Tangi
9. Nayagarh	Daspalla, Nuagan, Odagan, Ranpur
10. Puri	Puri (Sadar), Gop, Astaranga, Nimapara

For any query please dial toll free number of Sanjog Help Line-18003456770 and access the website-www.sanjogheline.in

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CAPART: Creating People's Movement for Rural Development

Prabhukalyan Mohapatra

CAPART (Council for the Advancement of People's Action and Rural Technology), an autonomous body under the Ministry of Rural Development Government of India, was set up in September 1986 by the amalgamation of PADI (Peoples' Action for Development India) and CART (Council for Advancement of Rural Technology) to address specific problems relating to development in the rural areas.

CAPART's mandate is to encourage, promote, assist rural action and propagate appropriate rural technologies for the benefit of the rural poor. Government of India has designated CAPART as the nodal agency to lead development work in the rural sector, formulate policies for the betterment of the people, coordinate and control the work of voluntary agencies in this sector. During 20 years of its existence, CAPART has become one of the major funding agencies for the voluntary sector in the field of rural development and has contributed to the development process by funding VOs (voluntary organizations) to supplement government's action. As of now, it has assisted more than 11,000 voluntary organizations scattered all over India.

The principal aim of CAPART is to involve people through non-governmental voluntary organizations in the implementation of

development programmes and need-based innovative projects. It works towards creating a people's movement for development in the rural areas by means of higher degree of social mobilization, lowering of social barriers and empowerment of the rural poor.

Almost seventy percent of our country's population, as per 2001 census, still lives in the villages-characterized by low income level and inadequate provision of livelihoods. Even meeting the basic subsistence needs in some rural areas is a challenge to which CAPART responds by promoting voluntary action through grass-root planning for sustainable development, organizing seminars and workshops, providing a platform for advocacy and sharing of knowledge. It selects and encourages innovative technologies and enables technology transfer from lab to land. The over-arching principle behind CAPART's functioning is the reduction of rural poverty and improvement in quality of rural poor's life.

CAPART not only promotes voluntary action towards implementation of projects for enhancement of rural prosperity but also serves as a catalyst for development of technologies appropriate for rural areas, assist a large number of NGOs for implementation of variegated projects. It's assistance is available for diverse categories of schemes under Public Co-operation

(PC), Organization of Beneficiaries (OB), Advancement of Rural Technology Scheme (ARTS), Watershed and Water Resource Development Programme (WSD), Disability Assistance (DA), Young Professional Scheme (YPs), Public Co-operation (PC) or Promotion of Voluntary Action in Rural Development. It focuses on empowerment of rural poor and aims at building community assets while providing employment, livelihoods and facilitating the social mobilization. Advancement of Rural Technology Scheme (ARTS) includes the development, demonstration and dissemination of innovative technologies for rural areas. Hence CAPART has signed Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) with leading institutes in the field of science / technology to explore and expand frontiers of new technology which could be introduced in rural areas for improving socio-economic status of rural poor. Watershed and Water Resource Development Programmes (WSD) are initiated to minimize the effect of drought on crops, livestock and productivity of land. CAPART has structured a two track system within which projects are approved depending on experience and credentials of the implementing agency. To reduce the cost and to improve the quality of rural life it promotes and propagates innovative as well as proven housing technologies- designs-materials in the rural areas. Marketing of products made by rural artisan is an important thrust area of CAPART for which it organizes 'Gramashree' and 'Saras' Melas. Above all, CAPART has also introduced the Young Professional Scheme (YPs) in 1988 to encourage young entrepreneurs to work in the field of rural development. In this scheme, interested young professionals are provided with grants under the "Starter Package Programme" which includes administrative and infrastructure cost to set up voluntary organizations of their own.

