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## *Editor's Note*



I write this note at a time when our Chief Minister has opposed the Centre's move to convene a meeting of State D.G.Ps with Union Home Minister to deliberate over the contentious National Counter Terrorism Centre (NCTC) and demanded that the Prime Minister has to address the Chief Ministers first. Prior to this, he had started reviving talks about a Third Front in national politics which will be transparent, corruption-free and secular. Not long back, under his leadership the Biju Janata Dal made a sweeping victory in the recently conducted Zilla Parishad polls. Translating the victory in 651 Zilla Parishad Zones in terms of Assembly Constituencies comes to more than 120 of the 147 Assembly Constituencies. The highest ever Budget proposal for Odisha amounting to Rs. 52755.15 crore has been placed for the Finance Year-2012-13. The Budget proposal seeks to further consolidate and strengthen the intervention made for ensuring Food, Employment and Health security for the citizens of the State. The best part is that, there has been an increase of 42.64 % in the allocation for Agriculture. This clearly proves that our Chief Minister has put his feet firmly on the ground and now it is his turn like his legendary father and Socialist leader Biju Patnaik to play a major role in the national mainstream politics.

Shri Biju Patnaik was a dreamer but to make it a reality he could go to any extent. At one time not a very feasible Paradeep Port, Express Highway, Sunabeda MIG Factory was made a reality because of his relentless efforts. There was no end to his dreams. He was a political leader but never a comprising one rather a person who held both power and position for a very long time because he was different in the field of politics. He was a Pilot, but a fearless one, who brought the President and Vice-President of Indonesia to India amidst a fierce battle. He was an industrialist but the profit was used for the benefit of the poor and setting up of the prestigious Kalinga Prize. He took pride in identifying himself as the successor of the emperor Kharavel and the people accorded him that honour. Biju Babu's flamboyant and assertive personality and love for politics has made him a darling of the masses and unparalleled leader of the country. His worthy son has since taken over his father's legacy and is now ready to go one step forward.

The step taken by the Odisha Government in the recently concluded Panchayati Raj elections by providing 50 % of seats to women is historic. This is related to the recognition of the

value of women's contributions to the production process, household work and in the public field. On March 8th we will celebrate the International Women's Day to recognize that peace and social progress require the active participation and equality of women and to acknowledge the contribution of the women. In the last decade under the leadership of Shri Naveen Patnaik much progress has been made in women's access to education and proper health care. Their participation in paid labour force has grown and legislation that promises equal opportunities for women and respect for their human rights has been adopted. The empowerment process that was encouraged by legendary leader Shri Biju Patnaik has been made multifold under the leadership of his worthy son and leader of the masses Shri Naveen Patnaik.

I feel the common factor between both these legendary personalities who are incidentally father and son lies in the fact that both of them are dreamers. The question is the approach, while Biju Babu was flamboyant, Naveen Patnaik is artistic. But both of them love Odisha and its people more than they loved themselves.

On this 5th of March the birth anniversary of the Statesman Shri Biju Patnaik, let us all join hands with our beloved Chief Minister to bring a smile on the face of every Odia. Both of them are doers, be it removing poverty, creating jobs and empowering the villages and the villagers, they led by examples.

Let us learn to criticize less and be doers more. That will be the greatest tribute to the legendary leader Biju Patnaik on the eve of his birth anniversary.



(Lenin Mohanty)  
Editor, Odisha Review

## The Jagannath Temple and the Sikh Arti

*Anil Dhir*

The veteran actor Balraj Sahni, who taught in Santiniketan in the late 1930's, once asked Rabindra Nath Tagore, "You have written the national anthem for India. Why not write an international anthem for the whole world?"

"It has already been written, not only for the world but for the entire universe. It was written in the 16<sup>th</sup> century by Guru Nanak," replied Tagore. He was referring to the Sikh Arti (the ceremony of light). Gurudev Tagore was so enamoured of this Arti that he had personally translated it into Bengali.

Every evening, after the recitation of Rehraas Sahib, the melodious rendition of this Arti, sung by the Raagis in Raga Dhanashri, can be heard in Gurudwaras. Listening to the Arti is a tremendously soothing experience, capable of taking one directly into the spiritual realms of devotion through music. It has been aptly mentioned by Guru Arjan Devji in the Sri Guru Granth Sahibji: "Arti kirtan sada anand", which translates as "Singing God's praises is His Arti, and this brings boundless bliss".

As legend has it, it was during Guru Nanak Devji's visit to the Jagannath Temple at

Puri in 1506 CE that this Arti was composed. The temple priests conducted an elaborate Arti every evening. They brought a big platter on which were many lighted lamps, and the accompanying paraphernalia of flowers, incense,



ornaments, pearls etc. and began the Arti. This was accompanied with the beating of drums and cymbals, the ringing of the bells and chants from the scriptures.

Guru Nanak was a saint of the Bhakti Cult and its exponents had the goal of uniting the human race through true devotion to God and emphasised the oneness of God. He, along with the other exponents of the Bhakti Cult like Ramananda, Kabir, Chaitanya, Namdev, Tukaram and Ramdas had all originally believed

in the formless worship of the Lord. But the symbolic image of Lord Jagannath was neither of any “Akar” nor was it “Nirakar”. The perplexed Nanak seeing this “Kimkar” (of which form?) image, was simply astonished and was overwhelmed with deep reverence. He understood the universalism of Jagannath and started the ‘Namakirtan’ of the Lord in his own way. Basically, Nanak believed in the formless worship of ‘Nirakar’ - Brahma and his motto was ‘Ek Omkar Satnam’. It means that he believed in ‘Omkar’ or ‘Pranava Brahma’ which has no form and stressed on the ‘Satnam’ or the true Namakirtan of the Lord.

While at the Jagannath Temple, Guru Nanak observed that the priests were attaching more importance to the rituals rather than to the true faith of the Lord. He noticed that most of the devotees were joining the ritual not with their hearts; at best they were enjoying the spectacle of it. But, after seeing Jagannath for the first time, and the elaborate Arti, Nanak could not reject him on the ground that he was incompatible with his own Bhakti philosophy. All the gathered devotees stood up and gazed at the Lord with great devotion, like they do even today. But Nanak was so charged with ecstasy that he could not mark these reactions of the people. He was filled with great pleasure, was transfixed, and thus remained seated. So overwhelmed was he, that tears rolled down his eyes.

A section of the orthodox priests marked this indifference of Nanak and took it as disrespect to Lord Jagannath. After the Arti was over, they confronted him and asked him why he had not stood up during the Arti. They cast aspirations on his being a holy man and said that mere rosaries and a monastic garb don’t make a monk. Guru Nanak stood there as a silent spectator, as if

nothing had happened. However the priests persisted that he explains his conduct and then Nanak spoke:

“Dear brothers ! Does our Jagannath exist only here and in this wooden image? Is he not dazzling in the aura of his own greatness, inside all creation? Cannot his *Mahima* be felt and experienced without the accompanying rituals? “

Guru Nanak had by that time understood the real potentialities of Lord Jagannath. He had seen the touch of universalism and Vedic symbolism manifest in the wonderful image of Lord Jagannath. While uttering these words, Nanak became highly emotional and looking at the Lord, he started to sing a few stanzas from a Sikh composition. He spontaneously composed a Maha Arti wherein he said that when the Lord is Omnipresent and Omnipotent, how I can worship him with a small set of lamps and incense. He ought to be worshipped as grandly as his grandeur deserves. Guru Nanak sang an Arti in his melodious voice, describing how the entire sky is the platter on which the sun and moon are lamps for worship. The stars and the planets are the gems and pearls, the mythical Mount Meru, covered with sandalwood trees is the incense and the wind blowing from all directions is the grand fan for the beloved.

*Gagan mein thaal rav chand dipak bane,  
tarika mandal janak moti,  
dhoop malyanlo pavan chavro  
kare saal banray phulant joti,  
kaisi arti hoye  
bhav khandna teri arti.  
Anhata Shabad Vajanta bheree*

The sky is the puja thaal (platter used for the artis),  
in which the sun and the moon are the diyas (lamps)

The stars and planets in the  
constellations are your jewels  
The wind, laden with sandal-wood fragrance,  
is the celestial fans  
All the flowering fields, forests are radiance!  
O! What a wonderful Arti, this is!

You, are a destroyer of Fear,  
The sound of Your Name, which is so subtle,  
that It goes unheard,  
Resounds endlessly.

The priests and pilgrims had collected around Guru Nanak and they were thrilled to hear him sing such praises to the Lord. Nanak's Arti conveyed that Nature's tribute to the Creator was superior to any ritualistic oblation offered before images. His melody reverberated around the whole Temple and touched the hearts of one and all. The priests realised that they had an enlightened soul visiting them.

Guru Nanak then further described Jagannath in his exalted verse:

*Sahas Tav Nain na na  
Nain hai Tohey kau  
Sahas moorat Nana Ik Tohee  
Sahas Pad Bimal Na na  
Ik Pad Gandh bin  
Sahas Tav Gandh Iv  
Chalat Mohee  
Sabh Mah Jot Jot Hai Sohee  
Tis Dat Chanaan Sabh Mah Chanaan Hoi  
Gur Sakhi Jot Pragat Hoi  
Har Charan Kamal Makrand Lobhit Mano  
Ana Din Mohey Aayey Pyaasa  
Kirpaa Jal Dey Nanak Sarang Kau  
Hoi Jaatey Terey nai Vaasa  
Jo Tis Bhaavey So Aarti Hoi*

You have a thousand eyes, forms, feet, noses...  
And you have none...

I am charmed !

Your Light enlightens all !

It is by the Grace of the Guru that the real Light  
(Knowledge) Manifests.

What pleases the Almighty is this Aarti (Creation)

I yearn for Your Lotus feet, Night and day,

Nanak is like the thirsty bird that asks,

For a drop of water, From You O Lord !

That drop (Grace) will make Nanak find comfort,

In the uttering of Your Name.

This original Arti was composed by Guru Nanak himself though later four more stanzas were

added. However the depth of thought that is conveyed in these few words makes it one of the best compositions of Godhead and nature.

In describing Jagannath's form, Nanak described Him saying that you have no eyes, but I can feel your penetrating gaze, you have no hands, but I can feel the all encompassing embrace of your love, you have no nose but I can feel the warmth of your breath, you have no ears but I know that you can hear my yearnings, you have no feet but I dream of spending my days worshipping these lotus feet.

The Aarti was further appended by the verses of Bhagat Ravi Das who incidentally, was a cobbler by profession. He too was a mystic Bhakti Saint whose writings have been included in the Sikh Holy Book Guru Granth Sahib. The following lines were added to the Arti from his works:

*Naam Tero Aarti Majan Muraarey  
Har Kay Naam Bina Joothey Sagal Pasaarey  
Naam Tero Aasno Naam Tero Ursaa  
Naam Tero Kesro Lay Chhitkaarey  
Naam Tera Ambhula Naam Tero Chandno  
Ghas Japey Naam Lay Tujhahee Kau Chaarey  
Naam Tera Deeva Naam Tera Baatee  
Naam Tero Tel Lai , Maahee Pasaarey  
Naam Terey Kee Jyot Lagaayee  
Bhaiyaa Ujiyaaro Bhavan Saglaarey  
Naam Teraa Taagaa Naam Phul Maalaa  
Bhaar Athaarah Sagala Joothaarey  
Tero Keeyaa Tujhahee kyaa arpau  
Naam Tera Tuhee Chavar Dhulaarey  
Das Atha Atha Sathey Chaarey Khaanee  
Ehay Vartan Hai Sagal Sansaare  
Kahay Ravdaas Naam Tero Aartee  
Sat Naam Har Bhog Tuhaarey*

O Lord, Your name is the Aarti,  
Your name is the Flower, the saffron, and the sandalwood  
That is offered to You.  
Your Name is the (Deeya)  
The Lamp, the oil and the cotton  
That is lighted in it.

With the Light that Your Name gives out,  
 The whole world is brightened.  
 Your Name is the Thread and Your Name is also  
 The Flowers that are strung into that thread.  
 All that I offer to You is Yours.  
 Your Name is the flywhisk, that you use,  
 The (Chant of Your) True Name,  
 We offer to You,  
 All is false except Your Name !

The glory of the Arti was further enriched with the addition of the verses of Sant Sain, who too was a mystic saint of humble origins. He was a barber in the court of Raja Ram, the King of Rewa.

What is the best Arti or form of adoration of the Lord is the theme of Sain's verses incorporated in the Guru Granth Sahib. According to Sain singing of God's praise and meditating constitute the highest worship.

*Dhoop Deep Dhrit Saaj Aartee  
 Vaarney Jaau Kamlapati  
 Mangalaa Har Mangalaa  
 Nit Mangal Raaja Raam Raaiko  
 Uttam Deeyaraa Nirmal Baatee  
 Toohee Niranjana Kamlaapati  
 Raam Bhagat Raamaananda Jaaney  
 Pooran Paramaananda Bakhaaney  
 Madana Moorata Bhay Taarey Govindey  
 Sain Bhanay Bhaj Paramaananda*

The Aarti is adorned by the lighted lamp  
 And the fragrance of the incense.  
 All is Auspicious.  
 Thou art the Supreme and Pure Light.  
 Thou art the Lord of the Goddess of Wealth.  
 My obeisance to Thee.  
 And to the Lord Rama, Beautiful Govinda,  
 Who is described as Replete Pure Bliss !  
 Sain prays to Thee, Who obliterates all Fear.

As if this was not enough, the Arti was further illuminated by incorporating the words of Sant Kabir, the greatest of the proponents of the Bhakti Cult. Needless to say, Sant Kabir was a humble Muslim weaver, who like Guru Nanak took the lonely road and travelled far and wide

spreading his simple and humble words of humaneness and compassion.

*Sun Sandhyaa Teree Dev Devaakar  
 AdhPati Aadee Samaayee  
 Sidh Samaadhee Anta Naheen Paayaa  
 Laagee Rahey Sarnaayee  
 Leho Aartee Ho Purakh Niranjan  
 Satguru Poojo Bhaai  
 Thaada Brahmaa Nigam Bichaarey  
 Alakh Na Lakhiyaa Jaayee  
 Tat Tel Naam Keeyaa Baatee  
 Deepak Deh Ujiyaaraa  
 Jyot Laayee Jagadeesha Jagaiyaa  
 Boojhey Boojhana Haaraa  
 Panchey Sabada Anaahada Baajey  
 Sangey Saaringa Paanee  
 Kabeer Daas Teree Aartee Keenee  
 Nirankaar Nirbaanee*

Dear Lord!  
 The Greatest of Yogis have not been able to  
 comprehend You,  
 Those who worship the unmanifest,  
 Fail to realise You.  
 Even though they have persevered in their quest.  
 Your Name resounds unheard (By the worldly)  
 And only He can hear (On who Your Grace  
 descends) Pray to Your Satguru! Almighty Lord!  
 Accept the Aarti, with the oil lit with the Chant of  
 Your Name, By You, the Lord of the Universe!  
 Kabirdas performs the Aarti of the 'Beyond  
 Description' and the 'Without Form'

Bhagat Dhanna was a simple Jat farmer from Rajasthan from whose works the following lines were added to the Arti.

*Gopaal Teraa Aartaa  
 Jo Jan Teree Bhagat Karantey  
 Tin Key Kaaj Sanvaartaa  
 Dal Seedhaa Maangau Ghee  
 Hamraa Khusee Karey Nit Jee  
 Pania Chaadan Neekaa  
 Anaaj Maangau  
 Gau Bhais Maangau Laaveree  
 Ik Taajana Turee Changeree  
 Ghar Kee Geehanee Changee  
 Jan Dhanaa Levey Manglee  
 Gopaal Tera Aartaa  
 Hey Dayaala Teraa Aartaa*



Which means:

O Gopaala, (Accept) your Aarti!

You grant the wishes of those who worship You!  
I ask for my basic sustenance (food, oil, lentils, good  
quality grains)

Which makes me feel fulfilled.

I also pray for a good wife, good clothes, good grain,  
a horse, a cow...

The final touches to this great composition were  
given by none other than the tenth Guru Gobind  
Singh Ji,

*Yaa Tey Prasann*

*Bhayey Hain Mahaa Muni*

*Devan Key Tap Mein Sukh Paavey*

*Jag Karey Ik Ved Rarey*

*Bhav Taap Harey*

*Mili Dhyaan Hi Laavey*

*Jhaalar Taal Mrudanga Upanga*

*Rabaab Leeyey*

*Sur Saaj milaavey*

*Kinnar Gandharva Gaana Karey*

*Gani Jachha Upachhara Nirata Dikhaavey*

*Sankhana kee Dhuneey Ghantan kee Kari*

*Phoolan Kee Barkhaa Barsaavey*

*Aartee Kot Karey Sur Sunder*

*Pekh Purandar Key Bali Jaavey*

*Daanatee Dachhan Dey Key Pradachhan*

*Bhaal Mein Kum Kum Achhan Laavey*

*Hot Kulaahal DevPuree mil Devan KeyKuli Mangal  
Gaavey*

*Aisey Chand Partaap Tey Devan Badhyo Prataap*

*Teen Lok Jai Jai Karey Rarei Naam Sat Jaap*

*Sagal Dwaar Ko Chaad Key Gahyo Tumhaaro Dwaar*

*Baanh Gahey Kee Laaj Rakh Govind Daas Tuhaar*

*Aagya Bhayee Akaal Kee Tabhee Chalaayo Panth*

*Sabh Sikhan Ko Hukum Hai Guru Maaniyo Granth*

*Guru Granth Jee Maaniyo Pragat Guraa Kee Deh*

*Jaa Kaa Hirdaa Shudh hai Khoj Shabad Mei Leih*

*Vaanee Guru Guru Hai Baanee Vich Baanee Amrit*

*saarey*

*Gurbaanee Kahey Sevak Jan Maaney Partakh Guru  
Nistaarey*

The Lord is pleased by the penance, prayers, rituals  
recitation of the Scriptures, Meditation, music, dance  
of the Celestial Beings, adorned with vermilion,  
various musical instruments, Ringing of bells and the  
showering of flowers, and the tune of the Aarti . The  
cosmic worlds rejoice and chant the Divine Name.

I have come to Your door-step O Lord, having left the  
world behind, Protect me, I am in Your service.

Because of the Lord's command, this order (Sikhism)  
Came into being.

The Sikhs are urged to believe that the Granth is the  
Guru manifest, Whoever is pure in heart, will find the  
answers within the words of the Guru Granth Sahib.

Its words are the Guru, and the Guru is in the Guru  
Granth's Utterings,

And within the words is the nectar (Of knowledge)

And the words urge disciples to believe in the Guru!

Thus the complete Arti that is sung today  
has in reality been composed by two Gurus, a  
cobbler, a barber, a weaver and a farmer, all from  
humble stock. This is proof enough that Sikhism  
believes in the equality of all humankind. The Guru  
Granth is an ecstatic pouring of a Spiritual Heart.

In this Arti, Guru Nanak described what  
he saw and experienced, yet even to him it was  
a very difficult task, because when it came to  
describing the Lord, words failed him.

*Awal Allah noor upaya*

*Kudrat ke sab bandey*

*Ek noor te sab jag upjaya*

*Kaun bhale ko mande.*

'First of all, God created light;

Mother Nature created all human beings equal;  
from that one Light the entire world came into being;  
so how do we differentiate that one is better than the  
other ?'

I find it rather sad and intriguing that the  
connection of Guru Nanakji and the Guru Granth  
Sahib in particular and Sikhism in general with  
the Jagannath Temple is little known. Nanak did  
visit many of the holy spots during his first Udasi,  
but the impact that Jagannath had on him and his  
belief is reflected in the Guru Granth Sahib and  
his later writings and preaching.

Another little known and important fact  
that has remained unsung is the influence of  
Jayadeva's work the "Geet Govinda" in the Guru  
Granth Sahibji. Two hymns composed by

Jayadeva have been incorporated in the Guru Granth Sahibji. It is evident that these hymns found their way to the Sikh religion due to the profound influence that Jayadeva had on Guru Nanak during the latter's visit to Puri.

The Bauli Mutt and the Mangu Mutt at Puri both have the Holy Guru Granth Sahib and the relevance to the Guru's visit is recorded. While on his deathbed in 1839 Maharaja Ranjit Singh willed the Kohinoor to the Jagannath Temple. Bhai Himmat Singh from Puri was one of the five disciples popularly known as 'Panch Pyare'. Odisha has seen the thriving of different religions in all their forms from ancient to modern times. Hinduism, with its various aspects like Saivism, Saktism, Vaishnavism, Buddhism, Jainism, Christianity and Islam have all thrived and gained relevance in the State. Good research will definitely bring into notice the relevance of Puri and Lord Jagannath in the Sikh history and religion.

*(The author undertook the Jagannath Sadak Sagad Yatra on the Old Jagannath Sadak and researched many aspects on the history old road. He can be contacted at anildhir2k5@hotmail.com)*

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## 15th National Conference on e-Governance : An Overview

In recent years the word ‘Governance’ has become buzzword. Partly because of globalization and democratization, ‘Governance’ has now become a keyword in the vocabulary of policymakers, industry leaders, activists and scholars. The increasing integration of markets and states that marks globalization, together with the growing empowerment of citizens has helped to spread the gospel of governance.

With the increasing awareness among citizens about their rights, government today is expected to be transparent in its dealing, accountable for its activities and quicker in responses. This has made the use of Information Communication Technology (ICT) imperative in any agenda drawn towards achieving good governance. e-Governance is the logical next step in the use of ICT systems in order to ensure wider participation and deeper involvement of citizens, institutions, civil society groups and the private sector in the decision making process of governance. e-Governance however also presents challenges and opportunities to transform both the mechanics of government and the nature of governance itself. In this context the goals of e-Governance is defined as follows:

1. Better service delivery to citizens

2. Ushering in transparency and accountability
3. Empowering people through information
4. Improved efficiency within Governments
5. Improve interface with business and industry

The Indian Government has been amongst the frontrunners when it comes to initiatives towards adoption of best practices and integrated delivery of information and services to achieve ICT led development in the country. Today, almost every government department is trying to leverage upon the benefits of ICT to provide better services to the common citizen. A number of e-Governance initiatives have been undertaken by the government departments at Central and State levels. Some of the e-Governance projects are already running successfully in different parts of the country.

With a view to provide a platform to e-Governance initiatives across the length and breadth of the country that can serve as beacons of excellence, Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances, Government of India along with Department of Information Technology, Government of India organizes

India's premier event on e-Governance, the National Conference on e-Governance every year. The conference provides a sharing and learning platform for effective interaction of policy makers, practitioners, industry leaders and academicians to deliberate, interact, identify priorities and recommend an actionable strategy for good governance and to improve the standard of citizen centric services rendered to the common man through use of Information Technology. The conference provides a forum for exchange of ideas, experiences, best practices and showcase, recognize, promote excellence in various e-Governance initiatives taken by the Central and State Governments.

This year for the second time Odisha was the proud host of the 15th National Conference on e-Governance which was held at KIIT Convention Centre in the KIIT University Campus at Bhubaneswar on 9th and 10th February 2012. For this year's Conference, the theme was 'Towards Effective Electronic Service Delivery' and the focus sector was 'Local Government'. Around 1500 delegates from across the country participated in the Conference.

Inaugurating the Conference Hon'ble Chief Minister Shri Naveen Patnaik said transparency and accountability are major requirements of good governance and e-Governance helps achieve it. Describing it as a major game changer in empowering the common man's access to information and services, he appreciated the endeavour of Odisha Computer Application Centre (OCAC) for dedicated and diverse application of e-Governance through out the State successfully.

Attending the Conference Union Minister of State in the Prime Minister's Office Shri V.Narayanasamy said the country needs to

invest heavily in the hardware sector to stay ahead in the Information Technology.

In his opening address Union Minister of State for Communications and IT, Shri Sachin Pilot said the Government proposes to ensure Broadband Connection to 160 million households by 2020 to make the dream of e-Governance a reality.

State Chief Secretary Shri B.K. Patnaik delivered the welcome address listing out the successful implementation of the e-Governance initiatives in the State, which include e-Dharani, Bhulekh, e-District, e-Municipality, Integrated Odisha Treasury Management system and Students Academics Management system.

The two-day long event went through a thorough deliberation on some key e-Governance issues by eminent policy makers, industry representatives, practitioners, academicians and all stakeholders in the e-Governance domain. Panel discussions were held on the theme of the conference, which are "Towards Effective Electronic Service Delivery, Democratization of Information, Social Audit and Local Government." The Panelists for different sessions were Shri R. Chandrasekhar, Secretary, Department of Information Technology, Government of India, Shri Rajendra Singh Power, Chairman NAASCOM, Shri R.C. Mishra, Secretary, Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances, Government of India, Shri Satyananda Mishra, Chief Information Commissioner, India, Shri Jugal Kishore Mohapatra, Principal Secretary, Finance, Government of Odisha, Shri Aurobinda Behera, Member, Board of Revenue, Odisha, Dr. M.N. Ray, Addl. Chief Secretary, West Bengal, Shri S.N. Tripathy, Principal Secretary, Rural Development, Government of Odisha and Shri

Madhusudan Padhi, Commissioner-cum-Secretary, Food Supplies and Consumer Welfare, Government of Odisha.

Attending the valedictory session His Excellency the Governor Shri Murlidhar Chandrakant Bhandare said, today the number of mobile phone subscribers in India stood over 811 million whereas the number of internet users in India is more than 121 million. Keeping the huge reach of mobile phones in the country, mobile technology can be used to conduct social audit of Government schemes. Eradication of poverty and illiteracy from this vast country should also be the aim of e-Governance, His Excellency the Governor further opined.

His Excellency the Governor gave away National e-Governance awards for exemplary e-Governance initiatives by various organisations. The awards were given in seven categories as follows :

- Category-1 : Excellence in Government Process Re-engineering
- Category-2 : Exemplary Re-use of ICT based solutions.
- Category-3 : Outstanding performance in citizen centric service delivery.
- Category-4 : Innovative use of technology in e-Governance.
- Category-5 : Innovative use of ICT by PSUs for customers benefit.
- Category-6 : Best Government Portal.
- Category-7 : Specific Sectoral Award - Focus Sector - Local Government

Odisha bagged two awards in the best Government Portal category. While Integrated Odisha Treasury Management System (IOTMS), Directorate of Treasuries and Inspection, Department of Finance, Government of Odisha

bagged the Gold, Silver award was given to State RTI Central Monitoring Mechanism implemented by Information and Public Relations Department. Shri Nikunja K. Sundaray, Principal Secretary in the Information and Public Relations Department received the award along with Director, Information and Public Relations, Shri B.P. Mohanty and team members including Shri Ganeswar Jena, Deputy Secretary and Shri Bibekananda Biswal, Chief Monitoring Officer, RTI, I & P.R. Department at the valedictory function. The selection for the award was made after a three-round screening process including field visit and presentation before jury members in New Delhi.

The National e-Governance Programme theme song penned by eminent Hindi Poet Gulzar was launched by Hon'ble Chief Minister Shri Naveen Patnaik on the inaugural day. An Exhibition was organised for various sponsors and participating State Governments at the venue. The stalls showcased their services, products and achievements in the field of e-Governance.

Commissioner-cum-Secretary in I.T. Department, Shri P.K. Jena, the key person in organising this mega event proposed the Vote of Thanks on both the days.

The conference successfully organised by the host State Odisha seeks to usher in a transparent, efficient and effective Government that is better equipped to deliver citizen centric services through use of Information Technology and pave the way for enhancing the quality of life for ordinary people.

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Sucheta Priyadarsini, Assistant Information Officer, Information & Public Relations Department, Bhubaneswar.

## Adivasi Mela -2012 : True Culmination of Adivasi Art, Artefacts and Culture of Odisha

The Spectacular annual event of ST & SC Development Deptt. in the Adivasi Ground of the Capital City of Bhubaneswar – Adivasi Mela – 2012 started with a big bang on 26th January, evening. The Mela was inaugurated by the Hon'ble Chief Minister of Odisha, Shri Naveen Patnaik in the distinguished company of Shri Santosh Kumar Sarangi, Commissioner-cum-Secretary of the Department, Shri S.K. Popli, Director, Shri B.K.Nayak, Member Secretary, ATLC & other senior officers.



The Adivasi Mela was hosted by the ST & SC Development Department to highlight the tribal life, tradition and culture of the State that has as many as 62 tribal & 13 primitive tribal groups. The theme of this year's Mela was "Better livelihood and Happy Life"

In this years' Mela there were 156 stalls and the Mela was divided into seven segments while one segment replicated tribal villages, which was most attractive wherein huts of 29 ST Communities were constructed by 21 ITDA, 8 Micro Projects. In the tribal villages, we find the unique lifestyle of tribals, culture and the like. Another segment was selling tribal products and the fourth had to showcase the tribal food. The rest two were tribal Art and Crafts and various

self sustenance works that tribals have undertaken for their welfare. The seventh segment was the cultural programme of the evening. The rich and unique tribal culture gets a platform at Adivasi Mela. The tribal artistes perform various dance forms like Kathi Nata, Dongria Kondh, Santal, Ho Munda, Ghumura Oraon, Lodha Chhau, Mankiridia, Bathudi dance, drama by the Department and other tribal dance.

The urban denizens get a glimpse of tribal life from close quarters in this Mela. The glittering function hosted by ST/SC Development Department ended on 5th February with His Excellency the Governor Shri M.C. Bhandare gracing the valedictory ceremony.



On the Valedictory day eminent personalities on various spheres were felicitated by His Excellency the Governor of Odisha. They were, Kshamanidhi Bhoj (creative writing), Piyush Munda (Ethno Medicine), Jayadev Nayak (Performing Art), Harish Ch. Pradhan (Creative Writing), Sridhar Singh (Creative writing), Dr. Damayanti Besra (Creative Writing), Miss Laxmipriya Majhi (Athletics), Pramila Kirsani (Sports), Tashil Toppo (Ethno Medicine), and Sudan Kanhar (Social Service). In the Mela 'Santal' House of ITDA, Rairangpur got first prize whereas ITDA, Gunupur depicting "Lanjia Saura" house bagged second Prize and ITDA, Kuchinda depicting "Kisan" house received third prize. Amongst the Micro Project's Stalls, Chukutia Bhunjia Development Agency, Sunabeda, Bonda Development Agency, Mudulipada, Paudi

Bhuinya Development Agency, Rugudakudar received first, second and third prizes respectively. Amongst the Government stalls Directorate of Horticulture was in the first position, Minor Irrigation Department, Mahila Vikash Samabaya Nigam got second and third prize respectively. Besides the theme pavilion O.T.E.L.P. received special Jury Prize for their outstanding presentation on 'Better Livelihood and Happy Life.'

Basically, in the Advasi Mela the SHG members and tribal artisans/farmers were selling various Handicrafts, Handlooms, Agricultural products and the Mela generated transactions nearly two crores. The popular Mela in the Capital City, the Adivasi Mela is being organized every year since 1951. The organization of the Mela by the ST & SC Development Department, Govt. of Odisha is a great step in reflecting tribal architecture, lifestyle, dance, music, handicrafts, handlooms and providing them a marketing platform.

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## Gram Swaraj to Panchayati Raj - A Journey in search of an Institution

The celebration of Panchayati Raj Diwas on 5th March and casting vote in the recently completed Three-tier Panchayati Election 2012 in the State, it is fact that, it is just an attempt to highlight the long journey of Indian Political System making traditional Panchayats to constitutionalised Panchayats under the auspices of Gandhiji's slogan of Gram Swaraj.

Gandhiji had aptly said, India lies in villages; 'if villages perishes, India will certainly perish. India will be no longer India.' His statement carries the social, economic as well as political perspective of rural India which is valid till date. The Gandhian economy on nation building of free India was based on Gram Swaraj. Regarding his dream of Gram Swaraj, he had narrated, the Village Swaraj must be a complete Republic, independent of its neighbours for its own vital want and yet inter-dependent for many things in which dependence is necessary.

Gandhiji's dream of Swaraj was however to some extent modified version of traditional Panchayats which were existed since vedic ages. It was the modern form of the later and was an emphasis of individual freedom and perfect democracy. The traditional panchayats were only meant for protection of the community and materializing the conflict between them. Giving the example of existence of Panchayats Sir Charles Trevellyn puts it that the Village Republics flourished during Hindu, Muslim and Peshwa (Marhata) Governments. The system collapsed

with the advent of East India Company when they used the Panchayats or the Pancha heads to collect revenues. Apart from this, when there was British-India Government in India, the centralization of all executive and judicial powers in the hands of the British bureaucrats also deprived the village functionaries of their age-old tradition of powers and influence.

Keeping a vigil on freedom from bottom to apex, Gandhiji rightly propounded the theory of Gram Swaraj and advocated to bring down the state closer to the people, and to incorporate it in the Indian Constitution. Ironically, his strong advocacy went for a loss in the Constituent Assembly. The concept of Panchayat was deleted in the first draft. However an amendment moved by K. Sauthanam was accepted which later on got incorporated in the Constitution of India through Article-40 of the Directive Principles of State Policy part-IV of the Constitution.

The post Independent period followed on the principle of the Constitution neither accorded rightful status to the Panchayats nor provided adequate teeth to it to function as a local Government and development machinery. In the 2nd five year plan, when new administrative community development blocks were set up with the introduction of C.D. programmes and national extension services in October, 1952, emphasis was given on village level as a vehicle for NES and CD programme. But that was not effective and Panchayats acted as only counters to the above programme at Block level.



Then a study committee headed by Balwantray was ordered to study the impact of the community development and National Extension Programme in all aspects and assess the extent to which these have succeeded in utilizing local institutions. The Mehta Committee team observed that the development cannot progress without responsibility and power. The committee reported, community development can only be a reality when the community understands its problems, realizes its responsibilities, exercises the necessary powers through its chosen representatives and maintains a constant and intelligent vigilance on local administration. It was from this stand point that the Mehta team recommended establishment of popular administration in terms of statutory elective local bodies at village levels and empowering them with the necessary resources, power and authority.

Thus, the implementation of Balwantray Mehta Study Team in the year of 1957 for the democratic decentralization of development administration created a three tier structure of Panchayats which was given the name of Panchayati Raj. It included Gram Sabha, Gram Panchayat at village level and the Panchayat Samiti at the block level and Zilla Parishad at the district level.

Jawaharlal Nehru, the first Prime Minister of India, inaugurated independent India's first Panchayati Raj at Nagpur of Rajasthan and second one at Shadnagar, Andhra Pradesh. On that historic event, Nehru had quoted that Panchayats are the most revolutionary and historical step in the context of new India. A study team in 1962 indicated that the devolution of power at local level has improved the service delivery at grassroots but there was neither election to the Panchayats nor was adequate funds available with them. That was the result of further study of Ashok Meheta Committee and Singvi Committee.

But Meheta Committee recommendations were the basis of re-structuring of Panchayati Raj

into an institution. In response to the recommendations of Balwantray Mehta Committee in each district the three-tier structure of local self-Government bodies starting from village panchayats at the bottom, Panchayat Samities in the middle and Zilla Parishads at the apex was established. The Panchayats being the grass root organisations were expected to play a vital role in the community development programme.

In fact, Mehta Committee recommendation is a landmark in the process of decentralization of democratic set up which paved for Constitutional Amendment. Thinkers and researchers provided platform for the 73rd Amendment of Constitution of India in the year 1992 that conferred constitutional status to the Panchayati Raj Institutions.

The important features of 73rd Amendment are :

1. Uniform three tier structure of Panchayats at the village, block and district level in all the states except those having a population of more than 20 lakh.
2. One third reservation of women.
3. Reservation for the SCs and STs in proportion to their share of the population.
4. Five year tenure and fresh election within six months in case of their dissolution.
5. State Election Commission for fair election.
6. State Finance Commission for ensuring resources.
7. The 11th schedule having 29 items which may be devolved by the State Legislation on Panchayats for making and implementing plans of economic development and social justice so that they could become institutions of self Government. 29 subjects suggested for transfer to the Panchayats are 1. Agriculture including Agricultural Extension, 2. Land improvement,

implementation of Land Reforms, Land Consolidation and Soil Conservation, 3. Minor Irrigation, Water Management and Watershed Development, 4. Animal Husbandry, Dairy and Poultry, 5. Fisheries, 6. Social Forestry and Farm forestry, 7. Minor forest produce, 8. Small scale industries, including food processing industries, 9. Khadi village and cottage industries, 10. Rural Housing, 11. Drinking water, 12. Fuel and Fodder, 13. Roads, culverts, bridges, ferries, water ways and other means of communication, 14. Rural Electrification, including distribution of electricity, 15. Non-conventional energy source, 16. Poverty alleviation programme, 17. Education including primary and secondary schools, 18. Technical Training and Vocational Education, 19. Adult and non-Formal education, 20. Librarian, 21. Cultural activities, 22. Market and Farm, 23. Health and Sanitation, including hospitals, PHCs and dispensary, 24. Family welfare, 25. Women and child development, 26. Social welfare, including welfare of the handicapped and mentally challenged, 27. Welfare of the weaker section and in particular of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, 28. PDS and 29. Maintenance of community assets.

Coming to the context of Odisha, legendary Biju Pattnaik again revived Panchayati Raj in 1992. In early sixties under his Chief Ministership Panchayati Raj flourished in Odisha. On the recommendation of Mehta Committee Govt. of Odisha enacted the Odisha Zilla Parishad Act 1959 making provision for establishment of Panchayat Samities and ZPs. In 1961 the name of the Act was changed to Odisha Panchayat Samiti and Zilla Parishad Act 1959.

As per provisions of the 1959 Act all the 314 CD Blocks were converted into PR blocks each having a Panchayat Samiti consisting of officials and non-officials as its members again in an attempt to reform the P.R. system and the Government of Odisha in 1991 passed 3 important Acts, namely Odisha G.P. Amendment Act, 1991, Odisha Panchayat Samiti

(Amendment) Act 1991 and Odisha Zilla Parishad Act 1991.

While centre was deliberating the 1/3rd reservation for women (including SC/ST groups) Biju Babu implemented 33% reservation of seats for women category. Apart from this, the provision of Panchayats Extension to Scheduled Areas Act aim at empowering PRIs in Scheduled Areas for economic development and social justice. Needless to say, in the year 2002, for the first time the Odisha Government conducted three-tier PRIs election in conformity with 73rd amendment and PESA thereby empowering tribal people as envisaged under PESA.

Visionary Biju Babu also made provisions for women for the post of Vice-Chairman at all level. After Biju Babu, his ideology for empowering women starting right from grass root level is being followed in many other states in the country, which expressed reluctance to reserve 50% positions for women in PRIs. Our government has made this provision and the Panchayat Election conducted with 50% reservation for women category and also declared to train them in the line of 11th schedule of Constitution of India.

After over a five decades, Gandhiji's dream has come into reality. The Constitution have provided rights for people's participation in the local level planning and implementation. The Gram Sabha, a body consisting of electors of a Panchayat to which a Gram Panchayat is accountable for its every action and inaction. Endowed with so many powers and responsibilities, the elected representatives of PRIs should come forward in reducing poverty, illiteracy and other social backwardness. They need to exercise their power, execute policies, take decisions in planning process for themselves as well as for the betterment of their society.

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## The King Still Lives in His Kingdom

*Geeta Devi*

It was 9th April, 1997, nobody cares the scorching April Sun. Perhaps a cydonic tide of the Bay of Bengal engulfed the entire 'Bodadanda' (the road leading to the temple of Shree Jagannath) to greet the chariot of the king. The chariot halted at the Lions gate to pay a parting tribute to the Lord of the Universe. The chariot was blessed with a sacred flag of the 'Neelachakra' (the blue wheel of the great temple) and a burning lamp, a rare recognition of the valour of the valiant.

The chariot moved, moved towards 'Swargadvara' ( a place on the beach considered as the gateway to heaven) for today the hero would have to fly to heaven to glare the glories of his kingdom from a Divine height.

It was 29th March, 1997. The hero left for New Delhi in his last flight and fell sick in the aeroplane itself.

But who could host him long within the four walls of a hospital ? The lion tried to roar from his sick bed – 'Bloody doctor, what are you doing ? I have to attend meetings'.

Then came the silence, Despite all efforts, steadily and steadily the hero was advancing towards coma.



Twenty five minutes past 7' o'clock morning on 7th April, 1997, the lion breathed his last in the Escort Hospital, New Delhi.

A baby son was born to Mr. Laxmi Narayan Patnaik, the Advocate, the eminent literary figure of Ganjam, one time Dewan of the Gajapati of Parlakhemundi, on 5th March, 1916.

That baby was a born pilot, perhaps born with the vigour of 'Veer Vajarang' (Veer Hanuman of the Hindu mythology) to make the sky his abode amidst horrors and hurricanes. When the sky of the entire world was overshadowed by the black clouds of the 2nd World War, this youth of Odisha was diving his plane as a pilot in the Royal Indian Air Force.

As a pilot of the Governor General Lord Wavell, this young man didn't miss the opportunity to procure the secret documents of the Britishers from the black box of the Governor General's aeroplane for the national interest and conveyed these to Mahatma Gandhi.

When the British Police was alert to arrest Mrs. Aruna Asaf Ali, it was this pilot of the Governor General who was carrying a disguised Mrs. Ali from one air base to another.

The year was 1949. Pakistan was advancing towards Kashmir. In a hurry, Raja Hori Singh announced the merger of his State Kashmir with the Indian territory. Now it was the responsibility of the Govt. of India to rescue Kashmir. News of Pakistan's advancement was reaching the Government every moment. Now they were only twenty miles away from Srinagar with powerful tanks. The fall of Srinagar would be the loss of Kashmir. So Kashmir was going to be lost for ever.

Pt. Nehru immediately convened a meeting of the defence officers. The Generals, the Marshalls expressed their helplessness for it was then impossible to approach Srinagar from any side.

The power and prestige of the Government of India was on the brink of challenge. A perturbed Prime Minister was asking the last

question – "Are we then going to lose Kashmir for ever?"

All defence officials bowed down their heads. A tall young man stood up to draw everybody's attention – 'I shall land on the Srinagar airport, capture the control tower, their the air force to follow soon.'

The plan of the youngman was executed. Kashmir was saved, this was saved the interest of a nation at the stake of the life of a young pilot.

Does the Government of India ever think of recognizing this jewel of India. He himself rescued a 'Ratna' i.e. Kashmir from the verge of being lost for ever for his nation. His nation didn't think of this valour, this Endeavour, this adventure as befitting to be conferred with the highest dignity, the 'Ratna' award of the nation. The man who, to reckon the achievements of the scientists, the technologists of the world over, could launch the prestigious 'Kalinga Prize', could he ever aspire for a 'Ratna' award for himself? Never and Never. That man was Bijayananda Patnaik, the beloved son of Odisha.

A group of islands, in the girdle of waves, the waves of the Bay of Bengal, the South China Sea, the Indian Ocean and the North Pacific, is Indonesia. The Dutch army had already captured all the routes, the land, the sea and the air to Djakarta, the capital city of Indonesia. The leaders of the freedom movement were confined in the capital city.

Who could pierce the garrison? Who could rescue the precious lives of the leaders of the freedom movement of Indonesia Pt. Nehru got confused.

A young pilot with the lone companion of his wife took off the flight. At the dead of night

when the world was asleep, he silently slipped to the capital town, rescued Sahariar and flew back New Delhi, risking his own life and the life of his spouse. The young pilot was Mr. Bijayananda Patnaik, the Kalingite who testified his cultural heritage 'Kalingah Sahasikah' in every walk of his life.

The world outside recognized this adventure. A nation in overseas, Indonesia, crowned this King with the greatest honour of its soil – 'Bhumi Putra' and 'Binatunga Yasa Uttam'.

India is yet to realize these risky hazards he undertook for his nation. When values escape recognition, decadence knocks at the door.

That youngman came back to the politics of Odisha, his native state, with a mission to make it flourishing.

Efforts continued. The express highways, the Airport of Bhubaneswar, the sea port of Paradeep, the steel plant of Rourkela, the MIG plant of Sunabeda, the Sainik School, the Engineering college and a series of others, all were built one after another, to make a state culturally rich and economically sound.

What is Odisha today is much due to the endeavour of this rare personality who could only be ranked next to Madhusudan Das. This man was Mr. Bijayananda Patnaik, the industrialist, the politician and the Chief Minister.

In the ninties, the man again became the Chief Minister of Odisha though he had already become the king of the million hearts. His success or failure in politics might change his political throne but who could dethrone him from the hearts of the present generation! For the coming generation also, he would be hailed as an inspiring hero, if history be recorded in the correct rail. He is none else than Mr. Bijayananda Patnaik, the loving son of the soil, the living king of the crores.

It was 'Swargadvara', the gateway to heaven on the beach. The son was sleeping on the pyre. The fire was lit. Oh, no, it was his own helicopter, perhaps on the start. The spontaneous outburst of tears was the fuel to take him off to heaven up for he was to attend meetings there.

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Geeta Devi, Old Town, Nayagarh -2.

## Biju Patnaik and Odisha Politics

*Prof. Surya Narayan Misra*

Odisha became a separate province in 1936. It was first province to be linguistically organized. On the basis of the provisions under the Government of India Act, 1935 elections to provincial assemblies were held and accordingly newly constituted a sixty member Odisha Assembly was formed. Because of some irritants in the Act, although Congress had secured a majority of seats in the House, it refused to form the government, Hence Parla Maharaja became the first premier of the province. Of course, the irritant provision from the Act was removed and Congress agreed to form Government, (Sri Biswanath Das became the first Congress premier of the Province). Since 1937 the state had experienced the governmental leadership under several personalities. They were other than the two mentioned above, H.K Mahtab, N.K. Choudhury, Biju Patnaik, Biren Mitra, S. Tripathy, R.N Singh Deo, Biswanath Das, Smt Nandini Satapathy, B. Acharya, N. Routray, J.B. Patnaik, H. Biswal, Biju Patnaik,



J.B. Patnaik, G. Gomango and the present Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik.

Sri Biswanath Das, Biju Patnaik and J.B. Patnaik were credited to be Chief Ministers with a gap. But Biju's ascendancy to power wrote a different story of its own. He became Chief Minister in 1961 and again in 1990. It was different from that of the achievement of Sri B.Das. Whereas Sri Das became Chief Minister in 1971 as an alternate choice of a coalition Government.

But in Biju's case, he provided a new dynamic leadership to Congress which had a pitiable condition in the State during Congress era. In 1961 first Mid Term Poll to the Odisha Legislature Biju brought glory to the Congress camp and also to Pandit Nehru. In 1970 Biju had an unceremonious exit from the Congress politics. He formed a regional party called Utkal Congress being influenced by Annadurai's DMK of Tamil Nadu. His regional out fit saw Congress out of power and Odisha

could see a non-Congress Swatantra – Utkal Congress – Jharkhand Coalition. Of course, Biju did not get opportunity to lead the new formation. In 1977 he was instrumental in the exit of Congress. He, in fact, initiated ‘Big Majority Politics’ in Odisha in 1977 and political instability and defection politics were given good bye. The 1990 election to the State Assembly was Biju’s own show and it was Janata Dal Government under him. He secured three-fourth majority in the Assembly. That in why it was different form that of Mr Das.

Biju was a rare breed of politician. In fact he was a nationalist, adventurist, forward looking, ambitious and above all a statesman, His love for his land and people made him a leader with a passion for change. These qualities were observed from his young days. He was an athlete and unlike all athletes he had sportsman spirit. He was courageous which prompted him to venture for a cycling from Cuttack to Peshawar. He was attracted towards aeroplanes and his educational career was moulded accordingly. He turned into one of the finest pilots. This new skill helped him to join nationalist struggle through secret missions to leaders who fought against the British colonial administration. Even during the Indonesian struggle against Dutch his heroic deed decorated him as ‘Bhumi Putra’ of that country. When Indo-Pak conflict began in 1947 and Pak forces were intruding into Kashmir his was the first flight carrying soldiers. He could also help Indian Army in coordinating food supply to Indian forces during 1962 war with China. Even it was learnt that late J.L. Nehru wanted to keep Biju near to power centre at Delhi at the time of national crises those days. How many politicians have either done this or have ever thought of doing this. Hence he was rare.

After the constitutional democracy was on the rails, nationalist Biju who believed in rapid industrialisation for employment and poverty alleviation was provoked by his political mentor Sri Mahatab to contest election and serve people as representative of people. This indoctrinated him to represent people in 1952, 1957, 1961 during the first phase of political career as MLA from Bhanjanagar, Jagannath Prasad and Choudwar. During this first phase he wanted to motivate the policy makers towards his dreams for making the State growahead of others. Even he wanted to save the Government when it was in dire need due to lack of legislative support to continue in power. At that time Odisha was amidst peculiar combination of parties and politics which was not observed elsewhere. It was multi polar with Congress, Ganatantra Parishad and PSP in lead roles along with CPI and Jharkhand party. Biju initially garnered the support of unattached and Jharkhand to save Mahtab Government. Subsequently, he could impress upon the National leadership to approve a Right-Right coalition of Congress and Ganatantra Parishad. The intention behind such political move to find a stable Government in the State which would help industrialization of mineral rich Odisha.

Later, Biju could learn that he was only used in the whole process of saving the Government which did not pay any attention towards the industry plan he had. He then entered into centre-stage of politics to break the unholy coalition and lead the Congress system in the State. He was able to do it and could achieve as well. The first stable Congress Ministry after independence could be installed in power in 1961. He was the Chief Minister by attacking the system from the front.

Though Biju’s obsession was industrialization he was equally indoctrinated

towards planned economic development and social upliftment . He was critical of rising population in the country. He was the pioneer of State Planning Board concept. Under his personal touch, the programme of action for infrastructure development was initiated which included a port so that the abundant mineral resources could reach different destinations and the state earn monetary resources. The internal communication system was also developed. He thought of making the state power surplus by utilizing the existing riverine system. He along with Dr. A.N. Khosla, the technocrat Governor could think of linking the rivers under 'Decade of Destiny' which no other leader in the country talked about.

He utilized his influence upon power apparatus at the Centre to get projects like Sunabeda, MIG, Regional College of Education, Regional Research Laboratory, Sainik School, Rourkela Engineering College etc. His intention was to create trained man power in the state and remove regional imbalance on incremental basis. All his plans and programmes which he could launch only during first two years of his Chief Ministership were bulldozed when he was emotionally attracted towards 'Kamraj Plan' and took a new 'Sanyas' form politics. The plan was intended against corrupt politicians elsewhere to save Congress from demoralised state after its debacle in the Sino-Indian war. His dreams of developed Odisha was to be carried by his followers but it was not the same spirit and leadership with a foresight.

Congress had a domestic crisis after Nehru and Odisha experienced it as well. A strong vocal section left Congress and formed Jana Congress with the obvious intention to return to power. But Congress to give a fighting reply was not under the leadership of Biju Baboo. A bad

patch in his political career appeared and he was defeated in 1967 election and in 1971 as well surprisingly when his party Utkal Congress had a reasonable success and formed Government.

One visible part of Odisha politics of 1960s and early 70s was that internal trouble in the Congress Party led to the division of the state unit twice in 1965 and 1970. Of course, the party at the national level had a major split in 1969. In 1969 Smt Indira Gandhi was in dire trouble, many deserted her. But Biju was with Mrs Gandhi. When a Rajya Sabha seat fell vacant and the State unit recommended Biju's name Indira turned it down. By that time Biju's creation Nandini Devi was already close to Mrs Gandhi. She and Sri Shyam Sundar Mohapatra, it was reported, prevailed upon Mrs Gandhi to avoid Sri Patnaik. This humiliation turned Sri Patnaik from Congress and the Utkal Congress was born not out of arrogance but out of self system.

Biju left Congress for ever. In fact during later years he became the symbol of opposition unity in the state when he could bring his mentors and opponents to one forum called 'Pragati Combine'. Though this could not make a major inroad in to Congress social base of which he was the architect, yet it did not give unilateral role to Congress to lead the State.

During emergency he was under detention. In post-emergency period Biju who associated himself with JP movement and toured in Odisha played a significant role to organize all hue and cry to fight against Indira in 1977. He, as mentioned earlier, founded 'Big majority' in Odisha.

In 1977 he entered in to Lok Sabha. Had he wished he could have opted for State leadership. It was in 1970 his entry in to upper house was objected. But within two years he



entered into Rajya Sabha to silence his opponents. He found that the Center's negligence of the State had reached a serious stage. Despite the potential, the State was denied a second steel plant and state's industrialization was not in the agenda of New Delhi policy makers. Hence, he preferred an active role in New Delhi and impact, presided over a key economic ministry i.e. Ministry of Steel & Mines. The small stint at Udyog Bhawan gave us NALCO ,a mega project. Had he remained as Minister for a full term the neglect of the past could have been made good.

Since 1980, Biju was a crest-fallen politician. He never lost any election after 1971. In 1980 he remained in low profile as a member of Lok Sabha and encouraging a demoralized and truncated Janata Party against massive majority of Congress.

Mrs Gandhi's unfortunate assassination and a strong Congress apparatus in Delhi provoked Biju to remain in action in the State. With him his associates got new lease of life. He became leader of opposition and made whirlwind tour of the State. In fact, he became king-maker after 1989 Congress rout at the Centre. Had he wished he could have got any position including Deputy P.M. But he preferred Bhubaneswar as his centre of activity. The unceremonious and untimely exit of V.P Singh when Biju was Chief Minister with unheard popularity and electoral success caused mental agony in him. Biju brought left parties to his fold and made accepted seat adjustment. But a crestfallen man with age on the wrong side as well as obsession to work for the State found him a dejected leader. The socio-political climate of the country was changed.

Mandal-Kamandal politics disturbed him and as a true nationalist he made some remarks which was not even liked by his own colleagues. But it was only from a man who was caring for his State and crying for his country. Even the onset of liberal economy could not allow industrial climate to come first due to step motherly attitude of New Delhi.

In 1995 election to Assembly Biju was advised to distance from the Left by his own coterie. There was a split in the social base. Though party had a reasonable electoral support yet it could not be translated into seats as many of his candidates lost the election with few votes. Congress secured a survival majority. Biju could not be accorded as fitting success in the semifinal of politics. He decided to go to the Centre in 1996 and in fact won from two seats. As a Member of Lok Sabha, there was an opportunity, demand as well as hope that Biju should have become the Prime Minister. But it could not happen. It was a personal loss to Biju. Of course, he was not a scheming politician. In my opinion it was a loss for our State. A crestfallen Biju ultimately in a sad episode of last days of his life breathed his last on 17<sup>th</sup> April, 1997. Thus came the end of a hero's travel. But his name has remained in the minds of the people, the symbol of which is carried through a political outfit called Biju Janata Dal which distanced itself from anti- Odisha Janata Dal.

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# Social Justice, Panchayati Raj and Women Empowerment

*Dr. Pranab Kumar Rana*

## **INTRODUCTION :**

The Constitution of India is the best known for its magnificent social treatise, begins with the glorious preamble which guarantees the key-concepts as liberty, equality, justice and fraternity to the entire people of the country. These expressions postulate an unwritten pledge that everyone will do justice to one another especially for the common man – for the man on the street and in the farm, for the driver of the bullock-cart and for other suppressed and neglected sections. This was the reason why the Founding Fathers had chosen to prefer justice to Liberty, Equality and Fraternity for placement in order; again social justice was assigned a preferential place over economic and political<sup>1</sup>. Otherwise the expression in the preamble – “We the people of India ..... give unto our-selves this Constitution” loses its meaning and import, as much as the promise in Article 38 – (The State) shall strive to promote the welfare of the people by securing and protecting as effectively as it may a social order in which justice – social, economic and political shall inform all institutions of national life.

Thus, Social Justice in a comprehensive sense must penetrate in depth and permeate in its widest spectrum to all aspect of social life, including the stigmatized untouchability and the so-called members of the Backward classes. The concept of Social Justice must take within its sweep the objective of removing all inequalities

and affording equal opportunities to all citizens in social and economic affairs. Our country is not a utilitarian State, but a Democratic Republic with committed to welfarism. The problems enumerated above which concern the overwhelmingly large number of the citizens, could never be successfully tackled unless the State uses its most effective ameliorating devices against socio-economic and socio-legal instrumentalities that necessarily calls for a total reform for balancing economic structure and thereby relieve the body-politic of the tension.<sup>2</sup> In the process, the new era of Social Justice in the Democratic Republic of India could be surely ushered, when our condition favours introduction of democracy at the grass-root level i.e., the creation of Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) which embodied in Article 40 of the Constitution<sup>3</sup>. The basic conviction that Village Panchayats could play an important role in the social transformation and implementation of development programmes. In this paper, an attempt has made how far the Village Panchayat contributed for achieving the empowerment of women.

## **CONSTITUTIONAL COMMITMENT TOWARDS REPRESENTATION :**

The women of India have been torch-bearers of its democratic advancement since the time that Gandhiji gave them a clarion call to leave their courtyards and emerge as equal partners in the progress of the nation. Women fought shoulder to shoulder with men in the freedom

movement and they have shouldered more than their fair share of hard work in the task of nation building. This gives them the legitimacy to play an important role at the grass root level. Indeed, the equality guaranteed by the Constitution of India, demands active political participation by women which is integral to the whole issue of the progress of women.

Issues of equality and rights for women were always claimed as crucial components in state policy. Much of the justification for rights, justice and equality for women came from the need for 'emancipation' or 'liberation' of women. When the language of empowerment gained currency in the nineteen eighties, the claims changed and to some extent the means by which empowerment was to be brought about. The institutional reform envisaged in the governance agenda involved the incorporation of an 'empowerment' component, more in terms of capacity building<sup>4</sup>.

The late nineteen nineties and the period thereafter saw a rallying of forces among women's groups on the issue of reservation for women in elected bodies. The struggle to enhance women's representation in elected bodies which had first emerged in the 1920s and 1930s had been revisited in the 1970s by the Committee on the Status of Women in India while examining the political status of women. The Towards Equality report drew attention to the deeply entrenched discriminatory structures that inhibited women's representation in political bodies, and to the fact that the number of women legislators was declining as a result of the reluctance of political parties to field women candidates. The Committee recommended one-third reservation for women in elected bodies at the Panchayat level. A demand for increased representation of women was made again in the late 1980s, but the women's movement's critique of the government's National Perspective Plan for Women, emphasized reservation up to one-third in grass-roots bodies

for local-self government – to throw up 'new leadership from below' – and rejected reservation in State Assemblies and Parliament. The National Perspective Plan for women issued by the government in 1988, under pressure from the women's movement, recommended a 30 percent reservation of seats for women at the Panchayat and Zilla Parishad levels. In 1993 the 73<sup>rd</sup> and 74<sup>th</sup> Amendment Acts provided constitutional recognition and status to local elected bodies in villages (the Panchayats) and cities (the Municipalities), respectively. Apart from putting in place institutions of local governance and decentralizing power structures, the amendments also sought to deepen democracy by ensuring that hitherto excluded social groups like Women, Scheduled Castes (SC) and Scheduled Tribes (ST) are adequately represented in these bodies. The amendments provided, therefore, reservations for all these social groups, with the condition that no less than a third of the seats (including those reserved for women belonging to the SC and the ST communities) be reserved for women.<sup>5</sup>

#### **STATE SUPPORTED COMPONENTS ON WOMEN EMPOWERMENT :**

Reservation of women can be a temporary sort of relief, for which the Government of India has incorporated a special 'Women Components' under the Ministry of Rural Development. Under this women components, various programmes have lunched viz., Swarnjayanti Gram Swarajgar Yojana (SGSY), the Indira Awas Yojana (IAY), the National Social Assistance Programme (NSAP), the Restructured Centrally Rural Sanitation Programme, the Accelerated Rural Water Supply Programme, the Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP), the Development of Women and Children in Rural Areas (DWCRA) and the Jawahar Rojgar Yojana (JRY) etc.

Ministry of Women and Child Development also has been implementing various schemes towards both economic and social

empowerment of women. *Swayamsiddha* is the flagship scheme of the Ministry of Women which aims at holistic economic empowerment. It includes the *Support for Training and Employment Programme* (STEP) for Women and aims to upgrade their incomes by updating their skills in the traditional sectors. The Ministry has also set up support systems like working women hostels and crèches to help women in their struggle towards economic empowerment. *Swadhar* and Short Stay Homes have been set up to provide shelter and care services for women in distress. Besides the above, the special intervention *Kishori Shakti Yojana* (KSY) and Nutrition Programme for Adolescent Girls (NPAG) are being implemented for adolescent girls, using the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) infrastructure. These interventions focus on school dropouts, girls in the age group of 11-18 years, to meet their needs of self-development, nutrition, health education, literacy and recreational skill formation.<sup>6</sup>

Most of the above schemes focus on alleviation of poverty and generation of self-employment for women.

### **THE STATE OF ODISHA – AS A TORCH BEARER**

It is significant to discuss here that after the good number of deliberations, discussions and recommendations of various Committees<sup>7</sup>, Indian Parliament has able to enact 73<sup>rd</sup> and 74<sup>th</sup> Constitutional Amendment Act in the year 1992 in which across the country today, there are estimated to be more than one million women in all three tiers of PRI. Bringing these women into politics was an act of positive discrimination.<sup>8</sup> In this connection, it may be said that Odisha is first state to streamline the Panchayati Raj and Local-self Government Institutions by enacting the Orissa Gram Panchayat Act, 1964, the Orissa Panchayat Samities Act, 1959 and the Orissa Zilla Parishad Act, 1991, to make democracy participatory and not the aristocracy of a few nitpicking intellectuals.

These acts have been extensively amended to bring it in conformity with the provisions of the Constitutional Amendment Act, 1992. When the amended GP Act came into force considerable speculations were made about the ability of women in performing their duty or making any meaningful contribution to improve village administration.

Obviously illiteracy, poverty, lack of awareness and communication skill, family responsibility with the prime responsibility of earning livelihood was cited as hurdles for women's participation. Perpetuation of male dominance through kin and traditional high caste leadership were also alluded to deter the objective of restructuring village level administration. The perceived incapability of women in the public activity spawned primarily from the threat to male dominance. Therefore, women outside the kin category were de-motivated to contest after the notification for the holding panchayat election was issued. But the unwillingness of high caste young educated women to participate in the election facilitated tribal women without political background to enter the Gram Panchayat. In fact, the disadvantages of women were reflected in the absence in meetings, silence during the meetings, lack of interest in articulating community problems and proxy control. But in subsequent elections the consensus method of selection of women candidates has been replaced by contest in few areas and women have been trying to make their presence visible.<sup>9</sup>

### **INSTANCES OF SELF EMPOWERMENT**

The impact of the various developmental policies, plans and programmes implemented by the government over the last sixty years has brought forth a perceptible improvement in the socio-economic status of women. Although the entry of women to Panchayat Offices was negatively viewed, yet the women representatives have become assertive, courageous to interact on certain community issues which mark the sign of

their empowerment. *Sarpanchs* and *Naib Sarpanchs* have given up their fear and shyness to speak on issues related to the villages. They visit offices along with the male members and their relatives to appraise the officials about their problems like agriculture, revenue, banking and other allied community problems. Coming up of *Self-Help Groups* has facilitated the leaders of the group, some of whom are representing the ward, to listen to the problems of the group members. They are regular in attending Gram Panchayat meeting after the incentive allowance came into force. Participation in demonstration against sale of liquor, displacement and congregating for forest preservation indicates that these women are self empowered as well as have motivated others to participate in community issues.<sup>10</sup>

The community issues like health, sanitation, education, childcare etc., are not solely due to the women office bearers of the Panchayats. Rather, it was a cooperative effort of the villagers especially among women, which cannot be ignored.

## CONCLUSION

For participative democracy, it is true that empowerment of women should be fully alive at the grass root level. For ensuring rural development as well as eradication of rural poverty in a sustainable manner at the grass root level, establishing good governance in Panchayati Raj system should be a prerequisite. In order to achieve the good governance in rural sector, the Government (both Centre and State) should attempt to delimit the bureaucratic pressure, to promote local leadership, to remove structural deficiencies, to raise more financial resources and at the same time establishing "SOCIAL AUDIT" in all PRIs network is also one of the best opportunity for shaping the concept of "Bharat Nirman", "Shining India", "Feel Good" and this is not possible without participation and empowerment of rural downtrodden women.

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# Financial Sustenance for Women's Empowerment - A Measure Towards Inclusive Growth

*Bindu Madhab Panda*

## **Introduction**

Following sixty five years of independence, women's empowerment has still remained as one of the serious concerns for the society. The Constitution of India guarantees equal rights to both sexes and entitles women to enjoy economic, social, cultural and political rights on an equal footing with men (Article 325). Under Article 15 (3) of the Constitution, the State is empowered to make "special provisions", legislative or otherwise, to secure women's socio-political advancement. This ensures dignity and equal opportunities for the women and their active participation in all walks of life including education, politics, sports etc. Considering the women's role in the nation-building activities, the Government had declared the year 2001 as the year of Women's Empowerment by adopting a national policy to offer "Swashakti" to women. The goals of the National Policy is to bring about development and empowerment of women through creating an positive economic and social environment and to enable them to realize their full potential by having access to health care, quality education, employment, equal remuneration and social security, so that all sorts of discriminations and violence against women can be eliminated.