Primary objective of CAPART is to (1) promote voluntary action through grass-root planning, organize seminars and workshops, (2) provide platform for sharing and disseminating knowledge as well as experience, (3) extend funding support to innovative and need-based projects, (4) encourage voluntary organization to collaborate amongst themselves by developing networks, (5) select and encourage innovative technologies and their dissemination, (6) reduce rural poverty, (7) generate awareness for conservation of environment and natural resources, (8) provide minimum needs with respect to safe drinking water, hygienic sanitary conditions, etc. It also acts as a catalyst for development of technology appropriate for rural areas by identifying, funding research and development efforts, implementing pilot-projects by different agencies and institutions particularly NGOs. On the other hand, CAPART acts as a conduit for transfer of appropriate technology to government departments, public sector undertakings, co-operative societies, voluntary agencies, members of public to encourage adoption of modern techniques and appropriate technology in rural development. Besides, it acts as a clearing house of information and data-bank. Apart from this, CAPART disseminates knowledge on rural technology to manufacturers of machinery tools, equipment and spare parts so that large scale production of technically improved machinery etc. is carried out with private co-operatives and public sectors.

CAPART envisions to play a dynamic and catalytic role with various governmental agencies and NGOs, influence public policy and contributes its share towards the many-sided development of rural India. It aims to safeguard the rights of rural poor, improve their living conditions through introduction of appropriate rural technology, acquire marketable skills for rural poor and assist

them in their attempt to secure livelihoods through employment and self-employment.

The overall policy guidance and direction is provided to CAPART by its general body which consists of 100 members. Besides, representatives of associated government departments and individual subject experts more than half of general body's members are representatives of voluntary sector and other institutions concerned with rural development. But the executive and financial powers of CAPART is vested with executive committee comprising 25 members from the general body. While the Union Minister for Rural Development chairs the executive committee, Secretary Department of Rural Development occupies the post of vice-chairman of that committee. Besides, there are three National Standing Committees (NSC) which are chaired by Director General (DG) CAPART who sanctions the project above 25 lakh rupees. To decentralize the functioning of CAPART and to facilitate voluntary organizations nine regional committees (RC) have been constituted having

powers to sanction the project upto 25 lakh rupees. These regional committees are located at Ahmedabad, Bhubaneswar, Hyderabad, Jaipur, Lucknow, Chandigarh, Patna, Dharwad and Guwahati.

Rural development cannot be isolated from the rapid socio-economic changes taking place in the rest of India. Instead of waiting for the benefits of the economic boom to trickle into villages, CAPART acts as a pro-active catalyst to steer and direct the benefits of economic development according to the needs of rural communities. Besides, CAPART has reoriented itself to fulfill the gaps that exists in the fabric of rural life by formulating appropriate long term policies and giving right direction for accelerating rural development.

Prabhukalyan Mohapatra is a Bhubaneswar based freelance journalist, who lives at Qr. No.-VR-3/2, Unit-III, Bhubaneswar.

Fuel Efficient Smokeless Chulla

Barada Prasan Das

In Deogarh Forest Range under Deogarh Forest Division 13 VSS have been taken in 2nd Phase under O.F.S.D.P. activities in JICA Project. By personal effort and as per the instruction of the Divisional Forest Officer, Sri Bishnu Charan Behera, Forest Range Officer, influenced the villagers with the help of his staff to construct this Fuel Efficient Smokeless Chulla. He also demonstrated that in a workshop in his Office. As the construction process is purely indigenous and useful, it



was accepted by every body and all the households (i.e. total 687 families in all the 13 VSS villages) have constructed the same Chulla in their houses. For this an amount of Rs.200/- was promised to pay to each household from OFSDP Activities under "livelihood support."

As per the versions of the ladies (the direct beneficiaries) they are consuming 30% of the previously required quantity of Fuel wood and also they feel comfortable at the time of cooking as there is no smoke emanating from the Chulla. The villagers also feel that by such activities the pressure on the Forest minimised. This noble effort has also been beneficial for preservtion of forest and environment.

Barada Prasan Das, DIPRO, Deogarh

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