The Constitution of India preserved gender equality in its Preamble, Fundamental Rights, Fundamental Duties and Directive Principles of State Policy. Since the Fifth Five Year Plan (1974-78), the approach towards women's welfare for development has seen a paradigm shift in India with greater focus on women's empowerment as the central goal. The National Commission for Women was set up by an Act of the Parliament in 1990 to safeguard the rights and legal entitlements of women. The 73rd and 74th Amendments to the Constitution in 1993 have provided for reservation of seats in the Local Bodies of Panchayats and Municipalities for women, laying a strong foundation for their participation in decision-making at the local levels. Besides, several laws have been legislated and implemented in social, economic, legal and political sectors including active participation of women in State Assembly and Parliament.

## **Poverty Alleviation Programmes in Odisha for Women's Empowerment**

As per the 2011 population census of Registrar General of India, female population in Odisha constitutes 2.07 crore of the total State's population of 4.19 crore. According to the poverty estimates of the Planning Commission for 2004-05, more than 57 per cent of the total population were

living below the poverty line in Odisha. Since women comprise of about 49.40 per cent of the total State's population, the majority of women are living below the poverty line and are subjected to the harsh realities of intra-household and social discrimination.

To overcome the problems of poverty, the Government of Odisha has been implementing several welfare schemes viz., Supplementary Nutrition Programme for pregnant women, lactating mothers and children aged between six months-six years, Emergency Feeding Programme in KBK districts and Old Age Homes aiming at safety net for the old, infirm and destitute and SABALA to improve the nutritional and health status of adolescent girls and equip them with skills and provide them with knowledge on family welfare, health and hygiene, information and guidance on existing public services and mainstreaming them into formal schooling. The Support to Training and Employment Programme of Women (STEP) scheme also provides training for skill upgradation, development of entrepreneurial skills, asset creation, mobilisation into small viable groups to enable beneficiaries to take up employment-cum-income generation activities, to help poor and marginalised women and make them economically self-reliant

Besides the nutritional and skill development programmes, the Government of Odisha has been providing financial assistance of Rs.200 per month per woman who are poor, disabled and vulnerable through National and State Old Age Pension Programmes (NOAP & SOAP)/ Indira Gandhi National Old Age Pension, Indira Gandhi National Widow Pension Scheme, Indira Gandhi National Disabled Pension Scheme and Madhu Babu Pension Yojana. The Government also takes up the programme for assistance to disabled persons for purchase/fitting

of aids/appliances (ADIP Scheme) in coordination with Voluntary Organisations and Aid Agencies working in the field of social welfare in the State.

Swarnjayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana (SGSY) is being implemented by the Government of Odisha to assist BPL families by providing them income generating assets through bank credit and Government subsidy. The scheme is designed to promote self-employment oriented income generating activities for the BPL households in the rural areas by organising the rural poor into Self Help Groups (SHGs). Special safeguards have been provided for vulnerable sections focusing on Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, women, etc. The Rashtriya Mahila Kosh (RMK) scheme also extends micro-credit support for income generation to poor women grouped into SHGs.

### **Micro Finance for Women's Empowerment**

The problem of women's access to credit was given utmost priority at the first International Women's Conference in Mexico in 1975 as a part of the emerging awareness of the importance of women's productive role both for national economies as well as for women's rights. This led to the setting up of the Women's World Banking network and production of manuals for women's credit provision. Many other women's organizations have been set up world-wide as credit and savings components with an aim of increasing women's income and bringing women together to address wider gender issues. Starting from the mid-1980s, there was an escalation of donors, government and NGO-sponsored credit programmes in the wake of the 1985 Nairobi Women's Conference.

Between 1980s and 1990s, there was development and rapid expansion of large

minimalist poverty-targeted Micro Finance Institutions (MFIs) and networks viz. Grameen Bank, ACCION, Finca etc. These organizations witnessed significantly higher female repayment rates that led to increasing emphasis on targeting women as an efficiency strategy to increase credit recovery. A number of donors also saw female-targeted financially-sustainable micro-finance as a means of marrying internal demands for increased efficiency because of declining budgets with demands of the increasingly vocal gender lobbies. The trend was further reinforced by the Micro Credit Summit Campaign starting in 1997 which had 'reaching and empowering women' as its second key goal after poverty reduction. Micro-finance for women has recently been seen as a key strategy in meeting not only Millennium Development Goal number three i.e gender equality, but also poverty reduction, health, HIV/AIDS and other goals. India has also been a signatory to various international conventions and human rights instruments committing to secure equal rights of women.

Micro finance sector has cycled from micro savings to micro credit and further to micro enterprises and now entered the micro insurance, micro remittance and micro pension. This evolutionary growth process has created optimum opportunity for the rural poor across India to attain reasonable economic, social and cultural empowerment, leading to better living standard and quality of life for participating households. Micro finance involves credit linkage with banks through two models (i) SHG - Bank Linkage Model: this model involves the SHGs financed directly by the banks viz., Commercial Banks, RRBs and Cooperative Banks (ii) MFI - Bank Linkage Model: this model covers financing of MFIs by banking agencies for on-lending to SHGs and other small borrowers. MFIs are playing an important role of financial intermediaries

operating under various legal forms, viz., NGO MFIs, Cooperative MFIs and NBFC MFIs.

Financial institutions in the country continued to play a leading role in the micro finance programme for nearly two decades. As on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2011, loans outstanding by banks to 39.84 lakh women SHGs was Rs.26123.75 crore in 2010-11 as against Rs. 23030.36 crore to 38.98 lakh women SHGs in 2009-10. As on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2011, women SHGs had 60.98 lakh saving accounts with bank balance of Rs.5298.65 crore. In order to enhance women's access to credit, existing micro-credit mechanisms and MFIs in Odisha have extended their support to the existing 5.21 lakh SHGs. Besides, many supportive measures have been taken by the Government of Odisha to ensure adequate flow of credit through extant financial institutions and banks, so that all women below poverty line can have easy access to credit. Micro finance has emerged as a powerful instrument in the State, generating employment and livelihood and is dominantly guided by SHGs with Bank Linkage Programme as a cost effective mechanism for providing financial support to the "Unreached Poor" which has been successful not only in meeting financial needs of the rural poor women but also strengthening their collective self help capacities. Rapid and significant progress in SHGs formation has now taken the shape of a women's empowerment movement in the State. In Odisha, as on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2011 almost 62.15 lakh rural households were covered under 5.21 lakh SHGs-Bank Linkage programme. More than 400 SHGs were found per one lakh population, during the same period. During 2010-11, total number of 71843 SHGs had disbursed loan amount of Rs.574.92 crore against the total outstanding loan of Rs.1579.84 crore, which indicates the progress and potentiality of the SHGs and Banks.



Micro finance addresses the issues linked to poverty alleviation, financial support to micro entrepreneurs, gender development etc. Micro finance is a “Provision of thrift, credit and other financial services and products of very small amounts to the poor in rural, semi-urban or urban areas for enabling them to raise their income levels and improve living standards”. Onward-lending to individuals and also to members of SHGs is categorised by the RBI as priority sector. As per the RBI, guidelines aggregate amount of loan, extended for income generating activity, is not less than 75 per cent of the total loans given by MFIs.

### **Problems and Challenges in Micro Finance**

Many studies have highlighted that perpetual poverty and underdevelopment among the women prevailed across India since independence. Despite, a number of steps taken by the Government, the situation is not very satisfactory due to existing problems in the financial sector and society. The major problems and challenges as highlighted by the different studies are as under:

- Lack of knowledge of the market for entering into business;
- Inadequate book-keeping knowledge;
- Employment of too many persons that increases social pressure for sharing profits, group lending;
- Capital shortage and high interest rates;
- Inventory and inflation accounting;
- Errors in credit policies;
- Financial inclusion in the tribal and most backward rural areas;
- Conflicts and untimely break up of the Groups; and

- Internal family problems, traditional responsibilities increase women’s work and time burden.

### **Way Forward**

Tackling graveness of poverty, undoubtedly Odisha has achieved remarkable progress in empowering women during last 12 years through good governance. However, it is realized that a lot is still to be delivered, especially for the women through the measures such as:

- Awareness campaign for the women about their rights, responsibilities, etc.;
- Attaining full women literacy to strengthen the awareness campaign;
- Extension of women oriented training/ skill for employment and earning;
- Special training for women for social adjustment, family construction, increasing confidence to tackle violence etc.;
- Framing policies for financial sustainability of poor women for creating community owned institutions;
- Financial inclusion in the tribal and most backward rural areas;
- Extension of economics/ finance based training for skill upgradation, development of entrepreneurial skills, asset creation and its mobilization;
- Credit is important for economic development but cannot by itself enable very poor women to overcome their poverty. The financial institutions involved in micro credit initiatives should instigate women not to consume all the credit available, rather that should be used for generating micro enterprises. To overcome chronic poverty it

is more important to provide saving services alongwith credit facilities;

- Development of a strong collaborative model among banks, NGOs, MFIs and Women's organizations to exercise best practices in relation to micro-finance for women's empowerment and how different institutions can work together; and
- Effectively implementation of the gender strategies in micro finance in a broad way for increasing women's access to savings and credit and organizing self help groups in a strategic thinking for vigorously promote gender equality and women's empowerment.

### Conclusion

Participation of women in the economic activities is utmost important to achieve inclusive growth. To expedite the process of inclusiveness, a number of financial inclusion activities have already been started in Odisha through increasing number of banks and MFIs and significant economic and social empowerment of women through SHGs have already been pictured. However, a lot needs to be recognized in a broader dimension to reduce the gap between rich and poor. In so far as attaining aims of both empowerment and sustainability of women is concerned, it is a long-term aspect and cohesive efforts need to be spontaneously drifted out from each corner of the society. Governments effort through designing and implementing policies for generating and providing financial supports may be well behind attaining the millennium development goals until and unless strong willingness, efforts and utilization power is developed by the women and their families. The dream of eradicating poverty and hunger from women/ society can only be achieved when the beneficiaries can dig out the multiplier effect of

the funds (cash or kind) and services supported by the Government/ financial institutions. So, the innovative steps taken through the SHGs must be welcomed and be extended to many poor women for their empowerment to build a new, healthy and violence free women empowered and developed Odisha. This can fulfil the aim of inclusive growth of Odisha.

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## Voices of Women of Odisha

*Dr. Sucheta Priyabadini*

Odisha has a rich cultural heritage, and many women have left an indelible impression in the annals of Odisha's history in different periods. Caught in the globalization, state of Odisha has been increasingly recognizing the role played by women in the society. Beginning from the six Bhauma queens who ruled the state of Odisha, the women during the initial stages of the spread of Buddhism, women leading salt marches and tribal women protesting against the loss of their natural resources to greed of the state and multinational corporations, in all these we find women of Odisha working and contributing towards the overall development of the society. Whether literate or illiterate under the yolk of patriarchy from ages their endless contributions and efforts have led to the progress in various walks of life.

Browsing through the history of Odisha, reminds of the dynamic women like Sarala Devi, Smt. Reba Ray, Smt Rama Devi, Sucharu Devi, Padma Bai and many more. The historical sources of the period are abundantly filled with stories of accomplished women of the time. As we look back much deep into the annals of history, we find women during the Shailodbhava dynasty who ruled over southern part of Odisha from the middle of 6<sup>th</sup> century AD to 8<sup>th</sup> century AD excelling in

culture and arts. Royal women of these times were benevolent and could donate villages but did not play an active role in the affairs of administration. Sculptures of this era indicate that women excelled in dancing, singing and other adornments imply high aesthetic senses.

### **Women as Administrators**

The zenith of power and position of women came during the rule of the Bhaumakaras (736AD to 945 AD). According to some historians, the Bhaumas belonged to Odisha and were a non Aryan tribe. Women of these tribes enjoyed great freedom. The Bhaumakaras followed the custom of allowing their female members to succeed their deceased husbands. Six widowed queens and one unmarried princess of the Bhauma dynasty ruled as sovereign rulers, which is unprecedented in Indian history. **Tribhuvanamahadevi** was the first known queen to be the queen in 845 AD. The others like Pruthivi Mahadevi, Bakul Mahadevi, Gauri Mahadevi and Dharma Mahadevi succeeded one after another. One of the striking feature was that none of the queens adopted a son to succeed her. The female rulers took up the reins of administration perhaps on account of their superior ability as compared to the male members. Women during Bhauma rule enjoyed a high status

in society. The queens were trained both in warfare as well as administration. They presided over assemblies of the feudatories. Some women however showed courage and talent in administration. Sumitra Devi of Mayurbhanj who ruled from 1803 AD to 1810 AD displayed immense bravery and intelligence. Rani Suka Devi of Banki, a feudal state, too displayed tremendous courage in safeguarding her territory.

### **Women as Poetesses**

Ancient history speaks of the Oriya women who occupy a brighter position than at present. There were talented poetess like Madhavi Devi, Brundabati Devi, Rani Nisank Ray etc. as mentioned in Khurdha Itihas(History of Khurdha). The writings of women focus mainly on social prejudices and exploitation against women such as "Child marriage", Child widow, women education etc to fight against the illiteracy and social evils that affected women.

### **Women in the military**

If we go further back we find descriptions of women in military dress engraved in the olden caves of Odisha. From this it appears that women did not hesitate even to face wars. Oriya legends and myths which glorify women have been a source of inspiration to the women of the succeeding generations. The bravery and magnanimity of Suka Devi, the queen of Bankigarh in the 18<sup>th</sup> century are widely known in Odisha.

### **Women as Social Reformers**

The efforts of Reba Roy and Rani of Khallilkote in spreading female education in the beginning of 20<sup>th</sup> century is indeed heartening. Profile of female education in the 19<sup>th</sup> century Odisha presents not a quite favourable picture of female literacy. The number of female scholars in different schools of Odisha compared to the males of school going age is a meagre 1.3% in

their ratio and this clearly indicates that in the last decade of the same century female literacy was just a trickle and not in any way significant to effect any cultural change. A meeting of Odia women was organized by Rama Devi for social reformation and welfare activities at Cuttack. The meeting took on political colour and a resolution was passed to send female delegates to congress conference. This was the beginning of a great epoch in the changing role structure of women in society who felt enthused to enter the mainstream of political action in order to prove their social worth. This was certainly the most historic moment in the movement for women liberation.

Since women actively participated in all the programmes of social welfare and reform they carved out a space for themselves in the larger sphere of civic and political interaction with the dominant section of their male counterparts. Slowly social reform movements gained their foothold in Odisha, the major objectives being the removal of untouchability and the social upliftment of the depressed classes. Sarala Devi, Rama Devi and a host of women reformists came prepared to bear the brunt of the conservative fury in their attempts at storming the bastion of caste discrimination. It is not a case that they broke down the caste barriers or emancipated the depressed fellowmen from the ligatures of repression, but their participation certainly brought a new spate of flavour into social reform. Their emergence in this domain softened the rigour of social resistance and made considerable headway towards eroding caste discrimination if not totally liquidating such long groomed caste prejudices.

Several women organizations started to be formed which worked towards female education, eradication of social evils etc. The most laudable effort was the Utkal Mahila Conference held in Berhampur in 1924. Women like Rama Devi, Malati Devi, Annapurna Devi, Godavari

Devi worked for the socio-economic upliftment of the Odia women, especially the rural women. The modern women's movement in Odisha was an integral part of freedom struggle.

### **Role of Odishan women in Freedom movement**

The spirit of nationalism found a mighty upsurge in the 2nd half of 19th century and Odisha had its own distinguished share of national enterprise. The freedom movement in Odisha was a regional manifestation of the All India Movement under the aegis of the Indian National Congress. With the advent of Gandhiji in the National Congress and the launching of the Non-Co-operation Movement in 1920, the nature of freedom movement in Odisha took a new orientation. In the beginning of 20<sup>th</sup> century large number of women in Odisha came out from indoors and whole-heartedly devoted themselves to the task of national struggle. The emergence of women into the political limelight coincided with the Non-co-operation Movement 1921. Under the Gandhian spell a large number of women activists like Sarala Devi, Rama Devi, Malati Choudhuri, Janhavi Devi, Hiranmayi Devi, Godavari Devi, Radhamani Devi, Parvati Devi and Janaki Devi stood the forefront. These women freedom fighters participated in various activities of the freedom struggle such as *Satyagraha*, spinning cottage industries and other related programme under the aegis of Indian National Congress.

The eminent women leaders like Shailabala Das, Reba Roy and the queens of the minor states of Odisha were influenced by the creed of Indian National Congress. They not only worked for the female literacy drive, widow remarriage, elimination of *purdah* system and child marriage, but also for individual freedom, national unity, solidarity and democratization of all social institutions.

From 1885 to 1905, most of the Odia women leaders withdrew from Congress due to negligence of Indian Congress leaders towards issues of Oriya and Sailabala came forward to make Oriya speaking tracts to form a separate province. Women leaders like Nisamani Devi, Nitambini Patra, Haramani Devi, Monorama Devi, Champamani Devi, Ashamani Devi, Sunamani Devi, Radhamani Devi etc were influenced by the ideologies of Pandit Gopabandhu Das.

By 1920, the women seeking their lone goal of emancipation found the media an important instrument to fight against all ideologies of sexism and male chauvinism. To use the media to their advantage, the female participants must either turn journalists or cultural producers and this imperative activated many women to compose and to write so that their views could be circulated among the educated audience either in fictional or non fictional form. A group of women writers emerged in the literary scene and among them Kuntala Kumari Sabat and Sitadevi Khadanga are the two women luminaries whose contribution to Oriya poetry during the epoch of cultural renaissance remains land-mark in literature for all the times. They did not pursue art for any propagandistic motives though both of them have a strong message in the substantial part of their poetic outpourings. Their poetic skill, rhetorical acumen, aesthetic designs remain incomparable paradigms of literary production of the age. For the first time they proved that women could be as capable as men in any domain of literary creativity. This created a new image of Odishan womanhood and brought great recognition for the genius of the female sex as cultural producers and heightened the prestige of women writers blazing a trail of glory for women in Odisha. Labanya Devi, the wife of Advocate Loknath Bahadur of Puri founded a women's association at Puri called

Mahila Bandhu Samiti. It had the primary membership of a few prominent ladies from the elite classes. Involved exclusively in the literary activities of women, this association gave recognition to women's talent and creativity.

Gandhiji's visit to Odisha for the first time in 1921 obviously had its effect. In March 1921, Mahatma Gandhi addressed various public meetings in Odisha. He also addressed a small gathering of women at Binod Bihari, Cuttack. Towards the end of 1921 Sarada Devi with her husband visited Kanika, where tenants were agitating against their pro-British Raj as well as the British authorities. Rama Devi and Hiramani Devi attended the Gaya Session of the Indian National Congress held in 1922. The Calcutta Session of the Indian National Congress held in December 1928 was attended by Rama Devi, Sorojini Chowdhury, Janhavi Devi and Kokila Devi. The famous *Salt Satyagraha* of 1930 involved hundreds of women activists like Sarala Devi, Kishorimani Devi and Malati Devi who came out from the seclusion of their homes to join Congress demonstrations for the manufacture of salt. A few weeks after the Dandi March began, Gandhiji said, "the importance of some sisters to join the good fight is to me a healthy sign. In this movement, their contribution should be much better than any man. Woman is immeasurably superior to man. The awakening of women redoubled the energy and activities of the Satyagrahis. As soon as the Satyagraha started at Inchudi, Rama Devi and Kiran Bala Sen reached the Satyagraha camp at Balasore. Hundreds of women came under the spell of their amazing enthusiasm and leadership. On 20<sup>th</sup> April, 1930 they led a long procession of women to the Satyagraha centre and violated the Salt Law. Rama Devi, Annapurna Devi, Malati Devi and other women volunteers visited Srijanj and encouraged the women folk of that area to violate

Salt Law. Smt. Rasamani Devi, Sarala Devi, Kuntala Kumari Sabat, Sorijini Chowdhury took pioneering interest in establishing this participation of many Oriya women in the historic Karachi Congress session in 1931 and paved the way for greater role in national movement. The spread of the Civil Disobedience Movement in Odisha was mostly due to the All Odisha Women's Council which had members from different parts of the state with Kuntala Kumari as its President.

Gandhiji's Padayatra in May 1934 had a profound impact on the women of Odisha, as they were called upon to fight the evils of liquor, boycott of foreign clothes and to discard untouchability. Inspired by Gandhiji's teachings, Rama Devi and her associates participated in the development of Khadi and Village industries. Meanwhile Malati Devi carried on the Congress Socialist Movement with her husband. Sarala Devi became a member of the first Legislative Assembly of Odisha from 1937 to 1944. In 1946 Malati Devi was elected to the Constituent Assembly of India.

The political activities of the Oriya women reached its zenith during the period of Quit India Movement. Many Congress workers including Malati Choudhury represented Odisha in this Movement. The role of Odishan women in the Quit India movement is another liberation, which was gathering great momentum during the period of freedom struggle. Women in large numbers courted imprisonment in consequence of their active participation in Quit India Movement. Malati Choudhury along with Surendra Nath Dwivedi escaped the police dragnet and went into hiding in order to keep up the movement active and energetic on 8<sup>th</sup> August 1942. On the same day in Cuttack and some other places in Odisha, 24 leaders including Rama Devi were arrested. Malati Choudhury with much difficulty arrived at Cuttack on 12<sup>th</sup> August 1942 and laid the foundation of August Revolution in Odisha. On

account of the revolutionary activities and tireless efforts of women the August Revolution gathered momentum. Eminent women like Malati Choudhury, Rama Devi, Sarala Devi, Annapurna Devi, Mangala Devi, Suryamani Devi, Guna Manjari Devi, Champa Devi, Pravabati Devi, Sita Devi, Laxmi Bai and many others contributed immensely in making the Quit India Movement a grand success.

The advancement of Odisha became a steady proposition only with the woman entering in the mainstream of civic and political life of the community though Odisha still lags behind with respect to female education if it is compared with the other advanced states like Kerala and West Bengal. A glance at the present status of women taking different roles in social structure does not give a very encouraging picture of women liberation. The movement that took its rise from the spread of education and attempts of modernising a traditional society has stopped far short of attaining the climax which could have been reached if woman of Odisha had risen to a status of parity with their male counterparts. Yet the present picture gleams with signs of better prospect. Recent statistics of college education during the last decade reveals a steady, progressive increase in the strength of women on roles in the institutions of higher learning. This signals a progressive change in male attitude towards educating women and giving them social, cultural and civic parity.

### **Women in the Political Scenario**

Late eighties and early ninties of last century determined the entry of women into fields of administration with international awakening of women from Fourth International Conference of Women, Beijing and Reservation for Women in grassroots level of Panchayati Raj Institutions and Municipal Institutions of India. The political arena

in the 1970s witnessed the entry of young Brahmin (high caste) Oriya lady Nandini Satpathy who rose to be the Chief Minister of the State. Though she hailed from a political background and had been a student activist, her rise was phenomenal but the irony was that the status of women in Odisha did not dramatically change during her tenure. Today we need more representation of Odia women in the political field as MP and MLA.

### **Women Activist of 21<sup>st</sup> Century**

Odisha administration issued an Order of reservation for women in Odisha Administrative Services and in admissions into the Engineering Colleges of Odisha in 1992. This has ushered a situation of entry of women into administration and technical education.

Last decade and a half was marked by a resurgence of women's struggle and emergence of new women's groups and organizations in the state. In the late 80s and the beginning of the 90s several women organizations emerged. These women organizations took up the issues related to women's oppression like dowry, violence within the family, alcoholism among men, wife beating, discrimination at work place etc to mobilize women for a collective action. There are also several active grassroot organizations, tribal women's organization, self employed women's organization who are fighting against all forms of oppression, injustice and exploitation.

Women's movement in 21<sup>st</sup> century gave a radical turn to women's movement where tribal, landless and rural women have participated. Prominent tribal women like Lacchma Majhi, Tulsi Munda, Urmila Kuanra to name a few who see education as a fundamental need for social change and work for the education of tribal children. Some women like Prof Asha Hans, Kasturi Mohapatra, Nirupama Rath, *Tapasi Praharaj*

etc are the backbone of social transformation and work for the upliftment of marginalized people of the society.

### Conclusion

Thus women of Odisha played their most glorious and heroic role in all phases of freedom movement and played the role of social activists in post independence era. Apart from these women who have got their inspiration from their emerged as great writers, social activists and bureaucrats in the current millennium stand as role models for the younger women generation.

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## Biju Babu and District Reorganisation

*Dr. Tusar Kanta Pattnaik*

“If the area of operation gets limited and fragmented too, the managerial efficiency becomes seemingly developed and the success reaches very smoothly” once advised Napoleon Bonaparte to his military generals. Biju Patnaik who idolized Napoleon had taken a cue from his remarks, strived passionately to crystallize his long cherished desire for district reorganization. Although it was not materialized in his first tenure owing to his short stint, but in his second spell as Chief Minister, Biju Babu started with renewed vigour and unremitting zeal for district reorganization in order to make administration transparent and closer to the people.



election to the Orissa Assembly in January, 1937. The new province was then consisted of only 6 districts and the income of the new state was less than rupees two crores. The income was just enough to maintain the administrative machinery. No major development, could be undertaken with such meagre income. The immediate task of popular ministry formed in July, 1937 was to bring all the districts under one unified law. While the three coastal districts in Cuttack, Puri, and Balasore were being administered under Bengal Laws, Ganjam and Koraput districts were being administered under Madras Presidency Laws and Sambalpur being administered under Central Provinces Laws.

Since the inauguration of the new province of Orissa on 1st April 1936, which was administered by an Advisory Council consisting of the former Orissa members of Bihar and Orissa and Madras provinces council till 1937 March. A council of ministers was constituted after the

### **Formation of District after Independence :**

Government of Orissa, soon after the merger of states in 1948 declared seven new districts over and above the already existing six

districts. The new districts were Dhenkanal, Sundergarh, Mayurbhanja, Phulbani, Balangir and Kalahandi. By formation of these new districts, comprising some major and important ex-states, Government of Orissa tactfully managed to somewhat assuage the feelings of the ex-rulers and the people of those former states. There were as many as 471 districts in India in 1992 as against a total of 300 districts in India in 1952. This means that there was a rise of 57% of districts in All India level within a span of 40 years as against absolutely no rise in Orissa. Chief Minister of Orissa Naba Krushna Choudhury was contemplating to form new districts in order to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of the district administration. Government of India set a Commission for reorganization of states known as the State Reorganisation Commission (SRC) in 1955-56. The state government then decided to put forth its legitimate demands for merger of the outlying Oriya-speaking tracts of Sareikela and Kharasuan in Bihar with Orissa before the Commission. Accordingly the work started in marathon speed in a new department specially opened for the purpose under Shri Radhanath Rath, the then Development Minister in 1955 to prepare Government records and relevant documents in support of the government's stand to take its claim for Sareikela and Kharasuan in the North and other out-lying Oriya tracts in Andhra in the South and in Madhya Pradesh in the West. Shri Radhanath Rath worked day and night for months together and led unimpeachable evidence and advanced irrefutable arguments before SR Commission on behalf of the Government of Orissa to support its claim. But owing the strong Bihar lobby in Delhi, the Commission in their recommendation in 1956 rejected the demands of Orissa on the border areas in question. Following the announcements of the SRC rejecting Orissa's just and reasonable

claims of Sareikela and Kharasuan, there was a very strong movement in Orissa known as the SRC movement in 1956 which took a toll of a few lives after which Naba Babu voluntarily stepped down from the government and thus his dream of reorganization of districts could not materialize. District reorganization could not also be possible in the following years because of continued political instability in the state.

Biju Patnaik brought stability to the Government as Orissa's Chief Minister in 1961 and started the "Age in Industrialisation" in the state. Unfortunately Biju stepped down from power in October 1963 in the Kamraj Plan. Because of his busy engagements for all round industrialization of the state, reorganization of districts could not be made possible within his short tenure of Chief Ministership.

Political instability again continued in the state after Biju Patnaik left his office. However, shortly before the proclamation of President's Rule in Orissa in 1973 Government appointed a "District Reorganisation Committee" under the chairmanship of justice Raj Kishore Das which gave its report in 1975. Despite certain recommendations of this Committee, Government could not take any definite decision on reorganization of districts for want of resources or for their lack of political will till 1990.

Janata Dal in Orissa under the leadership of vibrant Biju Patnaik won the 1990 General election in a thumping majority. In its election manifesto, Janata Dal promised for reorganization of districts. Mr. Patnaik desired and evinced keen interest to give priority to district reorganization which he could not fulfill within short span of his first Chief Ministership during the year 1961-63. Biju Babu gave Revenue Minister Surendra Nayak green signal to go ahead with the onerous

task of reorganization of districts and immediately formed a cabinet sub-committee under his chairmanship for necessary guidance and timely aid and advice. The stupendous job was accomplished in time as the officers cooperated sincerely. By the beginning of October 1990 the Cabinet decided for formation of ten new districts in the state for which a grant of rupees five crores was also made. On further demands from the breadth and length of the state for creation of more and more districts, Government later on decided to form five more new districts thus making a total of 15 in all. Considering the recommendations of the 15 year old reports of the aforesaid District Reorganisation Committee and keeping in view the changes in the contemporary political, geographical, economic and social sectors and such other relevant factors and above all, the opinion of the people Government decided to form these new districts in the state. Sequel to the formation of these new districts, of course, the overhead cost of expenditure on the administration head was increased for which Government made demands to the 10<sup>th</sup> Finance Commission of India for the release of the

proportionate share of claim from the Centre on this head to meet this deficit with limited resources. Govt. also made a budget provision of Rs. 6 crores for this purpose for the year 1993-94. Even Government was ready to observe economy and timely financial austerity in case of amounts falls shorts of requirements. To achieve and implement this noble purpose of instant reorganization some inconveniences in the matter of office and residential accommodations, conveyance and vehicle, furniture and other facilities and prerequisites in the new district headquarters, was palpable but with the utmost sincerity of Biju Patnaik Government, it was gradually diminished. Finally district reorganization which was chimera for myriad Oriyas became a reality.

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## Women of Odisha : Status and Challenges

*Prof. Asha Hans*

*Dr. Amrita Patel*

The persisting subordination of women in India was brought out by the report of the Committee on the Status of Women in India (CSWI) published in 1975. The report broke the myth of women's equality which prevailed during the post-Independence years. The status of women in Odisha was not studied in a comprehensive way till 2004. This article is an attempt to update the data and analyze change in women's status. The status of women in Odisha is a complex issue and with many intricate factors of which only some have been covered in this article.

### **FEMALE SURVIVAL & MORTALITY**

#### **Sex Ratio**

Women's status is linked to the whole cycle of female survival beginning with the sex ratio which is a fundamental indicator in our understanding of inequality and female aversion.

The sex ratio in Odisha declined drastically from 1086 in 1921 to 972 in 2001. However it has improved marginally to 978 as per 2011 Census data.

The decline in Child Sex Ratio (CSR) is the main cause of concern as it continues to decline consistently from 967 in 1991 Census to 950 in 2001 Census to even lower 934 as per the 2011

Census. Low CSR shows a remarkable cluster and not a scatter. The districts with the lowest CSR in the 2011 Census data are Nayagarh (851), Dhenkanal (870), Angul (884) and Ganjam (899). The contiguity of districts with very low CSR in their urban population that is disturbing. There is a set of three adjoining districts Ganjam, Nayagarh and Boudh where the CSR (urban) are below 860 (2001 Census) a figure comparable to female to male ratio (FMR) in some of the districts of Haryana and western UP.

Outside the data and quantitative analysis provided by academics and government officials, the mass killing of the girl child before birth found public concern, as for instance the media highlight of Nayagarh District in 2007. It seems that the PCPNDT Act (1995 & 2003) has yielded little result. Easy availability and affordability of sex determination techniques coupled with the absence of proper enforcement of Acts and poor Monitoring of clinics and medical labs (registration, maintenance of Form "F" and analysis of birth and death registers / records). The legal mechanism seems inadequate to tackle the sex determination incidences whether from the demand side or the supply side.

The problem is a social one specifically linked to girl child dislike due to dowry and lack

of property rights. Simultaneously, while we need to recognize sex selective abortion as an act of discrimination, we also need to respect the right to abortion.

### **Infant Mortality Rate**

The Infant Mortality Rate (IMR) for females has remained lower than males throughout the last two decades. Overall the IMR of Odisha is 65 while that of all India is 50. Female IMR (FIMR) in the state remains one of the highest in India being 66 females per 1,000 live births, with the national figure (India) standing at 52 Rural FIMR is 68 in comparison to 55 of India. There is also a differentiation between urban FIMR in Odisha (46) in comparison to the Indian (34). The urban rural gap is also of high concern and needs special attention.

### **Maternal Mortality**

Maternal mortality in India accounts for the largest number in the world. India's MMR stands at 254 with Odisha at a much higher 303 (SRS, 2009). The NFHS 3 survey reveals that the 62.7% of the ever married women in the age group of 15 to 49 years have anemia which is one of the main causes of maternal mortality besides having low Body Mass Index (BMI). The National Rural Health Mission set up to reduce maternal mortality as one of its goals is too medical and misses out on the social component which is so important to women's health which continues to be below any normal standard of acceptance. The Janani Surakshya Yojana (JSY) under the National Rural Health Mission (2005) has been introduced to decrease MMR and IMR and increase institutional deliveries.

### **Maternal Health**

There has been some improvement in the health provisions for women in Odisha. Antenatal

care has increased from 65% found in NFHS 1 to 87% in NFHS 3. Institutional deliveries however remain low though there has been an increase from 14% (NFHS 1) to 39 % (NFHS 3). Reproductive health care is linked to hospitals and service provision and policy needs to look into the interlinkages with women's working conditions such as in agriculture.

### **Marriage & Fertility**

The silver lining is a declining age in marriage of age of below 18 years. There has been a larger decline in Odisha compared to the all India level. The rural level (39.7) as expected is higher than urban (24.3). There is also a clear role of education as those with less than 5 years of education who married below the age of 18 were 52.1% compared to those who completed 5-9 years falling as low as 29.8% and those with 10 years of literacy it fell to 9.3%. It proves the generally held notion that education plays an important role in eradicating child marriage.

Fertility rate has declined marginally from 2.5 as per NFHS 2 to 2.4 as per NFHS 3.

Several Schemes such as IMR Mission and Mortality Reduction Mission and National Rural Health Mission exist in the State to tackle the situation. What is needed is a social approach to health together with the medical and structural. Increase in decision making by women, and improving awareness, accessibility and services by making them available at the door step, would supplement the fulfillment of health indicators.

### **EDUCATION**

In the state, the establishment of the First Girls High School by Commissioner of Cuttack, Mr Ravenshaw in 1906 and the efforts of Reba Roy and Rani of Khallikote in spreading female

education in the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century indicate the emerging social awareness on the need for literacy among women. Female literacy in Odisha has been lower than male and has consistently been below the Indian level. The gender gap also remains at a high 18% (Male-82.40 and female – 64.36, 2011 Census) an indication of gender bias. As per the 2011 Census, the overall literacy stood at 73.45. As a stand alone indicator, it indicates an increase from 4.5% in 1951 to 64.36% in 2011. Women have fared better in literacy because of a number of entitlements provided by the State such as the Sarva Siksha Abhijan. Further assessment of dropouts and new methods of bringing in the girl child would bring them on an equal ground with the boys.

There is a wider gap in Scheduled Tribe (ST) literacy as girl children in many rural tribal areas remain out of school. Nabarangapur for instance has female literacy of 37.22 as per the 2011 Census, and four southern tribal districts average being low at around 37%.

There exists disparity between the general masses and indigenous people. Women from the ST communities remain excluded and though enrolment is increasing, dropout is very high. The State has taken up schemes such as provision of bicycles to ST/SC girls and special hostels but the situation remains critical in tribal areas.

## WORK PROFILE

Female work participation is considered as an important indicator of women's involvement in economic activities. As per the 1971 census the percentage of women workers in Odisha to total workers was 10.85 and increased to 31.35 by 2001, and rural work participation of women was at a higher 33.47 % while urban was only

15.45% as per 2001 Census. This is the reason for high female participation rates of the economically poor, the majority of whom reside in rural areas.

## Unorganized Sector

75% or more of women are in agriculture and many in the unorganized sector such as mining, beedi manufacturing, NTFP collection and construction work. One of the changes brought in by globalization is the extended unorganized sector within the recognized organized sector which is deprived of most benefits provided by law and agreed upon by the organized sector. This includes maternity benefit, pension and insurance. There is no social protection who work as contractual labourers in the organized sector even though they should be beneficiaries under the Factories Act, The Mines Act, The Dock Workers' Act, The Employees' State Insurance Act and the Workmen's Compensation Act which provide health benefits and compensation to the workers in cases of ill-health and injuries.

In the unorganised sector where the majority of women workers are concentrated, no occupational safety and health safeguards are in place. The female labour force constituting one third of the rural workers in India "face serious problems and constraints related to work such as lack of continuity, insecurity, wage discrimination, unhealthy job relationship, absence of medical and accident care". The tragic paradox of women's labour in the organised sector is their highly visible presence as contract labour within the public sector mines, the most patriarchal of work. Labourers by the thousands employed in head loading, stone breaking, cleaning and other forms of daily wage labour where they are entirely at the mercy of petty contractors and have absolutely no work safety or security In the

unorganised sector they are forced to work beyond work hours, even in advanced stages of pregnancy, have no leave or creche facilities, and are always under threat of being thrown out. In some of the quarries in Odisha, women are forced to work at night and are sexually abused and therefore found not to be 'respectable for marriage'. The economy of women in a patriarchal set up is linked to social norms of acceptance and rejection.

### **Employment**

Reservation of 30% jobs in Public sector for Grade B,C,D has meant higher women's employment in administration. The percentage of women in the organized sector has increased from 4.1% in 1970 to 15.4% by the end of 2007. In the high echelons of administration women constitute less than 0-14%. In comparison there has been a decline in private sector employment for women from 18.7% in 2000 to 10.8% in 2007. The employment registration indicated that only 0.35 lakh were women job seekers compared to 1.47 lakh men. We find that women usually go in for temporary and standby jobs because of the prevailing diffidence to employ women in regular full time jobs with good working conditions which are considered as expensive.

### **Domestic Work**

Another issue of contention is domestic work as an economic activity. In Odisha besides carrying out domestic work such as cooking and looking after the children women also carry out unpaid activities such as maintenance of kitchen gardens, work in household poultry, collecting firewood and cow dung, husking paddy, grinding food grain and collecting water from at least 2-5 kms distance. Unfortunately, under the age of five, girl children at the cost of their education and well

being, engage in near equal domestic activities as below 15 years and adults.

### **Micro Credit**

The network of Women Self Help Groups (WSHGs) across the State and the proliferation of Panchayats with women going above the mandated one third provide work to large numbers of women. Mission Shakti is an umbrella of women self help groups. Though large in number economically on the ground there is a weakness. As per government records there are 3.87 lakhs WSHGs with 46.5 lakh women as members with 4.38 lakh WSHGs having a credit link. In contrast as per NFHS 3, the micro credit loans are very low though knowledge of micro-credit has been found to be high. Some SHGs are doing well after being linked to Mid Day Meals of various schools. Other SHGs have started to tie up with MNCs and Micro Finance Institutions. There is a risk factor in such linkages as they work only for profit while SHGs need a social safety net as they are composed of very poor and mostly illiterate women. The increase in their burden of work through Government entrusting them with too many schemes to run, can also have a deterrent effect as most women have heavy household duties.

### **MGNREGA**

MGNREGA has been introduced as a social net for accessing work for at least 100 days, but in the context of women certain problems have emerged. Among these are the issues related to hard labour by women who are pregnant, single women who have no partners and lower wages. Leaves out old age who are most vulnerable. There has also been less work and low and delayed wages. NREGA together with RTI has emerged as powerful tools to strengthen those outside the formal economy such as women and

these should be monitored and taken advantage of.

### **Trafficking, Migration and Displacement**

As the state joins in the race for globalization there are the adverse effects of displacement, migration and trafficking experienced by women which need urgent attention. Some are forced to move while in the case of others little work and low literacy combine to women moving out to new pastures which unfortunately are unsafe. Exploitation by agents in Delhi, forces them to leave their jobs as domestic workers to join other women in sex work. Some migrate as far as Haryana and Punjab to marry four-five brothers in the restructuring of the mythological Draupadi. Unfortunately they remain sex slaves at night and unpaid farm workers in the day.

About 50% of migrants from Odisha are from the tribal districts women. They go to Hyderabad or Raipur or within the State to Bhubaneswar, to work in brick kilns where they are paid Rs.80 per 1000 bricks made, which normally takes 12 to 15 hours and involves physical labour. They migrate as access to PDS is low, food for work is inadequate to ensure food security. Frequent droughts make agricultural productivity low and availability of work throughout the year is low.

Issues that affect the women migrants are low wages, non payment of wages, gender disparity in wages, forced sex work and trafficking, violence, increased domestic violence and exploitation of single women. There is a lack of education and neglect of children's education, lack of health services for self as well as children and absence of social network in the destination. Food insecurity and malnutrition follows them into migrant territory. There is also lack of legal mechanism for protection and no awareness

among the women on rights and facilities of protection. Prosecution under the Inter State Migrant Workers Act is low as seen from the data of the Labour Department, Government of Odisha. In the years 2000-01 and 2001-02, only 95 and 53 cases have been filed out of which 7 and 13 cases have been disposed respectively. There is a need to empower migrant women and make migration safe.

Due to construction of large dams, establishment of large industries, defence related production, wild life sanctuaries and communal riots, people are being displaced in large numbers. While in migration women go out for a few months, those who are displaced lose their homes and communities permanently. They face the same problems as migrant women, some are born in camps and suffer much more. In Lanjigarh for instance where a large industry has been set up there is large scale sexual abuse of women and trafficking. The law in place in Odisha relating to Rehabilitation does not make any specific provision for women.

### **WOMEN IN POLITICS**

In politics beginning with women joining the freedom movement, to 2009 where elections reflected the sorry status of women in politics in Odisha it has been a struggle. No woman from Odisha is represented in the Lok Sabha. In the Assembly there are only 7 women. Women's inclusion in parties ranged from 8 in BJD to 15 in Congress but their own strength is emerging as 37 women stood as independents in the last national elections. Due to exclusion from political decision making their impact on the state would remain limited, so more women need to be included in the political process. The State has already implemented 50% of seat reservation in Panchayats for women.



## **MARGINALIZATION WITHIN MARGINALIZATION**

There are vulnerabilities among the 13 % of women belonging to single headed households. The women with disabilities (WWD) are marginalized.

## **TRANSPARENCY & ACCOUNTABILITY: GENDER BUDGETING**

One measure of accountability is the amount of money spent on women's programmes. It is important as ensuring equality cannot be achieved unless there are committed funds available for implementing the various policies and schemes introduced by the government. Recent data indicates that though expenditure for social services has been increasing but Women Specific programmes constitute less than 1% of it. Almost all the women specific programmes are concentrated in the Department of Women & Child Development but it has to be noted that the women component planning mandates that all sectors should have 30% of its resources to be allocated for women. The new approach is to enlarge the scope to gender audit which looks at the impact on women of allocations and expenditure.

## **CONCLUSION**

With poor women left with few economic alternatives, as agriculture shrinks and women's access to credit is limited and the dangers of the Micro-Finance Bill looms large; there is a need to open minds and visions on these concerns and specificities of women's situation in the economy. Patriarchy and feudal structure strengthen in these situations and we need to be aware of this danger. There is a need for inclusion of the very poor, the disabled and marginalized. Under these situations education and political power will assist to climb barriers.

Governmental initiatives have been sensitive to women's needs but more concrete steps are needed such as gender audit to know whether the efforts are bearing fruit or not. While the norms of globalization becomes binding on elected representatives and governments, it is however imperative that the policies, programmes and schemes are gender sensitive and not gender neutral.

Women are moving forward in every field motivated by the urge to excel and to find their own space in this universe. Their efforts in politics at the Panchayat level changed the power equation at the local level. Women's agency has emerged as a powerful indicator of the search for justice and equality. They are using their advantages wherever they can and there are more sectors they have entered as engineers, computer analysts and even venturing to space sciences and industry.

We need to build on this advancement of women in Odisha and create a society where we respect women and their human rights.

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## A Different Freedom Fighter, Biju

*Gurukalyan Mahapatra*

Biju Patnaik, during his formative years, was highly influenced by Utkal Gourav Madhusudan Das and Utkalmani Gopabandhu Das. He was also attracted by Mahatma Gandhi which led him to the freedom struggle for this nation.

He took active part in Quit India Movement of 1942, along with Aruna Asaf Ali and other socialists and was involved in underground activities against the British rulers. He was imprisoned by the then British Government from 1943 to 1946 and detained in Red Fort, New Delhi, Ferozpur, Lahore and Cuttack etc jails.

He was brave. His flying skills were highly appreciated. He landed the plane boldly which boarded first platoon of soldiers in Srinagar against the Pakistani radars in 1947. The first Prime Minister of this country, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru affectionately used to call Biju as 'India's buccaneer'. Former Prime Minister, Mr.I.K.Gujral recalling Biju, admitted his

versatility and daredevilry. According to him, Biju Dada, became a living legend in his young life.

When Biju was working for Royal Air Force, his house was the centre for underground freedom struggle. Dr.Ram Manohar Lohia, Jay Prakash Naryan Aurana Asaf Ali and other socialists used to launch their struggle from Biju Patnaik's house. Even Biju carried them by plane to various destinations. Biju was not only an pilot, but was head of Transport Command of the Royal Air Force of Southern Asia of Britishers. Several times, Biju narrowly escaped death while in plane.

A noted trade union leader and former Defence Minister Mr.George

Fernandes, thus remembered Biju, 'He made a significant contribution in 1942 movement and at the last of the movement, when he was arrested; he escaped from the death sentence. It is not necessary to discuss right now as to how he



Biju Patnaik with his father Laxminarayan

managed to escape. It was his luck and luck of the country that he managed to escape for he had yet to deliver many things for the country.

After independence the emergency was declared in this country and many leaders were in jail. Mr. Atal Bihari Vajpayee, a veteran leader (also former Prime Minister) in his condolence references in the Parliament on 21st April, 1997, mentioned. 'I also got the opportunity to work with him for a brief time-period, however, I shall always carry this regret that I did not get the opportunity of being in his company at the time when he was put in Rohtak jail during the emergency. Those who were with him in prison relate how he bore all the hardships in the prison stoically and as a good companion helped the other inmates to pass that crucial time... A Prison in such a place where the true personality of a person comes to the fore and his real nature comes out. Shri Pilu Modi was also in the same prison as Biju Babu. Both were from rich families and were used to high standard of life. But when they were imprisoned, they did not air any grievances to make any complaints. Probably this

was the result of the qualities he had developed as a pilot during the Freedom Struggle.

Biju Patnaik was known for his patriotism and bravery not only in India, but also abroad. He was associated with the Indonesia Freedom Movement and was honoured by the Indonesian Government and got the title as Bhumi Putra (Son of the Soil). At the risk of his life he had then brought the Indonesian Premier Mr. Sultan Saharir to New Delhi by plane during the Freedom Struggle in Indonesia. After our independence Biju was closely associated with the Nepalese Democratic Movement in 1953.

Biju Pattnaik's role as a freedom fighter should be written in our Indian history as he was associated with the building of the fortunes of this country.

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## Women and Media Ethics

*Dr. Jayanti Jagadev*

Media is the means or medium through which information is shared by people at large. The objective of Media ethics is to protect and promote the interest of readers, listeners, and viewers and people in general. It spells out the news for news writers and editors to ensure objectivity and accuracy in presentation of facts or information. Objectivity should be the watch word of a medium person. There should never be any room for distorted information amounting to misrepresentation of truths. Media fails to discharge its bounden obligation, if accuracy is not maintained. Facts must be presented without exaggeration or distortion so that they remain immune to possible public resentment or adverse legal proceedings.

If stating the facts are prejudicial to the interest of the individual and the society, it is better that such truths be not made public.

Yellow journalism is used pejoratively to refer to journalistic practices that focus on scandals and scams by publishing sensational news, especially involving key celebrities and women. Tabloid journalism essentially offers an independent perspective. Thereby it stands distinguished from other competing media agencies. They feature local developments and entertaining contents. Bias of any kind is contrary

to the canons of journalism. Integrity, Independence and accountability constitute the core principles of journalistic ethics. Media ought to respect the privacy of individuals such obligation stems from the right to privacy on part of the individual. Names of photographs of visitors of rape, abduction and sexual assault leading to their identification are not to be published.

Media should exercise caution by way of catering information so that it doesn't become unfair in relation to a person, group or community. Media should have due respect for the indigenous tradition, culture and sentiments of the people. It is unhealthy to hurt the sentiment of a group or community. Commercialism is permissible to the extent it doesn't violate the basic ethical standards.

Women are now seriously examining how the developments in the media since globalization has engendered or hindered their progress and struggle for equality. As a powerful socialising agent, media has become an important tool as well as site of struggle for women seeking to eliminate sexism and violence against women.

The role of media remains crucial in communicating and popularising women's issues, concerns, and actions from women's perspective. Media otherwise has the power to shut out and further make invisible the women's agenda.

The globalized media, caters information designed to build up a consumer-oriented culture. The media's target readership is urban, westernised, rich and middle class consumers. There is at times complete negligence of gender related issues. Women in the globalized media are seen mostly as consumers as well as commodities.

Print media has undergone profound changes in the last two decades. Both vernacular and English print media has had a compound impact on the readers. Women and women related issues and news are presented more but in a context and perspective which may not be empowering. Visual media has engulfed the lives of people. TV too has done its bit in promulgating women issues.

A study conducted by 'Sansristi' a center for gender development, aims to read critically the representation of portrayal of Women in the print and visual media. The study covered both national and local dailies, Magazines and also the T.V. programmes. A local news paper 'Dharitri' rarely provides news on rural and marginalized women in the state, who are hit the most by the

onslaught of globalization. The news paper usually carries provocative and advertisement exposing women's bodies and depicting female sexuality. This certainly defeats media ethics. A local magazine 'Kadambini' mainly depict women as only capable of doing household work and wearing loads of jewellery. The magazine focuses on the upper class life style, consumerism and the luxuries, which have become an indispensable part of the upper crust of the society. Issues relating to the marginalized women and the day to day reality of women are completely sidelined. Media covers the marginalized women but marginally. The most disturbing fact is that media is more inclined towards the elites, not to these women, towards glamour not towards struggle and empowerment.

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## Co-operative Movement in Odisha : Highlights of Progress

*Sonali Senapati*

Co-operative Institutions play a vital role in Socio-economic upliftment of the rural people. These institutions have been assigned a place of paramount importance in the process of planned development. Prior to launching of First Five Year Plan in the country the Co-operative Societies Act, 1904 was enacted during British rule. It may be mentioned here that Odisha has been one of the pioneering States in the Country in respect of co-operative movement as the first Co-operative Society, namely, Cuttack Cooperative Store was established in the year 1898 under the leadership of Utkal Gourab Madhusudan Das. This heralded the beginning of Co-operative movement in Odisha. Thereafter, three Credit Co-operative Societies were organized in Banki in the year 1903. The same co-operative societies were merged with Banki Central Co-operative Bank in the year 1910. The Directorate of Registrar, Co-operative Societies in Odisha started functioning in the year 1917. The Orissa Co-operative Land Development Act, 1938 was the first Co-operative Legislation after formation of Odisha as a separate State on 1st April, 1936. The Orissa Co-operative Societies Act, 1951 was enacted in the year 1951. This Act was substituted by the Orissa Co-operative Societies Act, 1962 which is in vogue. The Orissa Self-Help Co-operative Act, 2001 was enacted in the year 2001 and came into force w.e.f. 1st June, 2002. Thus, it may be seen that the growth of Co-operative

Movement in Odisha has been backed by a series of legislative measures in the State.

### Structure of Cooperative Societies - District Wise

There are 4336 Co-operative Societies functioning under the control of Registrar, Co-operative Societies, Odisha as revealed from the statistics prepared by Registrar, Cooperative Societies. The District-wise Co-operative Societies are presented in the table below.

**TABLE NO. I**

As on 31.03 2008

SI. No.	Name of the District	No. of Co-operative Societies
1	Angul	159
2	Balasore	220
3	Bargarh	112
4	Bhadrak	132
5	Bolangir	233
6	Boudh	52
7	Cuttack	406
8	Deogarh	36
9	Dhenkanal	134
10	Gajapati	58
11	Ganjam	494

12	Jagatsinghpur	166
13	Jajpur	158
14	Jharsuguda	47
15	Kalahandi	97
16	Kendrapara	168
17	Keonjhar	93
18	Khurda	373
19	Koraput	64
20	Malkangiri	15
21	Mayurbhanj	118
22	Nuapada	31
23	Nayagarh	190
24	Nawarangpur	21
25	Kandhamal	36
26	Puri	272
27	Rayagada	41
28	Sambalpur	90
29	Subarnapur	93
30	Sundargarh	227
		<b>4336</b>

*Source:* Registrar of Co-operative Societies, Odisha

It may be seen that Ganjam district has the highest number of 494 Co-operative Societies whereas the district of Malkangiri has the lowest number of 15 Co-operative Societies. It is seen that the districts like Deogarh, Gajapati, Jharsuguda, Malkangiri, Nuapada, Nawarangpur, Kandhamal and Rayagada have less than fifty Co-operative Societies. It is necessary that in these districts efforts should be made to strengthen the Co-operative movement by way of organizing Co-operative Societies for the benefit of farmers and poor people.

When we analyse the position with regard to the numbers of Co-operative Societies, membership and working capital for the State as a whole the following table indicates the picture from the year 1998-99 to the year 2007-08.

**TABLE NO.2**

(Rs. in lakhs)

Year	No. of Co-operative Societies	Membership	Working Capital
1998-1999	4832	5416000	543847
1999-2000	4948	5600000	578263
2000-2001	4986	5729000	671254
2001-2002	4886	5765000	756533
2002-2003	4723	5700000	839647
2003-2004	4657	5940000	945743
2004-2005	4636	6218000	1015227
2005-2006	4626	6294000	1145973
2006-2007	4565	6355000	127483
2007-2008	4336	6485000	1404322

*Source:* Registrar of Co-operative Societies, Odisha.

The data presented in the Table No.2 indicate that there was a total number of 4832 Co-operative Societies in the year 1998-99. The number of Co-operative Societies has come down to 4336 in the year 2007-08. This shows that some societies must have been liquidated during the period. However, the membership of co-operative societies which was 5416000 in the year 1998-99 has increased to 6485000 in the year 2007-08. When we analyse the position with regard to Working Capital, it may be seen that total working Capital of co-operative societies in the year 1998-99 was Rs.543847 lakhs. Working capital of these societies has increased up to Rs.1404322 lakhs. This shows marked improvement in the working capital of co-operative societies over the years.

### **Performance of Short-Term and Medium-Term Credit Cooperative Structure**

The Short-Term and Medium-Term Credit Structure in the Co-operative Sector



include 2694 Primary Agricultural Co-operative Societies (PACS) at the grass-root level, 17 Central Co-operative Banks (DCCB) at the middle level and Orissa State Cooperative Bank at the apex level. This structure has been functioning very well over the years, although performance of PACS has not been uniformly good in the past. Orissa State Co-operative Bank is one of the most efficiently performing apex Co-operative Banks in the country. This Bank has been earning profit since its inception in 1948. It is noteworthy that 46.33 lakhs agricultural families have been brought under the short-term credit co-operative sector out of a total of 52.89 lakh agricultural families in the State as on 31.03.2009 covering 85 % of total agricultural families. KISSAN Credit Card Scheme has been extended in respect of 39.37 lakhs members as on 31.03.2010. Short-Term credit advanced by the Co-operative Societies in the State accounts for about 70 % of the total short-term credit given to the farmers. This shows that Co-operative Bank and Primary Agricultural Co-operative Societies (PACs) have taken the load of much larger share of short-term credit vis-à-vis Commercial Banks and RRBs. An innovative package known as Kalinga Kissan Gold Card has been adopted for rewarding the defaulting-free farmer members. Kalinga Kissan Gold Card allows an incentive @ 0.5 % in addition to interest subvention schemes.

Crop loan of Rs.3396.39 crores has been provided to 20.35 lakh farmer members in 2010-11. The market share of Co-operative Bank vis-à-vis Commercial Banks and RRBs in dispersion of crop loan in the State is 64%. Interest subvention schemes announced by Government of India to provide crop loan at 7% rate of interest to farmers along with an additional 2 % subvention granted by the State Government has been adopted in the State. There is also an additional 2% interest subvention if there is timely repayment.

### **Promotion of Self-Help Groups**

Co-operative institutions have played a prominent role in promotion and credit linkage of Self-Help Groups in general and Women Self-Help Groups in particular. In the year 2007-08 52,863 Self-Help Groups have been promoted with low cost deposit mobilization of Rs.56.55 crores and credit linkage to the extent of Rs.72.73 crores. In case of Women Self-Help Groups 48,712 Women Self-Help Groups have been promoted with mobilization of deposit to the extent of Rs.25.43 crores and credit linkage of Rs.70.11 crores.

### **Involvement in Paddy Procurement Operation**

Since Odisha is primarily a paddy growing State sale of paddy by the farmers at minimum support price has been a matter of serious concern. The farmers were prone to distress sale of paddy. Short-Term credit co-operatives have taken the initiative of market intervention and participated effectively in procurement of paddy. 1630 nos. of PACS have actively participated in paddy procurement during the year 2010-11. A total amount of Rs.16.80 lakh M.T. of paddy was procured by PACS. Paddy procurement initiatives by PACS have helped the PACS to improve their financial position.

### **Long-Term Co-operative Sector**

OSCARD Bank with 46 CARD BANKS is functioning in the State to cater the needs of long-term agricultural credit. To cater the credit needs of the farmer members in the year 2004-05 this sector could provide loan of Rs.7.54 crores. Since then no loan has been provided as the recovery position was not good for the Bank and there was adverse finance situation in the Bank.

There are 14 Co-operative Urban Banks (including one Utkal Co-operative Banking Society Ltd.) providing access to bank services in urban and semi-urban areas. During 2007-08 a sum of Rs.615.02 crores has been mobilized as deposit and Rs.415.43 crores had been advanced to its members.

### **State Co-operative Union and Training Centres**

There is a State Co-operative Union known as Orissa State Co-operative Union which has four centers of Co-operative Management Training Institutes and 17 field level Co-operative Training Centers at the level of each Central Co-operative Bank which are imparting co-operative training in the State. Besides, Madhu Sudan Institute of Cooperative Management, Bhubaneswar under the National Council for Co-operative Training sponsored by the National Co-operative Union of India is facilitating basic training and orientation in the co-operative sector.

In the marketing sector the MARKFED at the apex level is functioning for distribution of fertilizer through Buffer godowns, depots and sale points. Out of 51 Regional Co-operative Marketing Societies (RCMS), 28 RCMS have undertaken business in distribution of fertilizer.

### **Implementation of Revival Package of Short-Term Co-operative Credit in Odisha**

Odisha is 2nd State after Andhra Pradesh to accept the recommendation of Vaidyanathan Committee for revitalization of Short-Term Credit Co-operatives. Memorandum of Understanding was signed by Government of India, NABARD and Government of Odisha on 26th November, 2006. The process of Special Audit of Primary Agriculture Society was completed by March, 2007. A total amount of Recapitalization Assistance under Revitalization package to the extent of Rs.662.23 crores had been released to

2514 PACS. This revival package has strengthened the financial position of PACS in the State as a result the PACS are in a position to carry out short-term credit operation mainly for the farmers in the State. Assistance has also been given to 17 DCCBs (District Central Co-operative Banks) to the extent of Rs.132.19 crores.

Co-operative Movement in Odisha has progressed in the State for more than a century. Various Co-operative Institutions in the credit sector, consumer sector, marketing sector, industrial sector, housing sector and storage and processing sector etc. have expanded during this period. The performance of Co-operative Institutions in recent years after implementation of Vaidyanathan Committee Recommendations has improved significantly in the State. However, reform measures which are under implementation should be completed so as to bring about further improvement in performance.

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# Women Participation in Rural Local Self - Governance System in Odisha : A Constitutional and Reservational Perspective

*Dr. Benudhar Rout, N.T. Sahu*

## **Introduction:**

The actual function of Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) which is otherwise known as institutions of rural local self governance is of greater significance now more than ever before. Institutions of rural local governance are considered as partners of the Central and State Governments in carrying out development functions. Article 243-G introduced by the 73rd Amendment to the Constitution empowers State Governments to vest powers and responsibilities with village Panchayats to prepare plans for their socio-economic development and ensure social justice to the people through implementation of different schemes with their active participation.

There is a continuous effort on the part of Government through policy-makers to evolve systems and mechanisms to enable institutions of rural local governance to perform and deliver their new roles more effectively and efficiently. The objectives of institutions of rural local self governance are only realized to the expected extent to which it is translated on the ground. But it can only be translated through proper participation of elected representatives of institutions of rural local self governance especially the women representatives.

In Odisha, women constitute a very little bit less than 50 per cent of the state's population. Despite some favourable traditional values and customs and emergence of powerful women personalities, the position of women is not very rosy. Their socio-economic status is, however, relatively low and they are discriminated in all walks of life. For centuries, women have been confined to home and suppressed and deprived of their rights to get a fair treatment from the male dominated society. Development of women has, therefore, been one of the major issues in Odisha. Right from independence, gender discrimination has been identified as one of the most serious and debatable issues. After independence, it was realized that potentials of a state cannot be harnessed unless women became equal partners in the development process. Indian Constitution has made special provisions to ensure women's rights. To safeguard various constitutional rights of women, the Government has enacted women-specific and women-related legislations. In addition to Constitutional provisions and socio-legal legislations, various women specific policies meant to promote their development have also been initiated. All the Five Year Plans have given importance to the development of women, with a major objective of raising their economic and social status. Following various social and

economic development programmes, the next logical step was to enhance the participation of women in the decision - making process. One of the negative consequences of slow rate of transformation in the status of women is the low level of participation in the decision making and implementation of programmes and policies meant for them. Participation, to be meaningful, should start at the grassroot level where implementation of programmes takes place. Local level governance is a means to ensure democratic functioning and participation in decision making. So, efforts to ensure the participation of women in decision making process at the local level acquire special significance.

### **Women Participation through Constitutional Obligations:**

Rural local self governance system i.e. Panchayati Raj is one of the most important political innovations of independent India. It is a proper channel for equal and popular participation in the process of rural governance and development both by men and women. Before independence the Franchise Committee set up by the British Government discussed the Constitution of statutory village Panchayats, but did not consider the question of representation of women in PRIs on the contention that the then women did not even have the right to franchise. As a result, in the first set of Acts of the 1920s of the provinces and the princely states, women did not participate as representatives or even as voters. This is in the line with the ideologies prevalent during that point of time. In the year 1923, for the first time, the names of women appeared in the electoral rolls and in the year 1926, the first woman member was nominated to the Indian legislature. In the year 1931 women demanded for universal adult franchise but are said to have opposed against reservation, nominations or co-

options for women. In our country, the demand for women's representation at higher levels of political decision making process has been continuing till today. Way back in the year 1931, Lady Tata during the Indian National Congress Session had lamented the absence of women members in the legislative assemblies, as she felt that women members could have voiced the feelings of their sisters with greater clarity and force than men.

After independence, it was realized that India's potentials cannot be harnessed or realized unless women became equal partners in development and governance of the state affairs. Indian Constitution has made adequate provisions to ensure rights of women. Following various social and economic development programmes, the next logical step was to enhance the participation of women in the decision making process. Participation of women in PRIs has great importance, as the objective of constituting local governance is to encourage local leadership according to the developmental needs of the rural villages.

As constitutional mandate, the constitution of India guarantees equality of sexes and in fact grants special favours to women. These can be found in the different Articles of the Constitution. Article 14 states that the Government shall not deny to any person equality before law or the equal protection of laws. Article 15 declares that Government shall not discriminate against any citizen on the ground of sex. Article 15(3) makes a special provision enabling the state to make affirmative discriminations in favour of women. Above all and most importantly the Constitution imposes a fundamental duty on every citizen though Article 15(A)(3) to renounce the practices derogatory to the dignity of women. The Directive Principles of State Policy articulates the key policy

goals of the Indian welfare state. A duty is cast upon the State to provide for an appropriate policy, enabling conditions, congenial environment to its citizens for fulfillment of means of livelihood for men and women equally. Article 38, 39(a), 39(d), 39(e), 41, 42, 43 and 51(1) etc. are specially and exclusively dealt with welfare of women at par man. Article 325 of the Constitution guarantees political equality to women and prohibits exclusion from the electoral rolls on the basis of sex, caste, religion etc. Article 326 of the Constitution guarantees equal political status to every citizen of India including women. Articles 14, 15, 16 and 19 of the Constitution of India and the Representation of Peoples Act provides for equal participation of women in political process.

To protect and promote the rights of women and to encourage them to participate in all the affairs of governance, some international covenants have also been passed and as assented by the state parties including India. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948, the International Covenant on Political and Civil Rights 1966, the UN Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, 1966 etc are instrumental to eliminate all forms of discrimination against women on the ground of sex, marital status by guaranteeing enjoyment of fundamental rights and freedom in social, economic and cultural field. The United Nations initiatives namely UN Convention on Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) is another important international initiative instrumental for determining women centered policy measures by all the countries of world including India. According to the above international initiatives, unless women are involved in the decision and policy-making process at all levels of the governance, changes in women's

political and to some extent social and economic status will continue to be marginal.

On the above context, in India, under the existing laws of the land and as per planning and policy measures, important initiatives have been undertaken by the Government to ensure equal status of women in the country. The Committee on the Status of Women in India (CSWI)<sup>1</sup> set up in the year 1971 to look into different aspects of status of women in India including their political participation and released its report in 1974. The Report of the "Committee on the Status of Women in India (CSWI) —Towards Equality, 1974" noted the ineffectiveness of the representation of women in Panchayat's governance system and it recommended for a statutory separate 'All Women's Panchayat' at the village level to ensure better and greater participation of women in the political process. It also started initiatives and efforts to encourage participation of women in the rural local governance as well as urban governance systems. The Committee also recommended for the system of reservation for women in the Legislative bodies which was opposed by some members of the Committee, representatives of political parties and women's organisations as a retrograde step from the equality conferred by the Constitution [Sharma, 1998:27].

The National Education Policy, 1986 and the 'Report of the National Commission on Self Employed Women' and 'Women in the Informal Sector — Shramshakti, 1988', the 'National Perspective Plan for Women 1988-2000 AD' of the Government of India and the 'National Policy for Women 2001' etc have also made significant contributions to the understanding and finding solutions for issues relating to women participation in India. The above measures are mostly instrumental for ensuring participation of women in local governance in India.

Besides, the above women specific measures undertaken by the Government, the women's participation in the local governance was started with the recommendations the Balwant Rai Gopalji Mehta's Team Report. The Report of the study team on Community Projects and National Extension Service Programme (Committee on Plans and Projects) Balwant Rai Mehta Committee Report, New Delhi. Nov. 1957, Vol.I) also recommends for women's representation in PRIs. In the words of the Committee "in regard to the constitution of Panchayat, we suggest that this should be purely on an elective basis, but that there may be a provision for the co-option of two women members and one member each from the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in conditions similar to those prescribed for the Panchayat Samiti, we do not consider that members of any other special group need any special representation either by election or by cooption."<sup>2</sup>

The Central Council of Local Self Government at its third meeting held in 1957 decided that the elected representatives in each Block Panchayat will co-opt two women who are interested to work among women and children. This was in line with the recommendations made during the time by the Balwant Rai Mehta Study Team (1957) which recommended co-option of two women in Panchayat bodies for the purpose of 'participation'. The fourth meeting of the Central Council of Local Self Government in the year 1958 also recommended for approximately half of the total members in Panchayats to be women if the Panchayats were to be real representative body of the people. The Council further suggested that till that stage is reached at least two seats should be reserved for women. It was also felt by the Council that having two women was

preferable compared to a solitary woman [Buch 2001].<sup>3</sup> The Balwant Rai Mehta Committee was followed by Ashok Mehta Committee, which was appointed in December 1977. The Ashok Mehta Committee recommended for two-tiers of local self Governments at Mandal and Zilla levels. The Committee also recommended for the co-option of two women as members of both at Zilla and Mandal level. The Report of Ashok Mehta Committee<sup>4</sup> also recommended for reservation of two seats for women in Panchayats and two co-option women members in case they did not come through elections. The Committee also suggested for a Committee of women to be set up within Panchayats to operate specific programmes for women and children. The Ashok Mehta Committee was followed by G.V.K. Rao Committee in the year 1985 and M.L. Singhvi Committee, 1986 which also tried to make PRIs more viable and effective with the popular participation of both male and female. Finally, the revival of rural governance system culminated into giving the desired constitutional status through the Constitution (64th Amendment) Bill, 1989 which was an attempt to amend the constitution of India to give constitutional status to the PRIs and to encourage the participation of women in the rural governance system through the provision of reservation of seats in all the 3-tiers of rural local governance system. But, unfortunately the Bill was defeated in the Rajya Sabha and could not take a shape due to political reasons.

### **73rd Constitutional Amendment Act, Instrumental for Women Participation**

The historic 73rd constitutional amendment was passed and came into force with effect from 24th April, 1993. The most significant and salient features of the 73 Amendment Act is

the provision of reservation of 1/3rd of seats for women in all the 3-tiers of rural local governance system. It lays down in Article 243D (3) that not less than one third of the total number of seats to be filled by direct election in every Panchayat shall be reserved for women and that such seats may be allotted by rotation to different constituencies in a Panchayat. The Constitutional amendment further lays down in Article 243-D (1) that seats shall be reserved for the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in every Panchayat and Article 243-D (2) states that not less than one third of the total number of the seats reserved under clause (1) shall be reserved for women belonging to the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. The number of seats reserved for the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes women would be allotted by rotation to different constituencies in a Panchayat. Article 243-D(4) provides that the office of the Chairperson in the Panchayats at the village or any other level shall also be reserved for, women and such reservation shall not be less than one-third of the total number of offices of Chairpersons in the Panchayats at each level. The offices so reserved at the level of the Chairperson would also be allotted by rotation to different Panchayats at each level. Besides, where there are no women Chairpersons at all 3-tiers of Panchayati Raj system, the post of Vice-Chairman shall be reserved for women at all levels of rural local governance. After this constitutional amendment, a large number of women have been elected to the PRIs as a result of the mandatory reservational provisions. The reservation provision under the Constitutional 73rd Amendment Act, 1993 made to ensure that women play a major role in rural local self governance system. It also provided women an opportunity to demonstrate their potential and to prove their capability as partners in the process of rural development by participating with their male counterparts.

### **Rural Local Governance in Odisha and Women Participation :**

Odisha is one of the pioneering states in the field of Panchayati Raj initiatives in India. Soon after the independence of our country, the Government of Odisha enacted Orissa Gram Panchayat Act in 1948. After that Panchayat Samiti and Zilla Parishad Act, 1959 was enacted and executed on 26th January 1961 in Odisha. Biju Babu when became Chief Minister during sixties, he had made concrete efforts to revitalize Panchayati Raj system. He is one of the pioneers in the field of women participation who strongly advocated for women participation in the local governance system in Odisha. His vision and policy was to empower the Panchayati Raj system with powers and active participation of women. In fact during his second term as Chief Minister (1990-95) and under his dynamic leadership, Odisha became the first state in India to implement the sound provisions of 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act, 1992 in advance to give opportunities to the women by making reservation of 1/3rd seats for them and women belonging to Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribes out of the total seats. It also adds to the credit of Biju Babu that after a long gap he conducted Panchayat elections in Odisha in the year 1992. He was an ardent advocate of devolution of funds, functions and functionaries to the PRIs and was most emphatic about participation of women in the rural local governance system. For the first time in the history of independent India, women were given 30% reservation in the three-tier PRIs in Odisha prior to implementation of 73rd amendment Act. He was bold and broad in his vision and approach to ensure the participation of women in rural local self governance systems in Odisha. Biju Babu was also emphatically emphasized on the political and

administrative training and orientation of elected women representatives to acquire skill and knowledge on politics and administration. His proactive vision was that local Government is the level of Government where women can enter into political life with relative ease, as the costs of mounting election campaigns are relatively low and issues at the local level tend to motivate women to enter politics. Further, local Governments are good training grounds for women politicians who want to reach higher levels of elected or appointed office in Government.

At present, Odisha has three-tier system of rural local self Government system — the first tier being at the village level i.e. Gram Panchayat, the second tier at the Block level i.e. Panchayat Samiti and the third at the district level i.e. Zilla Parishad and 50% of seats for women has been reserved in all the tiers. The present Panchayati Raj structure of Odisha includes 30 Zilla Parishads with 854 elected Zilla Parishad Members, 314 Panchayat Samitis with 6,235 elected Panchayat Samiti Members, 6236 Gram Panchayats including 6,236 elected Sarpanchs and 87,551 elected Ward Members out of which 46,643 Women Ward Members constitute the rural local governance system. Thus, in Odisha now there is a total of 1,00,876<sup>5</sup> elected representatives in the three-tier rural local self governance system out of which 50% women elected members that underlines the importance of women participation in the three-tier rural local self governance system.

### **Reservational Participation of Women in Rural Local Self Governance:**

As a constitutional mandate under the 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act 1992, provisions have been made for reservation of seats for women in the 3-tier rural local governance

system in Odisha like other states. Accordingly and prior to the present 50% reservations for women in the 3-tier rural local bodies, reservations were made for women upto 33% in all rural local bodies as per the provisions of Orissa Gram Panchayat Act 1964, The Orissa Panchayat Samiti Act, 1960 and The Orissa Zilla Parishad Act, 1991 as modified and amended up to date. The objectives of reservation for women in the above three important Acts was to encourage women to participate in the rural local governance system through the provision of reservations. Hence, it may be called as reservational participation of women in rural local self governance system. The rationale for reservations for women and other disadvantaged groups in the rural local self governance system intended to give voice and therefore influence to these disadvantaged groups in local governance. According to political theorist Anne Phillips(1995) the 'politics of presence' can provide such groups with guaranteed representation in public institutions - such as quotas in law making bodies, so that they may effectively represent their own needs and interests. The visionary leader of Odisha, Biju Patnaik for the first time in the history of independent India, announced that women will be given 33% reservation in the three- tier rural local governance systems since he was most emphatic about the participation of women in the rural local governance system i.e. Panchayati Raj Institutions. According to his announcement, the Orissa Gram Panchayat Act 1964, the Orissa Panchayat Samiti Act, 1959 were amended by Orissa Assembly during 1991 and 1992 and the Orissa Zilla Parishad Act, 1991 was enacted by the Orissa Assembly in 1991 and that provided 33% reservations for women in conformity with the 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act, 1992.



As a mandate and according to the above constitutional and legal provisions, the general Panchayat elections were held in Odisha during 1992 and a total of 28,069<sup>6</sup> women representatives were elected for the first time to the 3-tier rural local governance system from 5,262 Gram Panchayats. This is the first Panchayat election in Odisha where such a large number of women representatives were elected to the 3-tier structure of rural local governance system to participate in the local governance system.

The next general elections to PRIs were held in Odisha in the year 1997. The abstracts of total elected representatives of rural local governance structure system along with women

elected representatives of 30 districts of Odisha elected to the rural local self governance system during the Panchayat General Elections 1997<sup>7</sup> are given in detail below Table-1.

The Table-1 reveals that during 1997 General Panchayat Elections, out of total 92,452 elected PRI members, women constitute only 32,621 of total elected members.

Similarly, the abstracts of total elected members of PRI structure along with women elected representatives of 30 districts of Odisha elected to the three-tiers rural local self governance, system during the Panchayat General Elections 2002<sup>8</sup> mentions below in the following table:

**Table - 1**

<b>General Panchayat Elections 1997 - Status of Women Participation in Odisha</b>						
PRI Elected Members	Total Elected Members	Scheduled Caste(SC) Women	Scheduled Tribe(ST) Women	Backward Class women (BCCW)	Reserved for Women (RW)	Total Elected Women Members
Ward Member	81,077	6,348	8,060	6,858	7,329	28,595
Sarpanch	5,261	396	579	0	887	1,862
Panchayat Samiti Member	5,260	399	562	411	498	1,870
Zilla Parishad Members	854	54	86	63	91	294
	<b>92,452</b>	<b>7,197</b>	<b>9,287</b>	<b>7,332</b>	<b>8,805</b>	<b>32,621</b>

**Table-2 - General Panchayat Elections 2002 - status of women participation in Odisha**

PRI Elected Members	Total PRI Elected Members	Scheduled Caste Women	Scheduled Tribe Women	Backward class Women (BCCW)	Reserved for Women (RW)	Total Elected Women Members
Ward Member	87,547	7,056	9,164	8,665	6,529	31,414
Sarpanch	6,234	336	894	462	496	2,188
Panchayat Samiti Member	6,227	449	674	577	488	2,188
Zilla Parishad Members	854	54	85	82	75	296
	<b>1,00,862</b>	<b>7,895</b>	<b>10,817</b>	<b>9,786</b>	<b>7,588</b>	<b>36,086</b>

From the above table, it is found that during the 2002 General Panchayat Elections, out of 1,00,862 elected PRI members, women constitute only 36,086 of the total elected members.

The last General Panchayat Election was held in the year 2007. As per the last Panchayat election data in Odisha there was 314 Panchayat Samitis and 6,234 Gram Panchayats. The total number of Zilla Parishad constituencies was 854

and there was a total number of 6,233 Panchayat Samiti Members in the state. The total number of Ward Members of the state was 87,542. Thus, there was a total of 1,00,863 elected representatives in the three-tier rural local governance system in the state during the 2007 Panchayat Elections. The Table-3 describes in detail about the total elected representatives along with total women members of the rural local governance system in Odisha during the 2007 general elections:

**Table -3 - General Panchayat Elections 2007<sup>9</sup> - Status of Women Participation in Odisha**

PRI Elected Representatives	Total PRI Representatives	Scheduled Caste Women	Scheduled Tribe Women	Backward Class Women	Reserved for Women	Total women Representatives
Ward Member	87,542	7,172	9,665	9,148	5,719	31,704
Sarpanch	6,234	344	907	471	466	2,188
Panchayat Samiti Member	6,233	455	699	632	422	2,208
Zilla Parishad	854	58	85	88	70	301
	<b>1,00,863</b>	<b>8,029</b>	<b>11,356</b>	<b>10,339</b>	<b>6,677</b>	<b>36,401</b>

### Conclusion:

Evidences in Indian national politics and also at the regional levels have suggested that the presence of such large number of women representatives do not necessarily lead to the enhancement of real participation of the women in the system. Therefore, in recent years, the question of the preferential treatment of women as a political group or the provision of quotas for women to ensure numerical strength and presence in the local governance system has assumed considerable importance. Very recently the Government of Odisha has taken a bold step to enhance the percentage of reservation for women from one-third to at least 50% in the 3-tier rural local Government system during the current general elections to PRIs which is a timely laudable step in this direction to encourage women participation in the rural local governance system.

However, over the short span of five years of participation no directly visible impact can be assessed either in terms of participation rates or distribution of benefits, since their participation, in the next elections remain absent in case of most of women representatives on political and institutional obstacle grounds. Women participate significantly less than men due to lack of education and information and the social factors which limit women's involvement in public affairs, are also reflected in the generally low levels of education and information that prevail among women. At the same time education and information also suggest ways of reducing the gap between men and women that arise from social and traditional norms. Women who are educated and well informed are often able to bridge social differences associated with gender.

In spite of the above discussed constitutional and reservational provisions for

women participation, in actual practice, the active participation of women in rural local governance system has remained restricted to a small number of women and not to the masses. The nature and extent of participation of women is limited to a few areas of rural local governance system and not up to the expected extent. Women have been given opportunities to lead through the reservation provisions imparted in the shape of constitutional amendments. On the contrary, undermining the capacities of women, this opportunity is in majority of cases being utilized by their male counterparts and not by them. In practice their participation is missing and restricted to tokenism participation. Notwithstanding the reservation provisions under constitutional obligations, the rural women are being deprived of real participation in the rural local self governance system in Odisha. Their participation is confined to their representation and reservational participation only. Many factors are responsible for their low participation in the system but two most important factors that impair their participation are psychological and low level of education. The psychological factor that inhibited active participation of women in the rural local governance system was shyness and submissiveness and lack of understanding of their role, rule and responsibilities and the low level of education can be treated as another inhibitor of women's active participation in the rural local governance system.

### End Notes:

1. The Committee on the Status of Women in India (CSWI), Ministry of Education and Welfare, Government of India, New Delhi.
2. Report of the Team for the Study of Community Projects and National Extension Service: Committee on Plans Projects (Balwant Rai Mehta Committee Report), New Delhi, November, 1957 (Vol.1) relating to women representation in Panchayati Raj Institutions.

3. Buch, N (2001), "Panchayats and Women", Kurukshetra, Vol.49, No.7, April, pp.8-17.
  4. Report of the Ashok Mehta Committee (1978) relating to the role of women in Panchayati Raj, Government of India, New Delhi.
  5. Information on General Elections to PRIs in Odisha, 2012, State Election Commission, Odisha, Bhubaneswar.
  6. Department of Panchayati Raj, GP Section, Panchayat Elections 1992, Government of Odisha, Bhubaneswar.
  7. Information on General Elections to PRIs in Odisha 1997, State Election Commission, Odisha, Bhubaneswar.
  8. Information on General Elections to PRIs 2002, State Election Commission, Odisha, Bhubaneswar.
  9. Information on General Elections to PRIs 2007, State Election Commission, Odisha, Bhubaneswar.
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## Reminiscing with the Legend : An Interview with Smt. Annapurna Moharana

*Dr. Pragyan Das*

Indian women turned themselves to be pathfinders instead of being a mere passive voice in the struggle for freedom. In a time when India was fighting for freedom from the British Raj the Indian women were fighting against the orthodox Indian society as well as the Raj. Thus, the dawn of independence saw two spheres: one, the freedom of the motherland and two, the freedom of the mother. But the question is whether the Indian women are really free? The answer perhaps lies within the great journey of a true Indian woman, the legendary Smt. Annapurna Moharana. India has many courageous daughters like Annapurna Devi, who explains us through her legendary work as a freedom fighter and protector of our nation, the true essence of a woman.

Capturing the essence of a woman through the very epitome of womanhood was proving to be too heavy for the psyche of a woman of this generation but I was ready to meet the legend. As I approached Annapurna Devi's house



with trepidation I saw through a dark passage a sunshine drenched courtyard and a vision in a white saree sitting in an old fashioned arm-chair with such grace that the first picture of Annapurna Devi is still fresh in my mind even t-day.

Annapurna Devi is completely unaware of her legendary status, I was further humbled in her presence when she welcomed with folded hands. She could perhaps sense my nervousness, so she made me feel very much at home as we sat in the courtyard and began a very informal interview. It was like listening to a story from my grandmother. Thus, the story of Strength, Courage and Struggle unfolded.

Being a Women's Studies student I was naturally curious about the status of women and my first question to Annapurna Devi was regarding the status of women in Odisha during the freedom movement? Her answer was an eye opener. She said; let me tell you the events starting from the year 1923-24 because before that I was a child. So let me speak of my

experiences from that time, usually the women of middle class and lower middle class stayed home and were not allowed to come out to work even talking to men or any association with the male society was considered lowly for a woman of this class, but the labour class women used to work in fields as well as their homes and various other work and activities which led them outside their homes. Thus, the difference between these two classes of women was evident, as exposures by working in fields, going to market etc. And their exposure to the outside world or coming in touch with their male counterparts was not possible. Secondly the education of women was hardly considered despite what is said in the story of Fakir Mohan Senapati in Rebat. The need of women's education was not at all thought upon. In Cuttack there was hardly any family in which the girl child was given an education. I didn't go to school as well as my father was a non-cooperative member. I couldn't go to any government school. Such was the status of women during that period of time.

I then asked her how did you being a young woman of those orthodox times came about in playing such major role in the freedom movement ?

She smiled and said that is because the paternal sides of my family like my father, mother, uncle, aunty and brother took part in the freedom movement. Hence the environment of my home completely changed and I saw many such women who took part in freedom movement during that time. When I went to Calcutta with my parents I saw great women freedom fighters such as Sarojini Naidu, Jyotirmoye Ganguly, I also visited Karachi Congress and saw women from all over India who have struggled for freedom and had taken much hardship for our country. Thus these exposures inspired me in a great way. But mainly

it was my family's influence on me for being involved in the freedom movement.

I was very awe-struck by the famous women personalities in her family and wanted to hear about them, so I asked did your mother Smt. Rama Devi and your aunt Smt. Malati Devi inspire you in your role as a freedom fighter or was it because of the problems and atrocities ?

She playfully gave my head a pat and said this was an intelligent question and said my mother Smt. Rama Devi and my aunty Smt. Malati Devi inspired me to become a freedom fighter. My Aunt was a student of Rabindra Nath Tagore, when she was to appear for Matriculation but in 1921 Gandhiji urged everyone to leave school and colleges. So, she wanted to join the movement and went to stay with her uncle as she didn't want to appear for the exams but her mother was highly educated and her grandfather D.L. Gupta was an I.C.S, So they forced her to give the exams. But after that she didn't study under Government schools. She studied in Shantiniketan which was a national institute. My mother was the daughter of the younger brother of Utkal Gouraba Madhusudan. So, from childhood she heard about activities on how to make Odisha free, how to literate women etc. Then Khudiram was hanged, this made a great impact on her mind. Thus, by facing such an environment of freedom movement both sisters in laws i.e. my mother and my aunt were as if prepared for the movement. Their attitude was formed from the start.

Women at those times were very vulnerable and perceiving a woman as a fighter for any cause was unthinkable, so I was very interested to know whether the role of women freedom fighter accepted during those times ?

She answered apart from Malati Devi and Rama Devi, let us consider them as exceptions;

usually people did not appreciate this role. When Gandhiji said that women like men have equal right to fight for their nation, and they can work better than men as a woman is known for herself sacrificing nature and can give her life for her child. Thus, by hearing this many women became inspired but our society was not at all accepting of this new Avatar the women wanted to portray. There were very few women whose husbands, father or brother went to jail with her or join her in the freedom movement. Most of the women revolted against their families to join the movement, as in those times if a woman steps out of her house against the wishes of her family she was considered a disgrace. But a woman Sushila Devi Singh escaped this cordon but she was spotted and was tried to be captured, she hid in a bush and later she came and joined the movement in Cuttack, her in laws and even her own father didn't allow her in their home. This is the story of one woman but many women like her tried to join the movement. They came from all over the place like Puri, Balasore etc. but our society didn't at all approve of this and tried to hold them back at all junctures.

In another instance two women one elderly and another one of the age around 18-19 came to our house as they heard of my mother and aunt. They wanted to join the movement but they couldn't be kept in our house as there were spies and the CID that kept a watch over our house and would have arrested them. So they hid in other places. In those hideouts oral training were given to them on different aspects like the national flag, why we can die for the national flag, why we have to discard foreign clothes etc. were the types of training that was given to them verbally but not by books and while they were involved in a protest march they were arrested and went to jail. A sub-inspector was the brother of one of the ladies and when he was notified he came and

verbally abused her and even physically abused her as well he then asked her to beg forgiveness to the Government to be pardoned but the lady despite her brother's abuses and persuasiveness did not budge from her stand. Like this there were many women who fought with their families to fight against the British Raj. Men had only one aim or goal to fight for the Britishers but women had to fight the society as well as the Britishers.

During the freedom movement prominent figures such as Mahatma Gandhi were associated with your family. Could you share your experiences with him ?

In the freedom movement Gandhiji was the most important figure, many people were encouraged by him to join the freedom movement. He first came to Odisha in 1921, I was very young then. During that time the first women's assembly was held in Odisha, in Binod Bihari. Gandhiji gave a speech there about demolishing casteism and regarding weaving one's own clothes, etc. In this assembly a lady came into prominence known as Sarala Devi, who was a member of the Congress Party and she urged others to become members as well as attend meetings of men, talked to many men, got involved in freedom movement and committed blunders according to other women and some orthodox men. In 1924 a meeting was held in Town Hall that was attended by many women as well but their sitting arrangement was done inside a covering of bamboo's known as Cheka but Sarala Devi for the first time went out of the Cheka and sat with the men and even gave a speech. All the older orthodox women present in this meeting criticized her for such action. Sarala Devi despite all these difficulties took part in the freedom movement.

As far as our association with Gandhiji is concerned, when Gandhiji visited Odisha he went

from Puri to Bhadrak we also went with him and stayed with him during his visit to our State. He walked for nearly 8 kms daily to visit places. He stayed for nearly 29-30 days. His visit in Odisha started on 9<sup>th</sup> May and ended on June 8<sup>th</sup>. In his speech he always used to say that we need equality among us first, thus, to have a free nation we need to have a free society. He wanted women to work on equal turf with men. He wanted to empower the women of our nation.

Such reminiscing brought a side to the legend's demeanor which was a sight to behold as she was animated and agitated at the same time, trying to make me understand how important equality of women was and still is in our society, I tried to lessen her agitation by trading on safe grounds in my next question to her which was home ground for her that is the many Ashrams started by her family where ever they owned land. I thus, asked her regarding the functions of these Ashrams and the role it played in the freedom movement ?

Annapurna Devi was happy to talk about the Ashrams as it meant a lot to her to be associated with her family property in a way no daughter is. She said there were two kinds of ashrams before the independence, they were ashrams in many villages like Delanga, Bairi, etc. and the people who came to these Ashrams had main goal that was independence, they used to discuss on steps to take for freeing our nation, improving the society etc. Many people collected large sums of money and gifted Gandhiji on his birthday to form a forum and work for the society. But Gandhiji wanted to use the money for the benefit of women by women. But the learned men of our society didn't want to use the money for this purpose. Thus, Gandhiji said let them destroy the money, the inner strength of women needs to be aroused and they need to be empowered. In

1944 he got the money and started a Trust to uplift women in many places in Odisha like Koraput, Puri, Sambalpur etc. This Trust worked for two purposes: one being SEBA, by taking nursing training, Balbadi training that helps little children and two, Empowerment of women: making women aware that her place is not only inside her house but with in the society and making women aware about her work in the community and for the upliftment of other women and help women in villages, to keep the villages clean and perform all philanthropic work.

I then asked her about a group I was very interested in since my childhood the Banara Sena as well as the Nari Shakti. what purpose according to you did these two groups solve?

She was very happy to be reminiscing about the Banara Sena; it brought back playful memories for her. We worked with Banarsena, she said. Little children of this group did picketing in front of alcohol shops against Britishers. They participated in the revolt in many ways and as they were children they could not be jailed and there wasn't any reformatory place for children then, so they went scot free of all their revolutionary activities. The only punishment they got was a beating on their hands from a stick for 15-20 times or being taken to a long distance and being left there, so they had to walk back home. But in spite of this they were never scared off. As far as Nari Shakti is concerned women formed a powerful group with this and revolted against the Britishers in many ways. But women eventhough jailed were not mistreated in imprisonment.

After sharing light-hearted moments in the glee of Banar Sena I asked her about some serious matters like during the freedom movement of Odisha what were the activities against the Britishers ?



One of the major activities was picketing in front of the alcohol and drug shops, picketing against foreign clothes and other goods. Starting processions and explaining the people to revolt against the Britishers by singing patriotic songs, explaining how our countries revenue is being exploited by the British and some other activities were like the celebration of 26<sup>th</sup> January and on this day a notice was issued and read. It was a daily regarding the history of India and in its first paragraph it was written that any government that worked against the rights of its people could be overthrown by the people etc. this was read every 26<sup>th</sup> January and the people involved were arrested, lathi charge took place. Despite all these difficulties there were many other activities like flag hoisting, processions, singing patriotic songs etc.

I asked with hesitation whether she had ever gone to jail.

She laughed heartily especially seeing my discomfort in asking her this question and replied proudly, yes I have gone to jail, once in 1932 and then in 1942 and 1944 because I actively worked against the British government. I took part in many activities like when Gandhiji said salt is for everyone and then went to the sea shore to take salt, we also went with him and as it was illegal we were jailed.

I then asked her that by going to jail so many times how it affected her as a person and her status as a woman ?

She answered my entire family was involved in this and they were also jailed along with me. And others who were jailed were not affected as well because inside the jail the environment was completely patriotic and everyone was positively influenced. The

environment in the jail was inspiring to the people. At times people were jailed for six months and the village women who were mostly illiterates were educated about the true essence of nationalism by literate women jailed with them like Rama Devi, Sarala Devi. Thus, these types of people also took part to stay in jail among these illiterate men and women. Thus, the jail was used like a training camp.

I then asked her a personal question with trepidation that as casteism played a major role in those times but you chose an inter caste marriage, what was the reason behind it ?

She actually thanked me for asking her such questions as she believed it has great relevance on the subject and herself as a woman, She said, my family wanted to change the system, so my grandfather Madhusudan Das being a Hindu converted to Christianity, his father even disowned him when he married a Christian, my uncle Naba Krushna Chowdury married a Brahmin. And as Gandhiji said marrying in the same caste is not a way of national consent. Thus, Harijans should marry Brahmins and Hindus should marry Christians, Muslims should marry Hindus. Thus, my parents also decided that I should marry in another caste. My brother is also married in a different caste.

As your family was bringing a change in the society, through them did others use your family as an example and did the same ?

This type of intercaste marriage in our society was impossible if someone tried this it was revolted in a great way. My family was known to be Gandhibadis. Thus everyone knew why we were doing what we were. But others were following our foot steps in the society back then (she pauses and adds even today this is unthinkable.

In today's society what changes do you see in women compared to women in those times?

A great change is seen like women were inside Purdah then, now it is not so. In foreign nations a revolt was held for women's voting rights. But in India women did no such revolt for voting rights, they were given this right automatically because they were actually involved in the freedom struggle. In today's Odisha I see university educated women doing so well even better than men. Women have come a long way and are doing well in all spheres of life. Now a days women are not only talking about household affairs or clothes and jewellery but I see discussions on branches of knowledge from chemistry to ethics, to sociology. This shows the tremendous growth in knowledge which is only possible through education. But Odisha should also have women universities like Maharashtra. And when I see the economic independence of women it makes me very happy as well as the independence of a woman now has to travel alone by bus or train. But I see one thing that has not changed that is fear. Why are women so afraid? I see no animals or snakes around. So why are they so scared to go out in the dark etc. Because they are afraid of men. And the men who think that women tempt men is very scandalous way of thinking about women. Thus, even though men and women work together or get educated because of some misgivings of the society some thing doesn't change. And this fear will gradually fade if some ways are thought up. Women should not distrust men or be afraid of them and men should

change the wrong perception regarding women. They should work like two wheels.

I wanted to end the reminiscing with Annapurna Devi in this positive note but the need for assurance from this great personality about the deteriorating status of women in such progressive and developing times made me ask her this as a final question, The atrocities and abuses on women of an independent Odisha still persists, can we ever completely overcome it ?

We must change the deep rooted beliefs set in the minds of people for hundreds of years. Like abduction of Sita by Ravan that shows women are helpless vulnerable victims of men in our society. Such beliefs of hundreds of years which are set in people's mind like thick mud needs to be washed away. Then only can women be free of abuses. And yes I do believe this change in women's status even though it will certainly take time, will be seen in our society, as this was the dream of great freedom fighters like Gandhiji. If a nation in bondage could have such a dream then surely a free nation can achieve it.

This reminiscing brought out a certainty that women have achieved the status they deserve but it remains unseen as if surrounded in a mist, a mist that will surely lift in the after glow of such path-breaking personas.

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## Issues of Exclusion and Inclusion in Decentralised Local Governance Institutions in India

Dr. Dasarathi Bhuyan

*This paper proposes to explore “the issues of exclusion and inclusion in decentralized local governance institutions in India”. It also tries to explore how the marginalized groups are excluded in the decentralized democratic process. It further tries to examine an important area relating to exclusion of Panchayat institutions in situations of political conflict or economic contestation. It also examines in detail the provisions for reservations for SCs, STs, OBCs and women; it analyzes the various dimensions of the interrelated concept of inclusion and exclusion. It also examines the problem of why the local governance institutions get excluded from the process of development and governance. Further it assesses the marginalized groups’ awareness of Panchayati Raj, their perception of Panchayati Raj, their participation in Panchayati Raj programmes as functionaries and as beneficiaries and the extent to which they are benefited in different areas of operation of Panchayati Raj institutions. In pursuance of this study the researcher also tries to solve the questions arises in the mind. The key research questions are: How do the larger political and economic forces isolate, bypass or even co-opt the local governance? Who crafts the politics and practices of exclusion and how are these are played out and perpetuated? What are the manifestations of exclusion in day to day functioning of local governments? Who excludes who? Who represents on behalf of whom? How exclusion is officially legitimized? How do marginalized groups get organized to target local governments to be more inclusive? What are different forms of violence that are directed against the marginalized when they attempt to enter Panchayat institutions? Who creates violence and in which manner? In-depth research on both macro political and economic contexts as well as micro social contexts as described above is expected to generate knowledge about the dynamics of exclusion – inclusion and the ways to promote substantive and meaningful inclusion of the marginalized in decentralized local governance. Finally in the concluding summary, observations and findings the author tries to delineate some important suggestions for further policy paradigms. In fact, the conclusion makes humble attempts to manifest the core aspects of the present research work relating to the topic for academic debate and policy dialogue.*

India is a country of villages. Panchayati Raj system has influenced the village life extensively as one of the most important units of democratic decentralization. Decentralization of powers is nothing but transfer of powers 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.

All most all states have enacted their Panchayat laws in order to conform with the spirit and content of the 73<sup>rd</sup> Constitutional

amendments. Accordingly the new laws, elections have been conducted. Reservations have 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. However, there are still several problems when we examine the issues of substantive inclusion of the marginalized in the functioning of these elected bodies and in what they are able to achieve for their constituents in terms of promoting Good Governance. By merely creating institutions or providing formal training to people who hitherto lived and continue to live at the periphery of society and economy does not guarantee their entry into local governance. The forces of patriarchy and caste are the two socially powerful forces that deter women and Dalit participation respectively. Bringing such marginalized groups into the political sphere requires addressing the issues of dominance and exclusion both at the level of institutional structures and processes as well as at the larger social setting which the marginalized groups inhabit.

Secondly, Panchayats are engaged with service delivery diverting all their attention to the provisioning of developmental goods and services such as water, electricity, housing, education, sometimes at the cost of promoting social justice.

Thirdly, the rapid economic growth agenda of the state, particularly under neo-liberalism and globalization has unraveled a new set of questions on role and mandate of Panchayats relating to the governance of commons on which people's survival is dependent. Even the tribal regions which fall under Panchayat Extension to Scheduled Areas Act

(PESA) both the government and the industry have collaborated to negotiate directly with people without engaging Panchayats. PESA Act 1996 extends Panchayats to the tribal areas of eight States of India namely, Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha and Rajasthan with the intention to enable tribal society to assume control over their own destiny to preserve and conserve their traditional rights over natural resources. However, most states have been indifferent to the Act as well as corresponding transfer of powers to the tribal population (to access and utilize natural resources for consumption and livelihood).

In this fast changing context, the state efforts have mainly focused on capacity building, primarily through training. Civil society effort has also largely remained confined to capacity building. In recent years, the role of Panchayats has gained prominence owing to their role in the implementation of the National Rural Employment Guarantee Programme.

Thus 'Inclusion of the marginalized groups in local governance' has been a serious problem in our civil society. 'Inclusion' in this context means the inclusion of the marginalized sections - women, Dalit and tribals- in local governance. However, 'inclusion' can not be understood, without having any reference to 'exclusion'. Exclusion needs to be countered to promote inclusion. Since exclusion and inclusion are inter-related, new insights on inclusion through sincerely analysis requires on both: causes, consequences and means of exclusion as also the ways in which marginalized groups work towards their inclusion. Women, Dalit and tribal have suffered social and economic marginalization for a long time and therefore are considered for affirmative action. Particularly in the rural setting, the socio-economic hierarchies are inter-related. Hence, the groups

who occupy low position in social hierarchy such as Dalit, women, and tribal also invariably occupy low position in economic hierarchy.

While the focus on exclusion - inclusion has largely centered on how they take place within local governance institutions, an important area needing further solution relates exclusion of Panchayat institutions in situations of political conflict or economic contestation. More study needs to address this field to generate insights on what happens to inclusion when local governance institutions themselves get excluded from the processes of development and governance.

From the above discussions it is clear that there are two aspects that have significant implication for inclusion of the marginalized:

**FIRST, THE LARGER MACRO POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC CONTEXT IN WHICH LOCAL GOVERNMENTS OPERATES:**

How local governments can or cannot promote inclusion in the contexts of *(a) violent conflicts and political unrest, and (b) neo-liberal economic growth, globalization and commoditization of commons such as land, water and forests.*

**(a) Violent conflicts and political unrest:**

We have a stable democracy in India and India is the largest democratic country in world. Despite this political conflicts have aggravated in specific regional contexts. Two types of conflicts have raised in the recent times - the armed conflict in the North Eastern region which has taken the shape of separatist movements; and conflicts between the state and the Maoist groups (popularly known as Naxalites) in Chhatisgarh, Jharkhand, Odisha and Andhra Pradesh, West Bengal where the Maoist groups claiming to be *messiahs* of the poor have launched violent assault

against the government. It is imperative to explore how political contexts as described above affect the functioning of local governments and implications of this for the resource poor communities and those considered being most vulnerable to unrest such as poor and women.

**(b) Neo-liberal economic growth, globalization and commoditization of commons such as land, water and forests:**

In the present scenario of neo-liberalism and globalization we are witnessing economic conflicts between those whose resources are threatened by rapid economic growth and those who are actively pursuing these have intensified immensely. In pursuing economic growth Panchayats as local decision-making institutions are either bypassed or co-opted by the economically powerful forces in executing their agenda. In many parts of India people are protesting against the establishment of special economic zones whose resources are to be loosed on which their survival depends. For examples, people of Singur and Nandigram in West Bengal and Kalinga Nagar in Odisha are protesting against the establishment of the Special Economic Zones. Similarly in tribal areas of Odisha mining operations by multinationals have faced opposition from local people. In other parts of India, it is not entirely unknown for financial incentives in the short run inducing a peaceful cooption of the Panchayats in the neo-liberal agenda of the state but in the long run carrying with the possibility of the communities loosing control over their natural resources.

**SECONDLY, THE LOCAL MICRO SOCIAL CONTEXTS IN WHICH THE LOCAL GOVERNMENTS FUNCTION:**

How inclusion takes place in the contexts of social and economic inequalities in which Dalit, tribal and women lives. Within the micro sphere there are three critical problems:

(a) **Manipulation of structures and process underlying the functioning of local governments :**

The Constitution Amendment Acts and the confirmatory acts passed by the State Governments have created opportunities for inclusion of the marginalized through affirmative action. There is a clear and unequivocal conceptualization of the local governments as inclusive of those who have been in the periphery of society and have largely been isolated from the decision-making process. In practice however, when Panchayats interact with the local socio-economic structures the possibility exists for the power structures to get mirrored within the governance institutions. The marginalized groups who occupy weak positions in social and economic hierarchy can find themselves weak even within the local governments. While the representation of the weaker sections is officially sought through affirmative action, in the actual practices that take place within the institutions, they are subjected to multiple types of discrimination and exclusion. In many instances the actual decision is taken before hand without giving consideration to the opinion of the marginalized members, or their voices could be rendered silent through verbal abuse and other symbolic practices ( e.g- making them sit on the floor while others sit in chairs) Hence, we find women getting excluded in a predominantly male space; and low castes and poor getting excluded when the locally dominant caste and economically powerful groups occupy the positions of power in Panchayat institutions.

In the sphere of local governance, there are many spaces that are significant for exclusion to be played out right from the stage of calling of elections to the holding of the Gram Sabhas.

(b) **Mobilization for inclusion :** In many cases Panchayats are manipulated to keep the

marginalized excluded. But there is a continuous effort to counter such exclusion. Marginalized groups now a day are questioning their exclusion and mobilized towards inclusion. Efforts are underway in recent times to address the 'power and politics' played out in the spheres of local governance. Such mobilizations in recent times are visible in several ways. These include (i) Forming collectives by discriminated groups such as federations of women elected representatives (ii) Alignment with political parties (iii) Occupying alternate (and sometimes competing) spaces available for local development such as water users group, village education committees, self help groups / micro-finance groups etc.

(c) **Violence against the marginalized to prevent their inclusion :**

Violence against the marginalized by locally powerful groups to prevent their inclusion is the extreme form of exclusion. Such type of violence are often happens to women and Dalits. In this regard, patriarchy and caste are the two most dominant socio-cultural forces that determine positions of women and Dalits in social hierarchy. Violence in the sphere of local governance can manifest as physical, verbal (e.g abusive language), and even symbolic (e.g spreading rumors). Women have often faced such violence both within their homes and outside for entering local governance. Dalits have faced violence from high castes. Violence creates fear among the victims and the groups they belong so that they do not dare challenging the power structures within local governance.

In reality many State Governments 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 inclusion of marginalized groups could not take a concrete shape as

envisaged in the Constitutional Amendments. Still it is in a budding stage. It will take time to institutionalize the marginalized groups in the fold of decentralized democratic process. Further, marginalized groups have not been mobilized to participate in the process of development and governance.

Some scholars have observed that changes have been 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. 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. Panchayati Raj has also lessened the importance of caste Panchayats. There is a decrease in the exploitation of villagers by the landlords, money-lenders and upper castes; participation of Scheduled castes, Scheduled tribes, and Backward Classes has increased in rural development. With the introduction of new Panchayati Raj system; there is an increase of women's participation in leadership.

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 between 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.

As the most marginalized groups are uneducated, untrained the power equation is still in the hands of higher castes. 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.

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

Grama Sabha is the only Direct Democratic device in India. Effective planning at the grassroots level can only be envisaged if a large number of Grama Sabha members actively participate in the planning process. At present 50 per cent members (women) are virtually outside the Grama 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 social 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.

Participation cannot be imposed on the marginalized from above; it should be voluntary and based on good will to participate. Here by participation we mean direct involvement of people and not indirect involvement through their representatives. An equitable sharing of the benefits of development by marginalized groups is possible only when there is equitable

participation by them in the process of development. By doing so, marginalized groups 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.” The process can be accelerated only when the marginalized groups become conscious on their rights and privileges and build up strength to achieve justice for themselves in the sharing of benefits of development.

Marginalized groups’ participation or involvement can better be understood as: (a) participation in Decision-Making; (b) participation in implementation of development programmes and projects; (c) Participation in monitoring and evaluation of development programmes and projects (d) and Participation in sharing the benefits of development.

Direct participation of the marginalized groups 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, is 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 marginalized groups have some say in the decision-making and execution of these schemes.

More specifically, most of SC/ST and women representatives were facing the problem of non-cooperation from the official and upper castes/ dominant sections of their Grama Panchayats. These problems have not only been obstructing developmental works but also not enabling elected representatives to participate in the Panchayats. These problems are not confined to Odisha only but exists every where in different degree of intensity.

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.

Women comprise about 50 percent of country’s population. 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act has given women 33 per cent reservation in the political process of Panchayati Raj Institutions. In a path-breaking move to empower women at the grassroot level Government of India on August 27, 2009 approved a proposal to increase reservation for them in Panchayats to 50 percent. The Manmohan Singh government decided to bring a Bill to amend Article 243(d) of the Constitution to enhance reservation from the current one-third to at least 50 per cent. At present, out of the total elected representatives of Panchayats numbering approximately 28.1 lakh, 36.87 per cent are women. With the proposed Constitutional amendment, the number of elected women representatives is expected to rise to more than 14 lakh.

Many social scientists observed that due to reservation of seats many women were elected to local bodies. They have been given the opportunity to share power with men. But in spite of their representation it has been found that the elected women representatives are treated ‘as puppet’ in the Panchayati Raj Institutions. Most of them remain silent spectators to the proceedings of the Panchayat meetings and rarely



participate in the discussions. They hardly voice their own opinion regarding developmental administration. Simply sitting and listening to proceedings of the meeting have been their form of participation. Active participation in the form of involving in the decision making process was found to be rare in case of women representatives. Due to male dominance elected women members are functioning more or less as dummies –the husbands of women Sarpanchas are actively participating in the Panchayat matters instead of allowing their wives to take part in the decision making process. Financial matters are not tackled by the women representatives and for this they depend upon their husbands or sons or any other male relatives. Practically it has been found that two heads are functioning at Gram Panchayat levels-she head (de-jure)-the elected women Sarpanch and he had (de-facto)-the real Sarpanch. Most of the elected women Sarpanchas are regarded as a mere ‘Rubber Stamp’ and all the functions of the Panchayat are being performed by their husbands or local elites. Attendance of elected women representatives in Gram Panchayat meeting is found very low. Majority of them did not attend the meeting regularly.

Another important stumbling block on the way of women empowerment is family influence. Many families do not allow their elected women representatives to work together with government officials and others. The influence of casteism is also found to be another constraint in the process of women participation. It was noticed that upper caste people are either hesitant or unwilling to honour or implement decisions taken by a scheduled caste leaders. These women representatives were facing a lot of difficulties, harassment and humiliation at the hands of upper caste people and traditional power holders. Thus, there are so many factors upsetting the process of participation and level of performance of

women in the Panchayati Raj Institutions. Broadly these factors may be categorized as (i) internal Factor, and (ii) External Factor.

The *internal factors* which affecting the process of women empowerment and participation are identified as: lack of awareness, experience, knowledge, skill, leadership quality, low level of education, lack of exposure etc.

The *external factors* which affect the process of participation and empowerment of women are: influence of family, caste, social outlook, patriarch etc. On one occasion one elected male representative remarked “what do the women folk now? Their job is to cook and serve; governance is not their job, it is our exclusive privilege.” Patriarchal influences and traditional norms of our society hinder the path of women empowerment in the local government.

#### **Conclusion :**

The whole exercise of inclusion of marginalized 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. With out 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. In order to make participation of marginalized groups effective, efficient and successful there is a need of vital change in traditional, social attitude. There is also need for positive attitudinal change and mental make-up of the dominant folk in favor of women participation. They should be given appropriate training to improve their knowledge base and capacity level relating to their rights, responsibilities

and duties in the functioning of Panchayat bodies. They should be made acquainted with the procedures of Panchayati Raj rules, regulations and financial management. There is also need for launching more and more awareness campaigning in favour of women empowerment. Mass media, NGOs, Political Parties, Self Help Group's (SHGs), Mahila Mandals have a significant role to play in this context.

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## Makar Mela at Kalijai Hill

*Dr Janmejaya Choudhury*

Odisha abounds in spot of scenic beauty and the natural lake Chilika adds to its aesthetic looks. Chilika, a wonder creation of Nature, is a vast and picturesque lagoon/lake in the heart of coastal Odisha. It displays lavish scenic beauty. Chilika is not just a lake but an ever flowing living entity. In the works of the great Odia Poet, Radhanath Ray, it is a place of entertainment for 'Utkal Laxmi' and so goes the line.....

“Utkal Kamala Vilas Dirghika  
Marala Malini Nilambu Chilika  
Utkal Tuhi Charu Alankar  
Utkala Bhubane Sobhara Bhandar”

Queen of natural beauty, Chilika, the largest brackish water lake in Asia covering an area over 1100 sq.km is a great attraction for the tourists. Chilika lake is regarded as a magnificent gift of nature.

“Sundar Truptira Abasada Nanhi  
Jete Dekhuthile Nua Disuthai”

The lake is a mute witness to the rise and fall of so many castles, temples and forts.

“Atitara Tuhi Sakhi Puratana  
Dekhilu Narara Utthana Patana  
Kete Rajadhani To Tire Utthita  
Hoitanhi Puni Hele Astamita”

x      x      x

“Itihas-ranga Stali Tu Chilika  
Toratire Para Srimati Manika  
Haste Bhunjithile Sadare Labani  
Bhabagrahi Prabhu Bhakti Chintamani”

The blue water of Chilika lake that spreads around speaks of the glorious heritage of ancient Utkal. The hillock covered with green bushes in it, speaks of many legends and folktales. The confluence of grandeurs and geese along with other beautiful birds pronounces the co-existence of Nature's creations where from “Beauty” and “Truth” comes up, that's why, the poet and Philosophers get attracted to the Chilika. The magnificent sight of the lake enables a man with aesthetic sensibility to be transported to a different world where 'Art' and 'Beauty' reign supreme.

Kalijai Temple or Kalijai Pahada is situated on an island considered to be the abode of the Goddess Kalijai. She is venerated due to the folklore and the legend. It is an excellent destination.

“Kalijai Bada Pratyaksha Debata  
Koti Koti Dandabata  
Pahadara Na Raijey Kshyata Lo  
Kalijai Parabata”

The temple of Kalijai is located in the island of Chilka lake of Puri District. Formerly it came under the ex-Zamidari of Parikuda. The popular Kalijai legend talks of the beautiful rustic

bride, Kalijai who met watery-grave on the way to her in-laws house when the boat carrying her capsized on account of a storm. Since then, Kalijai has turned into an angelic spirit who safeguards the people on the sea.

Jai, a small girl was living with her parents in a village on the bank of the river Salia. She was very much liked by her parents for her beauty and religious bent of mind. She used to worship at the feet of Goddess Bhagabati on all ceremonial days. When she came of an age her parents gave her in marriage to a handsome young man of Parikuda Garh. After the marriage is over her father accompanied her to Parikuda along with a cart load of dowry articles. To reach Parikuda, the only available means of communication then was a long boat journey from Balugaon. So Jai with her father boarded the boat clear over the wide expanse of the Chilika water. He successfully avoided the invisible rocks within the deep Chilika water while plying the boat through the favourable cool wind. Jai was all along feeling uncomfortable as she had left her mother and childhood friends. Seeing her plight on the occasion of first boat ride, the father of Jai repeatedly advised the boatman to move boat cautiously across deep waters and rocky beds.

“Bhalakari Naha Buha Re Nauri  
Jhiaku Maduchi Dara;  
Gadhe Gada loke Chanhi Basithibe  
Jhia Jiba Sasughara”

The boatman as usual plying the boat carefully singing songs of the Chilika lake and praising the glory of the river Goddess.

“ Deulakirati Kalijai Giri  
Marakata- Setu Praye yara Shiri”

They were a distance away from the destination. Suddenly a dark cloud appeared in

the sky. The soaring thunder lightening and violent breeze caused panic among the boat riders. Before long large drops of rain started falling and soon it became a heavy downpour. The boatman could not control the boat as it was tossing over the violent waves of the deep Chilika water. It continued for a long time and the boat losing all its balance dashed against a huge rock. Several riders including Jai drowned in the water. The wailing cry of the riders did not overpower the loud thunder. No sooner the boat dashed and sank in the lake water the cloud disappeared on the vast sheet of sparkling water. But to every body's supreme Jai could no more be found. Her father repeatedly asked the boatman regarding her whereabouts.

“Bapa Pacharanti Khoji Naurire  
“Jhia Mora Gala Kanhi ?”  
Buji akhithia Nauri Nije Lo  
Tunda ta phitai Nanhi”-Kalijai  
(Godabarish Mishra)

The boatman apprehended her drowning when the boat caught in the whirlpool. They all searched the lake for a great distance but could not find any trace of Jai. Her father crushed his fate in giving marriage the daughter at a far off place and returned home with a heavy heart. Since then the rocky hill against which the boat dashed came to be known as the Kalijai hill. The boatman and people travelling in the lake have seen on many occasions the spirit of a young lady with disheveled hair and tearful eyes roaming in the thick forests of the rocky island. Local people identify her with Jai. Local people subsequently built a small temple and installed a stone idol calling her Kalijai.

“ Tolile Pahada-Sikhe Kale Ukte  
Sudar Deulatie;  
Se Deula Puni Samudre Sate Lo,  
Rahiba Debata Kie ?”

In the historical point of view, the real name of Kalijai is Kala Jai means victory over the era. Kalijai or Kalajayi was presiding deity of royal Palace of Parikuda Garh (Krushna Prasada Garh). Goddess was installed there and a temple was built to protect enemy those were coming on sea route. The main *pidha* temple and its front flat-roofed pillared *mandapa* are built in recent years on the rocky bed of this island, on a common platform and thoroughly plastered. The outer walls of this temple are devoid of sculptural decoration. The presiding deity under the name of Kalijai is greatly revered by the boatmen and the people who travel through the deep water of the Chilika lake. They believe that Kalijai is a very kind and helpful Goddess and those who pray at her feet never face any danger in the Chilika lake. The presiding deity is installed on a masonry pedestal erected very close to the inner back wall of the Garbhagriha. To her side another image under the name of Malajai has been given preserved for worship. As both the figures have been given deep coats of vermilion it becomes different to arrive at their iconographic features. A small image of Kanaka Durga kept in one corner of the Garbhagriha. Since the Kalijai temple of Chilika lake remains inaccessible during rainy season, the rulers of Parikuda built another shrine for the deity at Parikuda for annual observance of Dasahara festival.

Kalijai Island is home to the Goddess Kalijai. Out of various fairs and festivals of this spot, it hosts a huge fairs on Makar Sankranti annually called Makara Mela in the month of January. This fair attracts a large number of visitors both from outside and inside the country. Maa Kalijai is venerated by the local people. There are 132 fishermen villages having 31,000 fishermen. They are quite active in fishing at Chilika, visit Kalijai temple on this day to offer their ritual items. The lake Chilika is very much

important from the socio-economic point of view. It is life-line of thousands of fishermen families who completely depend on Chilika for their livelihood. On the day of Makar Sankranti, the special *nitis* observed in this temple. Goddess wears new clothes and Shri Santosh Singh Mardaraj, the king of Parikuda Garh comes from his fort namely Krushna Prasada Garh in royal procession by boats to this temple to offer special Bhoga, new cloths along with ritual requirements to Goddess on behalf of royal palace and coronation ( *Abhishek*)observed here.

Maximum devotees came to this spot to offer their sacrificial animals, through victim system is strictly prohibited here from early time. The festival helps bring all fisher folks together, who though display their own little quirks in the festivities, celebrate as one. It was celebrated by all with much fervor. Each caste added to the gaiety with their own unique customs, attire and celebratory dances. People donned new attire and greeted each other on the occasion. It is one of the biggest annual festivals of fisher folk. The festival is enjoyed with boisterous music, dance and drums. In this time Chilika lagoon became full of motorized boats and general boats. The lake became a perennial source of solace and joy to all emotional-beings. The grandeur and greatness of the lake have a lusting impact on the viewers. Indeed 'Makar Mela' of Kalijai hill is a 'thing of beauty' and hence a 'joy for ever'. Its sanctity makes it a place of pilgrimage which attracts tourists from around the globe. It is a witness to so many events and incidents of mythological and legendary importance.

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# Realizing the Rights of Girl Child

## (An Indian Perspective)

*Susanta Kumar Shadangi*

We, the people of India, feel proud to be the citizens of this largest democracy of the world. We feel complacent about the fact that we have freedoms like freedom of expression, freedom of association, freedom of universal adult franchise and so on. These are the unique provisions of our Constitution. We have also an illustrious Republic with institutions like Legislature, Executive and Judiciary which are independent in their respective spheres of functioning. These institutions are quite stable in nature. Our constitution gives us the essence of human spirit which is based on the finest principles of equality, social justice and human dignity. In addition, our constitution also gives us many other rights pertaining to human values which are the illustrious constitutional achievements of our democracy adding to the national pride.

Unfortunately however, we bear witness to the growth of several inequalities among different sections of our people in the social sphere of our living. We have many people in the society who are far from the fruits of our freedom. Even after a lapse of more than 60 years, there are still a good number of people who live in fear and social insecurity. They are still quite uncertain about their source of work and daily wages to eke out their daily livelihood. They are still vulnerable to the oppression of the vandals who

don't allow them their legitimate social justice for a peaceful living. All of us know that a successful democracy means and refers to an ideal setup of statecraft where the state has to undertake all-out congenial efforts to reach out to the weakest of the society. The state should ensure their wellbeing with safe living conditions.

The worst sufferers in the society today are the poor children especially girls. Of course it is not to say that the male-children are not exploited in the society. They are also vulnerable to torture and many other in-human conditions. But the pity is that the girl-children are subjected to more of ill-treatment than the boys. An enlightened democracy is one which learns to respect both the boys and the girls of the society alike.

Furthermore, we have another social feature which is astoundingly peculiar and unwholesome in nature. The strongest in the society have always an upper-hand in everything in their day-to-day social behaviour. They are prone to wreck inhuman onslaughts on the poor and the destitute that include the children of the impoverished families. In this analogy, both male and female children are the targets of their inhuman ill-treatment. This is a common practice in every village and every town of our country.

### **Predicament of Girls:**

The problems of girls are different from the problems of the boys. The girl-child actually suffers at the basic stage of conception before she is born from the womb of her mother. At this stage, she suffers the onslaught on account of sex-selective abortion. In this process of selection, once a child is identified as female, she is subjected to inhuman treatment leading to destruction in the womb of the mother. This is known as the process of female foeticide. It is no doubt a fact that we have a strong legislation on this score known as the famous legislation of 1996 banning the process of sex-determination. Sex-determination is a heinous offence. The physicians restoring to this practice if proved, are liable for severe punishment. But the legislation of 1996 in actual practice has done little to avert this disturbing trend. The programs and policies for infants are thus woefully weak, lacking in seriousness about protecting their rights.

The female child is considered as a liability on the parents who are influenced by traditions, values, social norms and social institutions like family, kinship and marriage. Because of girl-child labour, girls are not only deprived of education and recreation but also exposed to risks like sexual harassment. Their moral and psychological development is also at stake. The forms of employment for girls also reflect the gender-bias. Family duties are relegated to the girl-child from her early childhood. These are the issues of violation of human rights.

### **Child Rights and its development at international level:**

The Geneva Declaration on the Rights of the Child in 1924 was the first convention of the League of Nations to discuss on rights of the child.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights as adopted by the United Nations in 1948 incorporated the basic rights of the children for growth and education. An independent 'Declaration of the Rights of the Child' was made by United Nations in 1959. This emphasized the special protection and care of the child to develop in a normal and healthy manner, an atmosphere of freedom and dignity. The United Nations Declaration emphasized child-welfare having application to every social condition by conferring specific rights on children through social security legislation prohibiting all sorts of discrimination. The year 1979 was declared as international year of child by United Nations which gave importance to the cooperation of the nations in the common task of meeting the basic needs of children i.e. nutrition, health, education, maternal protection, family care, equal social status and protection from racial and other forms of discrimination. This was a challenge to the conscience of mankind and to the community of nations. On November 20, 1989, the General Assembly of United Nations adopted a convention on Rights of the child which was ratified by 107 member-countries and India was a signatory to it. The convention contains 54 articles, each dealing with different types of rights. These can be divided into four broad categories of rights, such as – survival rights, developing rights, protection rights and participation rights.

**Survival rights** cover a child's right to life and the basic need for existence which include an adequate living standard, shelter, nutrition and access to medical services.

**Developing rights** include the aspects that hold children to reach their fullest potential such as information, freedom of thought, conscience and religion.

**Protection rights** require that the children be safeguarded against all forms of abuse, neglect and exploitation which include child labour, drug abuse, sexual exploitation, abuses in criminal justice system, etc.

**Participation rights** allow children to take an active role in their communities and nations; these encompass freedom of expression, freedom to join associations and assemble peacefully which are necessary for preparation of complete and responsible adulthood.

In 1919, The International Labour Organization, in its first session, adopted a convention on the minimum age of the child for admission into any industrial employment. It laid down that no child under 14 should be employed in any public or private undertaking. This law was however not applicable to family business. An Industrial undertaking here includes mines, quarries, manufacturing units, construction, maintenance and repairs and transportation of passengers and goods by roads, rail or water way. The minimum age was revised from 14 to 15 in the convention No.59 of 1937. Subsequently ILO prohibited employment of children in agricultural undertakings, shops, hotels, restaurants, offices, places of public employments etc. India, being one of the member- countries, has ratified all the conventions. Convention No 138 of 1973 of ILO emphasized that each member for whom the convention was in force undertook to pursue a national policy designed to ensure the effective abolition of child labour and to raise progressively the minimum age for admission of children to employment or work. The minimum age, as specified by the convention, was not be less than the age of completion of compulsory schooling and in any case shall not be less than 15 years. The convention also recommended special attention for working condition of young persons

below 18 years, in terms of fair remuneration, limited working hours, prohibited night work, weekly and annual holiday with leave, coverage by all social security schemes, maintenance of satisfactory standards of health, safety etc.

ILO has adopted 5 conventions for medical examination of young persons, a condition precedent for employment. This is to ensure fitness for young persons for the employment where he/she is to be employed. Also three conventions were made in support of prohibition of night work of young persons both in industrial and non- industrial establishments. However ILO, through various conventions and recommendations made rules and guided the member- countries for abolition of child labour through various measures.

### **Constitutional Safeguards in India**

The Constitution of India carries an important expression of attitude of the state towards children. Article-15(3) of the Constitution authorizes the state for making special provisions for women and children. Article- 24 provides that no child below the age of 14 shall be employed to work in any factory or mine or engage in any other hazardous employment. Article 39(e) proclaims that the state shall direct its policy towards securing that the health and the strength of the tender children are not forced by economic necessity to enter avocations unsuited to their age. Article 39 (F) enjoins that childhood and youth are to be protected against exploitation etc. In Article – 45, the Constitution also endeavours to provide free and compulsory education for all children until they complete the age of 14 years.

The general provisions under Article, 38, 42, 43, 46 and 47 of Directive Principles of State Policy, although do not deal directly with child



welfare, provide strategy for indirectly promoting welfare of children.

**Article 38 (i)** provides that the state shall strive to promote the welfare of the people including children by securing and protecting as effectively as it may secure, social order in which justice, social, economic and political shall be ensured.

**Articles 42 and 43** provide for securing just and human conditions of work and hold out a promise that the state shall endeavour to secure, by suitable legislation, a living wage with specified conditions of work ensuring a descent standard of life and full enjoyment of leisure and social and cultural opportunities.

**Article-46** makes provisions for promotion, with special care of the educational and economic interests of SCs and STs and other weaker sections of the society.

**Article-47** lays emphasis on raising the standard of living of people by the state. These also include children in this regard.

While assessing the progress and implementation of these provisions, it is disappointing to note that the child- labour exploitation in actual practice is rampant in all spheres and this is increasing day by day. The parents, in this context are supposed to be morally very strict in their parental dispensation. They should not send their children to any public field for work despite the gnaws of financial loss. Instead, they should send their children to schools for education during the prescribed age limit. This is as per the most famous national legislation pertaining to the right to free and compulsory education. This may initially entail financial loss on the part of the parents. The sustenance of the children may appear burdensome in the beginning. It is doubtless a complex problem. Yet it has got

to be solved with the motivation by the state. Motivation is the only way out to avert this evil practice.

### **End Discrimination :**

Abolish laws that support discrimination against girls ( inheritance, dowry, marriage)

Reform education by creating rights- based, gender-sensitive curricula, infrastructure and pedagogy designed to promote equity.

Equip girls with economic tools to achieve economic empowerment.

Launch public campaigns that seek to eliminate discrimination based on the notion of girls' inferiority and that support girls' full partnership in the household and public spheres.

Collect, analyze and disseminate data on children mentioning by sex, age, socio-economic status, race and ethnicity in order to create an inclusive gender perspective for planning, implementation and monitoring of government programs and for bench marking.

### **Protect Girls**

Sign, ratify and implement the convention on the Rights of the child and its optional protocols.

Develop gender- responsive budgeting that explicitly allocates monies for programs to end violence against girls, for education and training at all levels and for promoting health etc.

Develop legislation that incorporates the protocol to prevent, suppress and punish Trafficking in women and children.

Invite UNICEF working in collaboration with UNODC to identify and replicate best practices across the globe that discriminate girls victimized by prostitution and prosecute perpetrators.

Provide gender-sensitive, community based reintegration program for children who have been trafficked, commercially exploited or involved in armed conflict.

### **Empower Girls**

Remove all barriers to education for girls including school fees, discriminatory attitudes and curriculum and ensure their safety in and out of school.

Increase girls' competence through education training that includes social, political and economic empowerment to prepare them for their critical roles in their families and communities.

Promote the participation and empowerment of girls by creating safe spaces for them to speak and to obtain assistance and by strengthening the role of civil society, especially girls' organizations, in tackling gender stereotypes.

Partner with families and communities to address the needs of girls heading households and children without parental care, including in the context of HIV/AIDS, and ensure measures to increase men's and boy's responsibility for care giving.

Monitor and evaluate macro-economic policies and social spending to ensure that girls' needs are met.

To realize the letter and spirit of the Constitution, the state has formulated a number of legislations such as Guardians and Wards Act, 1890, Immoral Traffic Prevention Act, 1986, The Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act, 1986, Infant milk substitutes, Feeding bottles and Infant Food Act, 1992, Pre-natal Diagnostic Techniques Act, 1994, Persons with Disabilities Act, 1995, The Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2000, Prohibition of

Child Marriage Act, 2006, The Rights of children to Free and compulsory Education Act, 2009.

In addition, a number of policies and plans such as National policy for children 1974, National policy on Education, National Policy on Child Labour, National Charter for Children 2004 and National Plan of Action for Children 2005, have been formulated. The Government is also implementing a large number of programs and schemes for the benefit of children.

India is a signatory to a number of international instruments such as UN convention on the Rights of the child, with its two optional Protocols, and Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) thereby affirming its commitment to the growth and development of women and children. It has also accepted without reservation the international commitments of the world for children adopted by the UN General Assembly special session on children in 2002, and the Beijing platform for Action for the advancement of women and girls adopted by the World conference on women in 1995.

### **Eleventh Plan- The path to go ahead (2007-2012)**

The objective for the 11th plan is to holistically empower the girl child in all aspects so that she can become an equal partner with boys on the road to development and progress. This requires addressing the various constraints and the persisting problems facing the girl child towards this end, strategy and action laid out in the National Plan of Action for children, 2005. Special importance is accorded to ensuring all girl children the right to life and liberty and to upholding their dignity and security in family and society with utmost attention to their right to equality and social justice.

## **The future of Indian girl child -bright or bleak ?**

India is a country where social disadvantage outweighs natural biological advantage of being a girl. A whole range of discriminatory practices including female foeticide, female infanticide, female genital mutilation, son idolization, early marriage and dowry have buried the future of the nation. In India, discriminatory practices have greatly influenced the health and well-being of a girl child, resulting in a higher mortality rate. It is believed that every year 12 million girls are born in the country but unfortunately only 1/3 of them survive. Some are killed in the wombs, some at the time of birth, some die due to ill health and some due to poor malnutrition status. Only a few numbers of girls are able to survive till their 15<sup>th</sup> birth day. Poverty, gender discrimination and son preference have also influenced the status of a girl child. There are 75 million malnourished children existing in the country. It is estimated that 75% of the total malnourished children are girls who show signs of chronic and acute malnutrition.

Girls who manage to cross this hard phase of life get trapped by the evil society during adolescence and teenage. These are stages where more nutrition is required for normal growth and development. Unfortunately, nutritional needs are neglected for girls and they are kept locked within the four walls.

Girl child is the future of every nation and India is no exception on this score. As a little amount of care, a handful of warmth and a heart-full of love for a girl child can make a big difference in future.

## **Concluding Remarks**

The nation can not afford to ignore the needs of the girl child any further; the nation cannot discriminate at every stage of life in matters like basic nutrition, education and living standard or just relegate her to the stereotyped role of a wife, mother or a sister. She needs to be recognized as the "Woman of the future". Education and training helps the woman to hone her talents. She can earn money. She has the ability to put the money earned in future education of her children. She can also spend the money of better healthcare of her children. An educated woman is sure to defend herself better than an illiterate one against men, crimes and abuse. Once she knows her rights she can also approach the courts. Many daring women have taken such recourse to bring men to task. A woman is a goddess to be revered. She is mother earth that sustains the very breath of humanity. How can man even think of killing her in the womb? As things seem to be, the nation is on a war-path to protect the rights and interests of the girl-children. There are still miles to go in this regard.

We all are proud citizens of India. The need of the hour is to realize our responsibilities and give a halt to this evil crime. We should take all possible steps to curb the brutal and undesirable practice of mass killing of girls. A determined drive can initiate a spark to the lamp and show the world that we all are parts of mother India.

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# Puranic Thought of Planting and Protecting Trees: A Lesson to the Modern Mankind

*Nihar Nalini Singh*

*angat angat sambhavasi hrdayad abhijayase |  
atma vai putranamasi sa jiva saradah satam ||<sup>1</sup>*

To make a “Green Earth” the above verse of *Agnipurana* makes a request to the mankind that, plant trees instead of cutting them and let them grow and increase. Besides it reveals the importance of trees.

Plants play an important and vital role in the human life. Directly or indirectly plants are connected with the life of man, and apart from that life cannot be imagined. From the very beginning the relationship between plants and people was very deep. It is because at the early times men were the absolute dependants on the plants for the continuance of their lives. Though they had scanty needs still then they got all of them from the plants, viz. food to eat, cloth to wear, shelter to live, ornaments to decorate body, weapons to protect themselves from the attack of wild animals etc. Gradually their brain developed and they learnt to use the plants for their multi purpose works. They learnt the way of cultivation to get plenty of foods and they also learnt the utility of roots and leaves in order to eradicate different diseases, like vomiting, irregularity of purge, head-ache and mainly of wounds etc. Thus we may say that the plants were the friends and guardian of the early- man.

Their relationship with mankind is pertinently observed in the *Puranas*. From every angle, *Puranas* have discerned and discussed the utility and importance of plant kingdom to human society. Such *Puranas* are mostly the *Agnipurana*, the *Kurmapurana*, the *Matsyapurana*, the *Brahma Vaivartta purana*, the *Garudapurana*, the *Vayupurana* etc. The *Vayupurana* clearly states that all basic necessities of a man, viz. garments, ornaments, timber for house building, fruits, dyes, honey etc. are available from plants.<sup>2</sup>

Not only the ancient people but the modern people also greatly depend upon the plants for their day-to-day life. The only difference is that in the early times men depended directly on the plants whereas the modern men use the plants both directly and indirectly. Because the needs of the modern people are uncountable and are raising higher day by day. Being cultured and literate by applying their brain they are making efforts in different researches to find out various ways of utilization of plant by each and every part, i.e. for food, shelter, cosmetics, furniture etc. for their comfortable life. They prepare medicine from the parts of the plants’ body as it is or processing them in several ways. But unfortunately the modern men are ignoring the importance of plants.

They are also forgetting the plants' contribution. Even if they forget that the plants are the only source of life existence by giving out oxygen into the air. On the other hand, the early-man could realize the importance of plants and in return they took care of them which are elaborately narrated in the *puranas* which are great lessons for modern men.

*Puranas* severely criticize the unnecessary cutting of trees and prescribe the punishments for this prohibited act. In *Agnipurana* it is said –

*tarumsca cchedayed yasca vrksan cchayasusitalan  
asipatravane ghore pidyate yamakimkaraih* \*3

In order to protect the trees from the wood cutters' hand, there is some threatening made by the authors of *Skandapurana*. According to that cutting of trees may lead one to the hell.

*nagaropavane vrksan pramadaddhi cchinnati yah  
sa gacchen narakam nama jrmbhanam  
raudradarsanam*4

Ancient people were conscious of plantation, by thinking of its preciousness. To encourage plantation *Matsyapurana* said that by planting a single tree one can reside in heaven for 30,000 years of Indra. Not only this, the planter may have the *moksha*, i.e., end of rebirth.

*yascaikam api rajendra vrksam samsthapayen narah  
so' pi svarge vased rajan yavad indrayuta trayam  
bhutan bhavyamsca manujams trayed drumasammitan  
paramam siddhim apnoti punaravrttidurlabham*5

*Agnipurana* also glorifies in other words how: "Planting of trees brings *moksha*."6

Again it is said that a tree never betrays anyone rather than it always remains helpful in all times. They are never harmful even as a son,

who at times do harm to their parents out of greed for property.

*"pitaram nopahimsanti druma dravinalobhatah* 7

*Agnipurana* encourages becoming a lover of tree. It gives more emphasis on planting a tree by analyzing its necessity – that to have a better life, one should plant a tree and should take care of it like one's own son. Because trees are more precious and useful than a son, who are self-seekers by nature and never follow the scriptures, i.e. –

*tasmat subhavaha vrksa ropyah sreymbhivanchata  
putravat paripalyasca te putra dharmatah smrtah.  
kim dharmavimukhair martyaih kevalam  
svarthabuddhibhah  
taruputra varam ye tu pararthaikanuvrttayah* 8

Plantation is not the only work; care should be taken for their protection by not cutting them down. Therefore, *puranas* made some prohibitions against the cutting of some particular trees, i.e. *Asvattha*, *Vata* or banyan, *Bilva* or wood apple tree, *Udumbara* or fig etc. by connecting them with some religious ethics.

*asvattha vatavrksasca na cchettavyo kadacana  
na cchettavyo bilvavrksodrum barasca kadacana  
karmanyascaiva ye vrksa na cchettavya  
sreyarthibhah* 9

The regretful factor is that the modern people are not conscious regarding the value of plants and plantation like the ancient people. Though the population and their need raising tremendously, still then they are cutting down the trees carelessly and destroying the forests with their full efforts, only to maintain their luxurious lives. Now-a-days considering the importance of trees the authorities launched some plans for afforestation, viz. plantation on the road-side and celebration of '*Vanamahotsava*' etc. but due to

lack of proper care those plants become unsuccessful. After plantation care should be taken to grow them up properly. There are so many illustrations in *puranas* in this regard. According to some passages of *Agnipurana*; planting trees is not very difficult work. But after plantation right care should be taken to allow them to grow properly by protecting them from the heat of the sun, from animals as well as from the insects. Besides plenty of water and fertilizers should be supplied at due times. *Puranas* supplied a lot of ideas about the plantation of sapplings with a right distance and the use of fertilizers for them. Those passages are:-

*pravesayen nadivahan puskarinya tu karayet*  
(AP.282,4cd)

*sayam pratastu gharmarttau sitakale dinantare*  
(AP.282,7cd)

*uttamam vimsatir hasta madhyam sodosantaram  
sthanat sthanantaram karyam vrksanam dvadasavaram  
viphalah syur ghana vrksah sastrenadau hi sodhanam  
vidanga ghrtapamkaktan secayecchitavarina*  
(AP.282,8cd9&10ab)

*phalanase kulatthaisca  
masairmudgairyaivaisthilaih  
grtasitapayahsekah phalapuspaya sarvada  
matsyambhasa tu sekana vrddhir bhavati sakhinah<sup>10</sup>*  
(AP.282,10cd,11ab,13ab)

*avikajaskrccurnam yavacurnam tilani ca  
gomamsamudakanceti saptaratram nidhapayet  
utsekam sarvavrksanam phalapuspadivrddhidam  
matsyodakena sitena amranam seka isyate  
prasastam capyasokanam kaminipadatadanam  
kharjuranarikelader lavanadbhir vivardhanam  
vidamngamatmyamansadbhish sarvesam dohadam  
subham<sup>\*11</sup>*

(AP.247,28-31)

Therefore the people should be alert to learn from *puranas* about different aspects of the plantation and their protection and should let them

grow properly by which lives may be wholesome and comfortable on this earth, not only for the human beings but for all the living entities.

### Foot Notes :

1. This has been taken from the *Mahabharata* I, 68, 62, vide the *Mahabharata Adiparvan* edited by Vishnu S. Sukthanakar, Vol.I, Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, Poona, 1993, P.309. The first two lines are found in the *Brhadaranyakopanisad* also. But there it refers to semen, vide Bh.U. (op.cit) 6.4.9.,9.457.
2. Purna Chandra Ojha, *Flora in the Bhagavat Purana*, Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis of Utkal University, 2010, P.159.
3. Cf. “*indhanartham asuskanam drumancaiva patanam*” – *Agnipurana*, edited by Baladev Upadhyaya, Kasi Sanskrit Series No.174. The Chaukhamba Skt. Series Office, Varanasi, 1964.
4. Vide, *SKD* Vol.IV, 1961, p.476.
5. Vide, *The Matsyapurana*, Part-I, forwarded by H.H. Wilson, arranged by Nag Sharan Singh, First edition, Nag Publishers, Delhi, 1983, Ch. LIX, pp.278-280.
6. Cf. “*pratistham padapanam ca vaksye’ham bhuktimuktidam*” and “*papanasah parat siddhir vrksaramapratisthaya*”  
*Agnipurana* of Maharsi Vedavyasa, edited by Baladev Upadhyaya, Kasi Skt Series, No.174. The Chaukhamba Skt. Series Office, Varanasi, 1964. Ch.70, Verse Nos. 1ab and 8cd.
7. Vide, *SKD*, p.476.
8. Vide, *SKD*, p.476.
9. *Varahapurana* Ch.126.
10. *AP*, p.416.
11. *Ibid* p.360.

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## Biju Patnaik : The Dynamic Person

*Sibasundar Pattanaik*

Amongst the Chief Ministers who adorn the columns of history of Odisha name of Biju Patnaik comes up at the first place. He was not only a well-administrator but also a visionary for the future. He is a daring personality. He had a vision for Odisha and he did not bother to fulfill his aims and objectives for the good of the people of Odisha at any cost even at the cost of his post or position. His achievements are far reaching.

There can not be better expression in praise of Biju Patnaik than what Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru told of him. Pandit Nehru, the first Prime Minister of India told to Dr. Bidhan Chandra Ray, the then Chief Minister of West Bengal and later on to Dr. Harekrushna Mahatab, the then Chief Minister of Orissa like this :-

**“ Biju is a dynamic person, but Heaven knows where he will land you.”**

When the Second World War broke out India had only three aeroplanes for Indian Air Force. We the people of Orissa, particularly the people of Khordha sub-division which is now formed into Khordha District had collected money and donated one aeroplane to Indian Government which was added to its inventory to fight with Germany-Japan axis with these four planes. The then British Indian Government had to hire the



planes of a private company for transportation of our military persons and materials. Biju Patnaik was then working as Chief Pilot in that Air Company under whom several pilots were serving. All of our top politicians were behind bars due to their Quit India Movement of 1942 popularly known as August Movement. A few leaders were left out and their leader was Aruna

Asaf Ali. Jaya Prakash Narayan had come from U.S.A. then. C. Rajagopalchari had been released early. Biju Patnaik and at his direction other pilots took these Indian leaders C. Rajagopalchari, Jaya Prakash Narayan, Patabhi Sitaramaiya, Ram Manohar Lohia etc. who were managing political movement - August Movement, popularly known as "Augusties" to different places in false names and returned back after these politicians presided over the meetings at different places. Biju Patnaik was so daring pilot that he dropped the plane in side the jungle, sea shore or river bed or other un-suitable regions for landing the plane for these meetings. Of course action of Biju Patnaik was detected by British Government and he was imprisoned at Fort William at Calcutta.

His imprisonment was short lived since he was released on parole at the instance of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and by the order of Mr. Wavel the Governor General and Vice-Roy of India in his mission to bring three socialist leaders of Indonesia kept in house arrest there to attend a socialist conference at Delhi. Biju went with his wife Yana Patnaik who kept her first son aged nineteen days in the care of Biju's sister. Biju brought these Indonesian leaders daring hazardous bullet firing by the Dutch Government under whom Indonesia was a dominion.

Biju had also piloted in Pakistan Insurrection of 1948 and Indo-China war of 1962. He had a room by the side of Pandit Nehru's room -even he was a Chief Minister of Orissa then. He had also looked after defence matters of Indo-Pak war of 1965.

The aforesaid facts are the daring achievements of Biju Babu as a pilot to substantiate Nehru statement. He had also achieved his daring jobs in peace time for the betterment of our state. If these aspects would

be considered Nehru's statements would be more proved.

He was a pioneer in reaching science to the ordinary man as he introduced Kaling Prize to be given to the scientist who simplified writings of big scientist by writing essay or books for popularisation of science and for advancement of science. That prize is given under the UNESCO. He introduced three phased Panchayati Raj in Orissa first at Gram Panchayat, Block and District level in accordance with the report of Balwant Ray Mehta Committee. Of course the first Panchayat opened in Rajasthan by Nehru did not proceed and Kerala's Panchayati Raj Bill failed in those days. Biju Babu made laws for some women membership in Panchayat system.

Biju Babu was the pioneer of the establishment of Panchayat industries in Orissa which were mainly based upon the local raw materials. In this context examples can be given about the small and medium scale sugar, wooden furniture tiles industries etc. He had felt that the houses of the people were being destroyed by fire. So he introduced tile industries, so that the people used to put tiles roof instead of thatching straw.

He was a harbinger of the women upliftment. Several women societies were established and they used to produce some household articles. Now this system has developed in a magnificent way for the women's upliftment by introduction of self help societies. He had also established several girls' schools and women colleges for the educational upliftment of women.

The greatest achievement of Biju Babu is the introduction of "Ombudsman"- System in



Orissa, which was suggested by Morarjee Desai in his one man commission of Administrative reforms. Mr. Desai had reported for introduction of Lokapal and Lokayukta. The former is to look after the corruption in the case of ministers and the later is to look after the corruption by officials. Those systems are being carried on in Odisha till now even though attempts by Indira Gandhi, Rajiv Gandhi, Atal Bihari Vajapayee and Manmohan Singh have failed till now. We hope that India would be able to achieve this goal in near future. Of course the system is introduced in some states but Biju Babu is pioneer in this regard.

Without the help of the Central Government he established Paradeep Port and built State Highway for transport of minerals to the port. The central recognition was post saction only.

He felt miserable for the plight of Chaukidars (Village Police) and Dafadars (Village Police Supervisors) who were being provided with scanty money for their remuneration by the villagers. He regularised them by making them Gram Rakhis.

He was not hankering after power. He introduced Kamaraj Plan through Mr. Kamaraj and he was also pioneer by resigning from the post of Chief Minister first in India so as to give scope to younger generation.

Biju Babu would have been a Prime Minister of India, but some Odia Politicians created huddles for it. It may not be out of place to mention here that, even though Biju Babu and Late Uma Charan Pattanaik, the then M.P. of Ganjam were politically in different camps Biju Babu did not have any ill feeling against Later carried the dead body by piloting the plane from Delhi to Bhubaneswar. Biju Babu's Kalinga Airways supplied foods in Nepha (presently Nagaland). He was also instrument in controlling Naga insurgency.

So, Mr. Nehru's statements in praise of Biju's dynamic actions and his adventurism are proper appreciations of our beloved Odia Leader.

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## Panchayati Raj in Odisha : An Overview

*Rabindra Kumar Behuria*

Odisha became a Separate Province in 1936. The only significant step in the decentralization 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 villagers could have played visible role in the working of 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 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 Odisha a pioneering role in the democratic decentralization process much earlier to the Balwantrai Mehta Committee Report.

The fate of Gram Panchayat during 1950's and early 1960's several was under the mercy of 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 I.A.S cadre officer to become Director of Panchayats in the rank of Joint Secretary and later revealed 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 Scheme of Panchayatiraj which was first adopted in Rajasthan on the 2<sup>nd</sup> October, 1959 was the result of the recommendations of the Balwantrai Mehta Committee. In 1956, the Committee was formed to study the working of the Community Development programmes and suggest remedies for removal of defects therein. This Committee is sometimes known as the committee on the Democratic Decentralization. The Mehta Committee submitted its report in 1957 and came to a conclusion that "We will never be able to evoke local interest and excite local

initiative in the field of development unless we create representative and democratic institutions and invest them with adequate power and appropriate finances". The Committee arrived at the concept of "democratic decentralization" through the broadening of the concept of people's participation in community development. It recommended to take away more powers from the Centre and States and to vest them with the local units of administration.

It also recommended for three-tier system of rural administration, namely, the Gram Panchayats at the base (i.e. at the village level), the Zilla Parishad at the top (i.e. in the district level), and the Panchayat Samiti in the middle (i.e. at the Block level). The system is popularly known as Panchayati Raj. As written earlier, Rajasthan was the first State in India which adopted this new scheme on 2<sup>d</sup> October, 1959. Odisha worked out this scheme on the 26<sup>th</sup> January, 1961. Almost all the States in India adopted this system. Thus, the recommendation of the Metha Committee brought about a political and social revolution in rural India.

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 Shri 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 in to 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 the Secretary. Thus the three-tier Panchayati Raj

system introduced in Odisha took few years to get stabilised.

### **Metha'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 Scheduled Caste and Scheduled 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 Gram Sabha. 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 and Cooperative Societies etc. Sometimes minor disputes among the citizens of villages are also settled by the village Panchayat.

### **Panchayat Samiti or Block Level Bodies:**

The block is the intermediary in the three-tier system and is the centre of developmental work. The Panchayat Samiti consists of by taking -

- (a) about 20 members elected by all the Panchayats in the Block;
- (b) two women members and one member from S.C and one from S.T, if they do not possess adequate representation otherwise by the process. Panchayat Samiti is headed by a Chairman elected by the members of the Samiti. The B.D.O shall be Executive Officers in the Samiti and shall function under the control of Chairman of Samiti. The Executive authority of the Samiti shall be vested in the Chairman and it shall be his duty to

have the resolution of the Samiti implemented through the Executive Officer of the Samiti. The Chairman of the Samiti shall convene and conduct the meeting of the Samiti and have the power to inspect and supervise all works undertaken by the Samiti. The Vice-Chairman of the Samiti shall be elected by the non-official members of the Samiti. He will exercise such power as delegated to him from time to time and when the office of the Chairman is vacant, he shall act as the Chairman.

#### **Functions :**

- (i) Planning, execution and supervision of the development programmes, schemes and works in the Block relating to the community development.
- (ii) Management control and spread of primary education in the Block.
- (iii) Supervisory powers over the Gram Panchayats within the Block to be exercised in such manner and to such extent as may be prescribed.
- (iv) Management of such trusts and endowments and other institutions as may be entrusted to them under any law for time being in force or under the Government.
- (v) Supervision of enforcement of laws relating to vacation and registration of births and deaths.
- (vi) The budgets of Gram Panchayats are to be submitted to the Samiti and the Samiti will approve the budgets.

#### **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 State Legislature and Parliament, Medical Officers of the district,

District Collectors, officer 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 programmes and developmental works. Besides this, it deals in maintenance of education, dispensaries, hospital, minor education etc.

#### **Panchayati Raj and Biju Babu:**

Biju in his second spell as Chief Minister of Odisha was more determined and exhibited sheer self confidence and unremitting zeal to streamline Panchayati Raj. 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 can not 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 Odisha Assembly that provided for 33% of reservation for women including SC & ST women. So for the first time, more than 28 thousand women were elected to various Gram Panchayats and Panchayat Samitis and Zilla Parishads. It was further provided that one-third of Zilla Parishads would have exclusively women Chairpersons. In case of the Panchayat

Samitis and the Gram Panchayats, one of the two office-bearers, i.e. Chairpersons or Vice-Chairpersons must be woman. It must be pointed out that Biju Pattnaik's policies on reservation for women were followed by many other State Governments in India that culminated in the 73<sup>rd</sup> and 74<sup>th</sup> 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 in 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 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 Panchayats Samitis and Zilla Parishad deserve mention as there were the outcome of the Amendment made during Biju's Chief Ministership. In case of Gram Panchayat three mentionable points are:

- (i) The post of Naib Sarpanch is reserved for the women members, if the Sarpanch is a male.
- (ii) One-third of the total wards are reserved for women candidate including S.C and S.T candidates.
- (iii) 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 Samitis the following features deserve mention:

- (i) One-third of the total seats are reserved for women members including women members of S.C and S.T category.

- (ii) Provision has been made to reserve the office of the Vice-Chairman for a woman in case the Chairman is male.

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:

- (i) 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 district.
- (ii) One-third of the seats are to be reserved for women members including S.T and S.C women.
- (iii) 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 the Zilla Parishad. Similarly persons having more than one spouse have been disqualified from contesting the election. The Government headed by the Biju Patnaik also set up quite a few Commissions of finance for the Panchayati Raj Institutions in order of offer methods and mechanisms for resources funding thus unleashing some genuine purpose to the decentralization of power.

#### **Problems:**

Diverse and huge problems in the functions and the 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 there was domination of the bureaucracy over PRI's. 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 PRI's.

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 realise the 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 public.

#### **Suggestions for removal of these defects:**

The Government should take to spread education rapidly. The Government should also change its former attitude towards the local bodies. The local bodies need better personnel as well as a better office organization and methods. The local bodies should have adequate finance at their disposal to take up manifold developmental activities. Local bodies should be away as far as possible, from the arena of nasty party politics. Last but not the least, the success of the Panchayati Raj and other Local Self Governing Institutions, public life should be free from corruption. People and the leaders should possess a high moral standard. They should be honest, truth binding, vigilant and well-informed. The establishment of the Panchayati Raj has led to the quest of new leadership. The new leadership should be “development-oriented” and not “power-motivated”. The success of Panchayati Raj much depends on this pattern of emerging leadership. If it is successful, it will bring a new era of prosperity. We may quote De Jocqueville, “local institutions constitute the strength of free nations. A nation may establish a

system of free Government, but without local institutions, it cannot have the spirit of liberty”.

#### **Conclusion:**

The whole exercise of decentralization of powers is equivalent to that of transfer of power from the British to the Indians. The Panchayati Raj set-up is still in experimental stage. Every experiment has its problems and promises. The Panchayati Raj may have weakness today, but it will be a vital force of tomorrow in shaping and developing the richer and prosperous life of people of India. It requires a movement of the masses. For mobilizing the masses for the new task, the leaders are to be trained. It is needless to say that the Panchayati Raj system acts like the grassroot of democracy and a time may come when Jay Prakash Narayan’s dream of “Gram Sabha to Lok Sabha” may materialise through it. Besides, the democratic decentralization took its shape for better administration and developmental perspectives for quick rural developmental and cooperation of local people. State Government does not possess adequate wisdom of local affairs and problems. In this sense, it constitutes a significant constitution to the theory and practice of nation-building activities in the developing areas.

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## Speech of Shri Prafulla Chandra Ghadai, Minister, Finance in the OLA on the Occasion of Presentation of the Budget for the year 2012-13

At the outset, I express my sincere gratitude to you and the Leader of the House, Hon'ble Chief Minister for giving me this opportunity to present the Budget for the financial year 2012-13 in this August House. I take this opportunity to express my heartfelt gratitude to the Hon'ble Leader of Opposition and Hon'ble Members of this House for having given me unstinted support in the previous years. I expect that I will continue to receive their affection and goodwill in the coming days. I also take this opportunity to express my gratefulness to the people of our State for extending their massive support to the Government under the able leadership of our beloved Chief Minister Sri Naveen Patnaik in the recently concluded Panchayat election.

### **2. Macro Economic Outlook**

**2.1** Even as the global economy had started recovering from the last episode of recession in 2008-09, the sovereign debt crisis which has erupted in the Euro zone has further unsettled the global macroeconomic environment. It is having its cascading effects in the emerging market economies including India. As a result of these uncertainties, the global recovery process looks more protracted. As a matter of fact, since September, 2011, different agencies have already revised their growth forecast for the US and the Euro area. In this context, let me quote the assessment of the Reserve Bank of India in their latest Financial Stability Report:- *“Global uncertainties have increased with prolongation of slowdown, aggravation of sovereign debt and lack of credible resolution mechanism at the current juncture. The impact of these global developments is felt in India through trade, finance, commodity and confidence channels. Adverse global developments along with domestic factors such as, persistent food inflation, high energy prices, capacity constraints in certain sectors and slackening investment activity are likely to pose continuing challenges for sustaining a high growth”*.

**2.2** The impact of Global uncertainty has thus brought down the growth expectations for 2011-12. According to the Advance Estimates of the Central Statistical Organization (CSO), the GDP growth rate for the current fiscal is expected to be 6.9% registering a sharp decline from the growth rate of 8.4% recorded last year. Even the growth forecast for the State's Economy in 2011-12 according to

the Advance Estimates is 7.2% as compared to the growth rate of 8.6% recorded in the previous financial year.

**2.3** Recessionary trends in the global economy and resultant slow down in the national economy might impact the collection of taxes of the union Government as well as that of the State Government.

### **3. Focus Areas of the next year's budget:**

Let me at the very outset briefly outline the focus areas of my budget proposals for the next fiscal year:

**3.1** As you know, the year 2012-13 is the first year of the Twelfth Five Year Plan. The approach paper of the plan has the theme "faster, sustainable and more inclusive growth". Although the Twelfth Five Year Plan is yet to be finalized, the broad sectoral priorities have been factored in to the budget proposals for 2012-13.

**3.2** The budget proposals seek to further consolidate and strengthen the interventions made for ensuring Food, Employment and Health security for the citizens of our State.

**3.3** Efforts have been made to upgrade the state of the infrastructure for enabling the State's economy to continue to move along a higher growth trajectory. Recourse will be taken to the Public Private Partnership (PPP) mode extensively, wherever feasible, for achieving this task.

**3.4** Continuation of the growth momentum in the State's Economy calls for a major step up in capital spending. Accordingly, I have made an earnest endeavour to increase allocation for capital expenditure in the budget.

**3.5** I have also attempted to strengthen the social security cover for the weaker sections and vulnerable groups as well as to provide larger allocation for enrichment of human capital.

### **4. Pre-budget Consultation**

**4.1** Having regard to the need for making the process of budget preparation more consultative, two rounds of discussion were held with a cross section of the civil society comprising economists, experts, representatives of the trade & industries, non government organizations, representatives of farmers' organizations, trade unions etc. We have received valuable inputs during the consultation. There was broad consensus on the following key points:

- i. Higher investment in Agriculture sector.
- ii. Adequate provision for maintenance of Capital Assets.
- iii. Enhanced allocation for Health & Education.
- iv. Higher outlay for Capital investment.



- v. Greater Tax efforts
- vi. Rationalization and phasing out of non-merit subsidies.
- vii. Institutionalization of Outcome monitoring.

4.2 I have tried to address some of these issues in my budget proposals. I would also like to inform the house that this kind of pre-budget consultation will be institutionalized in the coming years.

## **5. Revised Estimates for financial year 2011-12**

The Revised Estimates of receipts for 2011-12 have been worked out on the basis of the trend of receipts during the first 9 months of the current financial year, as well as the growth projection for the national and State's economy. Similarly, the Revised Estimates of expenditure has been worked out on the basis of the Budget Estimates, the additional provision made in the Supplementary as well as the actual expenditure during the first three quarters.

## **6. Abstract of Budget Estimates of the Financial Year 2012-13**

The Budget Estimates for 2012-13 have been prepared keeping in view the recommendations of the 13th Finance Commission, the State Plan Outlay as decided in the official level discussion with the Planning Commission and allocative priorities of the State Government.

**6.1** Estimates of the State's own revenue receipts have been made on the basis of the trend of collection of first nine months. With regard to the devolution of Central Taxes, we have adopted the assessment of the 13th Finance Commission. The quantum of central support for the State Plan has been estimated on the basis of the official level discussion with the Planning Commission.

**6.2** Based on the anticipated receipt of State's share in central taxes, State's own tax and non-tax revenue and grants from Centre, the Revenue Receipt for the year 2012-13 has been estimated at Rs.43832.74 crore. For the year 2012-13, our own tax and non-tax revenue has been estimated at Rs.20810.28 crore, which is 13.1% more than the Revised Estimate for 2011-12. We propose to achieve Tax/GSDP ratio of 6% in 2012-13 compared to our achievement of 5.74% in 2010-11.

**6.3** The Non-Plan expenditure estimate of Rs.34350.49 crore includes provision of Rs.12342.75 crore, Rs.5800.00 crore, Rs.4511.59 crore and Rs.3123.32 crore towards salaries, pension, interest payment and maintenance of capital assets respectively.

**6.4** As I have mentioned earlier, after discussion with the Planning Commission, the outlay for the State's Annual Plan 2012-13 has been fixed at Rs.17200.00 crore for the financial year 2012-13, which includes an outlay of Rs.15200.00 crore for the Government sector and Rs.2000.00 crore for the Public Sector Undertakings.

**6.5** The total expenditure proposed in the Budget Estimates for 2012-13 including Debt repayment is Rs.52030.70 crore. The Non-Plan expenditure is estimated at Rs.34350.49 crore with an increase

of 14.65% over the Revised Estimates for 2011-12. The State Plan, Central Plan and Centrally Sponsored Plan expenditure have been estimated at Rs.15200.00 crore, Rs.829.78 crore and Rs.1650.43 crore respectively totalling to Rs.17680.21 crore, which represents an increase of 19.27% over the Revised outlay for the year 2011-12.

Let me now enumerate some qualitative aspects of the Budget Estimates for 2012-13.

**6.6** Capital component of our Government expenditure has stagnated at around 1.5 - 2% of our GSDP during the past 10 years. Sustenance of the growth momentum will require larger quantum of Capital investment. Keeping this in view, Capital investment in our budget has been stepped up by 25%. With this increased allocation, it is estimated that the capital expenditure would go up to nearly 3% of the GSDP.

**6.7** Allocations for maintenance and upkeep of Capital assets has also been enhanced by 20% from Rs.2678.43 crore to Rs.3123.32 crore.

**6.8** Priority to allocation for development expenditure i.e. expenditure on Social and Economic Services for attaining higher levels of social and economic development is one of the goals of public expenditure management. We have been trying to provide larger allocation for developmental expenditure in the last few years. Accordingly, the ratio of developmental expenditure to total expenditure has gone up from 55% in 2006-07 to nearly 70% in 2012-13.

**6.9** The Budgeted Expenditure for 2012-13 will be financed through estimated revenue receipts of Rs.43842.74 crore, recovery of loans and advances of Rs.240.29 crore and borrowing and other receipts of Rs.7947.67 crore. The State's dependence on borrowing has reduced with net borrowing estimated at Rs.3260.54 crore for FY 2012-13 which is only 1.25% of GSDP.

## **7. Sectoral Highlights**

I wish to mention here that although higher allocations have been made for all departments, but I do not intend to take more time of the House to elaborate allocation of all departments. Now, I wish to enumerate some highlights of expenditure proposals under some major sectors.

### **7.1 Agriculture and Allied Activities**

#### **7.1.1 Agriculture Department**

In our State 65% livelihood is derived from Agriculture. So, utmost priority is accorded to develop the agriculture sector. Allocation for Agriculture Department has been substantially stepped up from Rs.1167.98 Crore in 2011-12 to Rs.1516.16 Crore in 2012-13. There is an increase of 42.64% of the outlay under State Plan.

- Rs.392.66 Cr has been provided in the Budget Estimates for 2012-13 under Rashtriya Krushi Vikas Yojana (RKVY).

- Allocation for **Jalanidhi** Scheme has been increased from Rs.63.15 Cr in 2011-12 to Rs.100 Cr in 2012-13. In addition, Rs.150 Cr has been provided for installation of 10,000 bore wells during 2012-13.
- Allocation for farm Mechanisation has been increased from Rs.75 Cr in 2011-12 to Rs.90 Cr in 2012-13.
- To modernise the farming system and for better utilisation of labour force, Rs.90 Cr has been provided to extend subsidy to the farmers during the Year 2012-13 as against Rs.75 Cr in 2011-12.
- Under Integrated Watershed Management Programme (IWMP), the State share has been provided at Rs.26.55 Cr in 2012-13 against Rs.8.65 Cr in 2011-12.
- Rs.22.13 Cr has been provided in 2012-13 under Odisha Rural Livelihood Programme (JEEBIKA).
- Rs. 50.00 Cr has been provided during 2012-13 for promotion of horticulture under State Plan.

### **7.1.2 Water Resources Department**

The total cultivable land in our State is 61.65 lakh Ha. Till date 30.15 lakh Ha. is under irrigation which is about 49% of the total cultivable land. In the 12th Plan period it has been proposed to create additional irrigation potential of 9.36 lakh Ha. which is about 15 % of the total cultivable area.

- Total outlay of Rs.3466.42 crore has been provided under Plan and Non-Plan for Water Resources Department.
- Allocation for major & medium irrigation project is proposed at Rs.1489.63 crore under State Plan.
- The outlay for flow minor irrigation is proposed at Rs.397.64 crore and the allocation for lift irrigation is Rs.312.00 crore including Rs.150.00 crore for mega lift projects.
- The proposed provision for construction of Check Dam is Rs.216.14 crore. The allocations for flood control and drainage is proposed at Rs.284.00 crore and an amount of Rs.86.00 crore will be provided for command area development.
- With these outlays irrigation potential for 1.02 lakh ha will be created in 2012-13.

### **7.1.3 Co-operation Department**

Rs.241.69 Cr has been provided for the Cooperation Department under both Plan and Non-Plan for the year 2012-13. State Plan allocation has been increased by 26%.

- Rs.98.7 Cr has been provided for interest subsidy to farmers on crop loans.
- Rs.15 Cr has been provided for provision of crop insurance to farmers.
- Rs.15 Cr has been provided under the awards of 13th Finance Commission for development of 37 nos of market yards.
- Rs.5 Cr has been provided in the budget for renovation and technical up-gradation of Bargarh Sugar Mill and Aska Co-operative Sugar Industries.

#### **7.1.4 Fisheries and Animal Resources Development Department**

Rs.385.84 Cr has been provided in the Budget of Fisheries and Animal Resources Development Department in 2012-13.

- Rs. 15.84 Cr has been provided in the Budget Estimates for 2012-13 for opening of new Livestock Aid Centres.
- Rs.2.90 Cr has been provided in the CSP Scheme (50:50) under the Accident Insurance in 2012-13 to cover 10 lakh poor fishermen to insure their lives.
- Rs. 6.92 Cr has been provided for KALYANI Project in 2012-13 which is being assisted by Bharat Agro Infrastructure Foundation (BAIF).

#### **7.1.5 Forest & Environment Department**

Allocation of Rs.593.08 Cr has been made for Forest & Environment Department in the budget estimate for the year 2012-13 including State Plan outlay for Rs.269.10 Cr.

- Rs.90 Cr has been provided to the externally assisted Odisha Forest Sector Development Project for afforestation and distribution of sapling for growing trees outside the forest area.
- It is targeted to take up afforestation over 2 lakh Ha including rehabilitation of degraded forest. Rs.6.15 Cr has been allocated for the new scheme "Ama Jungle Yojana".
- Rs.14.55 Cr has been allocated in 2012-13 towards Plantation in urban areas and Rs.6.00 Cr has been provided for plantation in bald hills.
- Rs. 5.00 Cr has been provided for management and development of Elephant Corridor in the State during the year 2012-13.
- Price of Kenduleaf purchase has been increased from 35 paise per 20 leaves to 40 paise per 20 leaves for benefit of about 8 lakh pluckers. It is proposed to cover all the Kenduleaf pluckers under Jan Shree Bima Yojana during the year 2012-13.

## 7.2 Social Services

### 7.2.1 Health & Family Welfare Department

Rs.1820.40 crore under both Plan and Non-Plan has been allocated for Health and Family Welfare Department, which is 25 % more than the present year's allocation. Effort has been made to reduce the out of pocket expenditure for health care by increasing the outlay for provision of medicine and diet to the in the Government run hospitals.

- **Provision for Medicines:** Allocation for purchase of medicines has been substantially increased from Rs.50.00 crore to Rs.104.56 crore which is 110% more than the current year's allocation.
- **Allocation for Diet:** Rs.22.72 crore has been allocated to provide diet to the Indoor Patients, which is 37% excess over the present year's allocation.
- **Augmentation of Intake Capacity of Govt. Medical Colleges:** I have already mentioned earlier that strengthening of health security of our citizens is a major focus area of my budget proposals. Needless to say that we cannot improve health security unless we augment availability of Doctors for our public health facilities. Keeping this in view, we have decided to enhance the intake capacity of all the three Medical Colleges from 150 to 250 within a period of four years. This project will require investment of Rs.400.00 crore for development of necessary infrastructure and other facilities. Rs.32.30 crore has been allocated for this project under State Plan.
- **Launching of Emergency Medical Ambulance Services:** Launching of "Emergency Medical Ambulance Services" in the State would be another major intervention for strengthening health security. In the first phase 15 districts will be covered under this new scheme. Rs.10.00 crore from Odisha Health System Project Fund has been allocated during current financial year for purchase of Ambulances. In the present allocation operational cost of Rs.6.22 crore has been provided.
- **State Share of NRHM:** Rs.120.00 crore has been provided as State Share for the schemes implemented under NRHM.
- **Externally Aided Project :** For Odisha Health System Project Fund Rs.62.59 crore has been provided.
- **Un-interrupted power supply facility:** Rs.6.00 crore has been provided to facilitate un-interrupted power supply to Medical Colleges, Sishu Bhawan, District Headquarter Hospitals, etc.
- **Biju Gramin Swasthya Sibir Scheme:** An outlay of Rs.3.00 crore has been provided under the scheme to hold Health Camps in the inaccessible areas.

- **Provision for construction of Buildings:** For infrastructure development of Medical Colleges, staff quarters, Sub-centre buildings and new PHC buildings, Rs.99.30 crore has been provided under State Plan including Thirteenth Finance Commission Grants.

### 7.2.2 School & Mass Education Department

Total allocation in School and Mass Education Department is enhanced from Rs.5307.44 crore to Rs.6525.40 crore this year.

- Rs.505.00 crore is provided towards State matching Contribution for Sarva Sikshya Abhiyan (SSA). Further, Rs.204.00 crore is provided under 13th FC award for the Scheme.
- Rs.45.00 crore is provided for distribution of bicycles to Class-X students' to the girls students and SC and ST students of different schools including the schools managed by ST and SC Development Department.
- Rs.4.50 crore is provided for Pathani Samanta Mathematics Talent Scholarship.
- Rs.150.00 crore is provided under Rashtriya Madhyamika Sikshya Abhiyan (RMSA) towards State matching Contribution.
- Rs.628.40crore has been provided for Grant-in-aid to non-Government schools.
- Rs.2.19 crore is provided towards block grant to the newly eligible Non-Govt Madrasas.
- Rs.12.80 crore as State Share under the Centrally Sponsored Scheme has been provided for implementation of Information and Communication Technology programme.
- Rs.42.95 crore is provided towards State Share for establishment of Model Schools in backward districts.
- Rs.160.00 crore has been provided towards State Share for implementation of Mid Day Meal (MDM) Scheme.

### 7.2.3 Higher Education Department

Rs.1290.28 crore has been provided for Higher Education together under Plan and Non Plan sector for the year 2012-13.

- Rs.9.66 crore and Rs.69.40 crore have been provided for infrastructure development of Universities and Colleges respectively.
- Rs.1.50 crore has been provided towards exemption of tuition fees and examination fees of the students of flood and draught affected areas.
- Rs.12.00 crore has been provided for Professional Scholarship and Rs. 6.03 Cr. has been provided for other Scholarships.

- Rs.737.85 crore has been provided for grant in aid to Non-Govt. Aided Colleges.
- Rs.18.60 crore has been provided towards state share for opening of Govt. Colleges in the districts with low Gross Enrolment Ratio.

#### **7.2.4 Panchayati Raj Department**

Rs.2563.83 crore is provided both under Plan and Non-Plan as against last year's Rs.2181.83 crore with more than a 17% increase in allocation.

- Rs.643.18 crore has been provided as grant-in-aid to P.R Institutions on the recommendation of the 13th Finance Commission,
- Rs.701.92 crore has been provided in the budget towards assistance to Panchayati Raj Institutions as per the recommendation of the 3rd State Finance Commission.
- Rs.165.00 crore has been provided under Gopabandhu Gramin Yojana for development of 11 districts.
- Rs.339.95 crore has been provided under BRGF programme being implemented in 19 districts.
- Rs.150.00 crore has been provided towards State share of Indira Awas Yojana for providing houses to the BPL families.
- Rs.100.00 crore has also been provided for the scheme 'Mo Kudia' as against last year's Rs.60.00 crore.
- Rs.100.00 crore has been provided in the budget for the World Bank assisted Targetted Rural Initiative for Poverty Termination and Infrastructure (TRIPTI).
- Rs.160.00 crore has been provided towards State matching contribution under Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme.
- Rs.60.00 crore has been provided in the budget for development of Gram Panchayat / Panchayat Samiti roads.
- Rs.5.00 crore is allocated under 'Aam Admi Bima Yojana' to provide life insurance cover for the landless agricultural labourers.
- Rs.113.00 crore is provided for repair of Grama Panchayat roads.

#### **7.2.5 ST & SC Development Department**

The total allocation to the Department is Rs.1605.71 crore against last year's Rs.1286.33 crore with an increase of more than 24 % in budgetary provision.

- Rs.294.79 crore has been provided in the Non-Plan towards pre-matric scholarship.
- Rs.226.00 crore is now provided for completion of 1464 Hostels for SC/ST students.
- Rs.150.04 crore has been provided for infrastructure development of Educational Institutions and construction of Staff quarters in ST & SC Development Department Schools under State Plan.
- Rs.28.00 crore has been provided for special plan in KBK districts.
- Rs.160.95 crore has been provided under Special Central Assistance to Tribal Area Sub-Plan under State Plan to augment income of tribal people through different income generating programmes.
- Rs.43.50 crore has been provided under non-plan for maintenance and repair of staff quarters (Rs.7.5 crore) and maintenance / special repair / addition / alteration / renovation of School & Hostel buildings (Rs.36.00 crore).

#### 7.2.6 Women & Child Development Department

Outlay of Rs.2723.69 crore has been provided under Plan and Non-Plan for Women & Child Development Department.

- **Social Security Pension Schemes:** To Provide Social Security Pension to the senior citizens, differently abled persons and widows, an outlay of Rs.918.19 crore has been provided.
- **MAMATA:**— Hon’ble members are aware that a new scheme “MAMATA” has been launched by the State Government during the current year for providing nutrition and health care support to the pregnant and lactating women. Under this scheme Rs.5000/- is being paid to each beneficiary for pre-natal and post-natal care. Rs.275.70 crore has been provided for this scheme under State Plan.
- **Supplementary Nutrition Programme:** Rs.540.00 crore has been provided for continuation of this ICDS Programme.
- **National Family benefit scheme:** Rs.30.20 crore under State Plan has been provided for this scheme by which financial assistance of Rs.10,000/- will be paid to a BPL family in the event of death of its primary bread earner.
- **Seed money support to Women’s Self Help Groups:** Rs.48.48 crore has been allocated for seed money support to the Women’s Self Help Groups, which is 25% more than the current year’s allocation.

#### 7.2.7 Labour and Employees State Insurance Department

Rs.68.84 crore has been provided in the budget under Plan and non-Plan for this Department.



- Rs.20.00 crore has been provided towards State share of Rashtriya Swasthya Bima Yojana (RSBY).

### 7.2.8 Employment & Technical Education and Training Department

Outlay of Rs.97.13 crore and Rs.84.33 crore have been provided in the budget of this Department under plan and non-plan respectively.

- **Skill Development:** I have already mentioned earlier that strengthening employment security is one of our top most priorities. There is a massive skill deficit all over the country in the context of rapid economic growth. This has presented us with a unique opportunity to equip our youths with marketable skill sets. We would like to impart them employable skills through the technical institutes like polytechnics and ITIs through tailor made courses for the upcoming industries and services sector in the State. Therefore, in order to develop a synergy between the technical education wing and the State Employment Mission, the composite Department of “Employment & Technical Education and Training” has been created. It would be our endeavour to provide placement linked skill training to one million youths during the Twelfth Five Year Plan. Accordingly, allocation of Rs.50.00 crore has been provided for the Employment Mission. The Department would also leverage and source funds for skill development from the ongoing schemes of the Central Government as well as from the National Skill Development Corporation.
- Rs.4.00 crore has been provided in the budget under State Plan towards establishment of Xavier’s Institute of Management (XIMB) at Sambalpur and Bolangir. This will go a long way in providing quality management education to the students of the State.
- Rs.10.40 crore has been provided for infrastructure development and procurement of tools & equipment for Engineering schools and polytechnics.
- Provision of Rs.4.00 crore has also been made towards State Share for Skill Development of Youth in 5 Districts affected by LWE (Left Wing Extremism) through ITIs. It is proposed to train 5000 (1000 in long term courses and 4000 in short term courses) trainees per annum for three years in the existing Govt. and Private Institutes.
- Rs.14.00 crore has been provided for infrastructure development of constituent colleges of BPUT. Besides, Rs.12.56 crore has also been provided for infrastructure and civil works of IGIT, Sarang, Government Engineering Colleges at Berhampur and Bhawanipatna etc.

## 7.3 Economic Services

### 7.3.1 Industries Department

An Outlay of Rs.9.93 crore has been provided in the budget for Industries Department both under plan and non-plan.

- For up-gradation of industrial infrastructure of Plastic, Polymer and Allied Cluster at Balasore under IIUS, a provision of Rs.1.13 crore has been provided.
- Rs.2.00 crore has been provided in the budget under State Plan for refund of Sales Tax to Mega Project under Special Industrial Promotion Assistance (SIPA).
- Subsidy of Rs.3.25 crore has been provided in the budget in shape of financial assistance against VAT reimbursement in Large Sector.

### **7.3.2 MSME Department**

To provide focussed attention on the development of the MSME Sector as a sequel to rapid industrialisation in the State, the new MSME Department has been created. Outlay of Rs.52.50 crore has been provided in the budget of this Department both under plan and non-plan.

### **7.3.3 Handloom, Textile & Handicrafts Department**

Outlays of Rs.77.06 crore and Rs.41.08 crore have been provided in the budget of this Department under plan and non-plan respectively.

- Rs.30.00 crore has been provided for revival, reform and restructuring of the Handloom Sector.
- Rs.12.60 crore and Rs.7.45 crore have been provided under State Plan for promotion of Handloom Industries and Sericulture respectively.
- Besides, for Integrated Handloom Development Scheme as a marketing Incentive, Rs.5.30 crore has been provided under in B.E. 2012-13.
- For promotion of handicraft Industries Rs.2.74 crore has been provided under State Plan.

### **7.3.4 Science & Technology Department**

An out lay of Rs.43.68 crore has been provided in the Budget of this Department under Plan & Non-plan.

- In order to spread awareness in the field of astronomy, astrophysics and space science a new Planetarium will be established at Sambalpur for which allocation of Rs.5.00 crore has been provided.
- Rs.3.05 crore has been provided for development of Bio-Technology Laboratories in different Institutions & Universities which will be used by Researchers & students.
- Rs.3.4 crore has been provided for construction of a green building for OREDA.

### **7.3.5 Information & Technology Department**

The Budgetary allocation for Information & Technology Department is Rs.122.63 crore both under Plan & Non-plan.

- Rs.20.60 crore has been provided towards implementation of e-Governance Projects as per National e-Governance Programme.
- Rs.12.00 crore has been provided in the budget for infrastructure development of IIIT, Bhubaneswar, which includes creation of Training Centre, Guest House, Research Laboratories & Staff Qrs.
- Provision of Rs.35.70 crore has been made from the 13th Finance Commission Grant for incentivising issue of UID.

### **7.3.6 Public Enterprises Department**

It has been proposed to provide total outlay of Rs.2.47 crore in the Budget of PE Department together under Plan & Non-Plan.

- Rs.1.00 crore has been provided in the budget of 2012- 13 towards Corpus fund of Odisha State Renewal Fund Society (OSRFS) for continuance of Public Enterprise Reforms beyond DFID supported programme period.

### **7.3.7 Planning & Coordination Department**

A total provision of Rs.1328.32 crore has been made for P&C Department under Plan & Non-plan.

- Rs.80.00 crore has been provided for Western Odisha Development Council.
- Rs.120.00 crore has been provided in the budget for continuance of Biju KBK Yojana for the development of most backward regions like KBK.
- Rs.28.50 crore has been made for implementation of Biju Kandhamala O Gajapati Yojana.
- Rs.540.00 crore has been provided in the budget for implementation of Integrated Action Plan in Tribal & Backward Districts.
- Rs.153.00 crore has been made for implementation of Special Development Programme.
- Provision of Rs.10.00 crore has been made under Crop Husbandry for extension of Crop estimation to Gram Panchayat level.

### **7.3.8 Food Supplies & Consumer Welfare Department**

An outlay of Rs.1192.58 crore has been provided in the Budget of this Department under both Plan & Non-plan.

- In order to strengthen food security, a new scheme for doorstep delivery of food grains at the retail points will be implemented during FY 2012-13. This initiative is expected to enhance the efficiency of the Public Distribution System (PDS). Accordingly, allocation for the Rice @ Rs.2.00 per Kg scheme has been increased to Rs.1140.57 crore. This also includes provision of rice to the riot affected families of Kandhamal, boarders of SC & ST Hostels and differently abled persons.
- A sum of Rs.9.00 crore has been made towards grants for digitization of Ration Cards which will prevent use of fake Ration Cards and ensure benefits of PDS to reach genuine consumers.
- For implementation of Arnapurna Scheme, provision of Rs.5.20 crore has been made towards subsidy to OSCSC Ltd.

### **7.3.9 Transport Department**

An out lay of Rs.53.00 crore has been provided in the Budget of this Department both under Plan & Non-plan.

- Rs.10.22 crore has been provided for construction of 10 nos. of building of RTO offices and for modernization of STA.
- Rs.5.00 crore has been provided for setting of Driving Training Institute at Berhampur, Barbil, Bhubaneswar, Keonjhar & Angul, which will train un-employed youth to earn their livelihood.
- For purchase of new buses by the OSRTC, margin money support of Rs.5.00 crore has been provided in the budget.

### **7.3.10 Commerce Department**

Total provision of Rs.63.52 crore under Plan & Non-plan has been provided for Commerce Department.

- Rs.2.12 crore has been provided for development of minor ports.
- Provision of 1.30 crore has been made for modernization of Water Transport System.
- It has been decided to modernize the existing the Jetties & Waiting Halls. For this purpose an amount of Rs.1.5 crore has been provided for the year 2012-13.

## **7.4 Infrastructure Development**

### **7.4.1 Works Department**

A total provision of Rs.2258.55 crore has been made in the year 2012-13 including Rs.1063.86 crore under State Plan for Works Department.

- Under State Plan, Rs.1048.86 crore has been provided under RIDF, Central Road Fund (CRF), One Time ACA and Externally Aided Projects (EAP) for development of 606 Kms. of road and completion of 16 bridges during 2012-13.
- Rs.15.00 crore has been allocated under State Plan for completion of incomplete buildings.
- Rs.657.65 crore has been provided under Non-Plan for maintenance of roads and bridges.
- Allocation of Rs.241.14 crore has been made under Non-Plan for maintenance of non-residential buildings including Rs.24.00 crore for repair and renovation of Government School and College Buildings which are at least 30 years old.
- Rs.122.73 crore has been provided under Non-Plan for maintenance of residential buildings.

#### **7.4.2 Housing and Urban Development Department**

A total provision of Rs.1574.67 crore has been made in the year 2012-13 including Rs.673.15 crore under State Plan.

- Rs.269.17 crore has been provided for maintenance & repair of water supply and sanitation work.
- Rs.135.98 crore has been provided as grants to ULBs under 13th Finance Commission award.
- Assistance of Rs.423.82 crore for the ULBs has been proposed as per the recommendation of 3rd State Finance Commission.
- Rs.48.50 crore has been provided for repair and maintenance of urban roads under Non-Plan and Rs.60.00 crore for improvement of urban roads under State Plan.
- Rs.296.37 crore has been provided for the projects under JNNURM like Urban Infrastructure Governance, BSUP, UIDSSMT, IHSDP and RAY.
- Rs.21.00 crore has been provided for creation of Odisha Urban Infrastructure Development Fund and Rs.75.00 crore for sewerage and sanitation under Externally Aided Projects (EAP).
- Rs.120.00 crore has been provided for Urban Water Supply Projects and Rs.40.00 crore has been provided for Urban Sewerage system.

#### **7.4.3 Rural Development Department**

A total provision of Rs.1720.54 crore has been made in the year 2012-13 including Rs.860.00 crore under State Plan.

- During the current year, a new scheme Biju Setu Yojana (BSY) has been launched for construction of 400 bridges over a period of 4 years in order to improve road network. A sum

of Rs.140.00 crore has been provided for the new scheme during the year 2012-13 for construction of 100 bridges.

- Rs.71.00 crore has been provided under the award of 13th Finance Commission for maintenance of rural roads and bridges.
- Rs.195.00 crore has been provided for roads and bridges under RIDF.
- Rs.50.00 crore has been provided under State Plan for development of important rural roads of economic and tourism importance.
- Allocation for up-gradation of rural roads has been increased from Rs.10.00 crore to Rs.80.00 crore.
- Rs.61.00 crore has been provided in the budget for maintenance of PMGSY Roads.
- Rs.25.00 crore has been provided for repair and renovation of Government Schools which are at least 30 years old.
- Rs.195.00 crore has been allocated towards State share of Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Scheme for completion of 1000 water supply projects and installation of 15000 Spot Sources (Tube Wells & Sanitary Wells).
- An amount of Rs.25.00 crore has been provided towards State share of Centrally Sponsored Scheme for Rural Sanitation.

#### **7.4.4 Energy Department**

Rs.542.26 crore has been provided in the budget of the Energy Department both under Plan and Non-Plan.

- Rs.150 crore has been provided under Biju Gram Jyoti to take up electrification of habitations and for system improvement.
- To provide electricity to the un-electrified habitations in the urban areas, Rs.20 crore has been provided under Biju Saharanchal Vidyutikaran Yojana.
- To expand & strengthen the transmission network in the KBK & other unviable areas, it is proposed to provide Rs.300 crore to OPTCL by way of equity infusion in 5 years. Accordingly Rs.50 crore is proposed for equity support to OPTCL during 2012-13.
- To take up several energy conservation measures, Rs.15 crore has been provided in this budget as against Rs.10 crore of last year.
- An amount of Rs.251.25 crore is proposed to be provided for implementation of CAPEX programme during 2012-13.

- In addition to this, Rs.3 crore is provided in this budget for the purpose of construction of building for the Odisha Electricity Regulatory Commission.

## **7.5 General Services**

### **7.5.1 Home Department**

- Provision of Rs.2343.33 crore has been made for Home Department under Plan and Non-plan in the B.E. for 2012-13, which is significantly higher than the previous year's provision of Rs.2004.56 crore.
- Provision of Rs.77.50 crore has been made under State Plan for construction of Police Station Buildings, Barracks and Residential Buildings.
- The Finance Commission Grants of Rs.17.50 crore will be utilised for construction of 3 number of Police Training Institutes.
- Rs.115.57 crore has been provided under Non-Plan for Security Related Expenditure (SRE) and Rs.22.89 crore under Modernisation of Police Force Scheme.
- Rs.7.85 crore has been provided under Non-Plan for purchase of modern equipments in Police Stations.
- Rs.50.00 crore has been provided under State Plan for overall development of Jail Organisation out of which Rs.46.73 crore has been earmarked for construction and up-gradation of jails and residential buildings.
- An amount of Rs.57.50 crore has been provided under State Plan for improvement of the Fire Service organisation, which includes of Rs.12.00 crore for procurement of advance fire fighting equipments and Rs.45.50 crore for construction of Fire Station and residential buildings.
- An amount of Rs.30.00 crore has been provided under State Plan for construction of court buildings and residential buildings.

### **7.5.2 Revenue & Disaster Management Department**

Provision of Rs.1204.98 crore has been made for Revenue and D.M Department under Plan and Non-plan in the B.E. for 2012-13.

- An amount of Rs.53.50 crore has been provided for construction of office buildings and Rs.13.50 crore has been provided for construction of residential buildings.
- Rs.5.75 crore has been provided towards State share of National Land Records Modernization Programme (NLRMP) to develop a modern, comprehensive, updated and transparent Land Records Management System.

- Rs.17.00 crore has been provided towards State share of CSP scheme National Cyclone Risk Mitigation Project (NCRMP).
- Rs.5.00 crore has been provided for construction of 100 Flood Centres during 2012-13.

### **7.5.3 General Administration Department**

Rs.214.58 crore has been provided in the Budget for this Department under both Plan and Non-Plan.

- Rs.6.00 crore out of State Plan has been earmarked for development of air-strips and construction of a new Air-Strip at Malkangiri during the financial year 2012-13.
- Rs.15.30 crore has been provided for Construction of Building of G.A. Department under State Capital Project.

### **7.5.4 Law Department**

Rs.193.98 crore has been provided in the Budget for this Department both under Plan and Non-Plan.

- Rs.1.99 crore has been provided in the budget as per the recommendation 13th Finance Commission towards Loka Adalat and Legal Aid.
- Rs.8.15 crore has been provided in the budget as per the recommendation of the 13th Finance Commission for Establishment of Alternate Dispute Resolution Centre (ADR Centre) and Training of Mediators/Conciliators.
- Rs.16.65 crore has been provided in the budget as per the recommendation of 13th Finance Commission for operation of Morning/Evening Court.

## **7.6 Other Sectors**

### **7.6.1 Information & Public Relations Department**

Rs.42.28 crore has been provided in the Budget for this Department both under Plan and Non-Plan.

### **7.6.2 Sports & Youth Services Department**

Rs.55.57 crore has been provided in the Budget for this Department both under Plan and Non-Plan.

- Rs.4.99 crore has been provide in the budget for completion of Hockey complex at Kalinga Stadium.



- To cater to the training needs of the inmates of Sports Hostel at Panposh, Rourkela a second Synthetic Hockey Turf will be laid. Accordingly, a sum of Rs.6.00 crore has been provided in the Budget for 2012-13.

### **7.6.3 Culture Department**

Rs.59.17 crore has been provided in the Budget for this Department under both Plan and Non-Plan.

- Rs.16.25 crore has been provided in the budget for Preservation of Monuments and Buddhist Heritage as per the recommendation of 13th Finance Commission.
- Rs.1.00 crore has been made for construction of Odishi Dance Museum in Guru Kelu Charan Mohapatra Odishi Research Centre, Bhubaneswar
- Rs.1.00 crore has been provided in the budget for construction of Modern Art Gallery in Bhubaneswar.
- Rs.2.00 crore has been provided in the budget for construction of Boys & Girls Hostels for Utkal Sangeeta Mahavidyala and B.K. College of Art and Crafts, Bhubaneswar.
- Rs.3.60 crore has been provided towards pension to Indigent Artists.

### **7.6.4 Tourism Department**

Rs.65.20 crore has been provided in the Budget for this Department under both Plan and Non-Plan.

- Rs.9.00 crore has been provided in the budget for acquisition of private land for development of tourist projects like Peace Park at Dhauli and Peripheral Development of Lingaraj Temple.
- Rs.13.50 crore has been provided in the budget in order to provide adequate basic amenities and other infrastructure in indentified tourist destinations.
- Rs.17.00 crore has been provided in the budget for organisation of International Events & Road shows/organisation of State and National Level Fairs and for publicity campaigns.

### **7.6.5 Excise Department**

Provision of Rs.52.54 crore has been made for Excise Department under Plan and Non-plan in the B.E. for 2012-13.

Out of this, a sum of Rs.3.17 crore is earmarked for construction of 62 Range and charge offices.

### **7.6.6 Odisha Legislative Assembly**

Rs.46.09 crore has been provided in the Budget for Odisha Legislative Assembly.

- For the first time, our State is going to introduce Health Insurance Scheme for the Ex-MLAs. Accordingly, a sum of Rs.10.00 lakh has been provided in the Budget for the purpose.

## **8. Institutional Reforms for better Financial Management:**

**8.1** Hon'ble Governor in his address to this House has elaborated on the initiatives taken by the State Government for better financial management and improvement in the quality of public expenditure including online preparation of budget for FY 2012-13. I would like to highlight on a few other citizen centric e-services launched by the commercial tax organization.

**8.2** Payment of taxes and filing of returns through the electronic mode is now possible. The prospective dealers can also apply for registration electronically. Presently, more than 75% of Commercial Taxes are being collected electronically. A lot of paperwork for the Department and the Dealers as well could be eliminated in the process. More such business centric electronic services are proposed to be rolled out in the near future for enhancing the efficiency and transparency of our tax administration.

### **8.3 Establishment of Programme Delivery and Outcome Monitoring Unit:**

We have started the exercise of preparation of Outcome Budget of key spending Departments from the year 2010-11. However, there is no institutional mechanism for monitoring and evaluating outcomes. In order to ensure objective and impartial assessment of outcome against outlay, we propose to set up a dedicated "Programme Delivery and Outcome Monitoring Unit" in Finance Department. The unit will be mandated to undertake concurrent monitoring and evaluation as well as impact assessment of all flagship programmes by engaging high quality independent consultants. Provision of Rs.5 crore is proposed to be made for the purpose in the Budget Estimates for 2012-13.

**8.4** We have been providing a separate disclosure statement in the Explanatory Memorandum to capture total public investment made for capital formation. Three more disclosure statements on grant-in-aid, subsidies and 100% Women Centring Programme have been added this time to the Explanatory Memorandum to make the budget more transparent.

## **9. Public Private Partnership (PPP)**

With a view to harnessing private sector investment, their efficiencies in project execution, provision of public assets and services, there is a need for roping in the private sector for provision of public infrastructure. We therefore, propose to invest at least Rs.5000.00 crore in the 12th Five Year Plan under PPP in the State. For this purpose, a Project Development and Facility Centre in P&C Department is set up with allocation of Rs.10 crore and a Viability Gap Fund of Rs.40 crore is proposed in the budget for 2012-13. You will be glad to know that Rs.48.14 crore has been earmarked for development of State Highways and Major District Roads through PPP.

## **10. Budget Estimates - Compliance with the FRBM Targets:**

**10.1** The State Government have amended the FRBM Act in line with the recommendations of 13th Finance Commission and have also drawn up a fiscal correction path. It mandates the State Government to maintain revenue balance, contain fiscal deficit within 3% of GSDP and limit the debt to GSDP ratio at 30.2% in 2012-13. All the three fiscal indicators have been kept well within the FRBM targets in the Budget Estimates for 2012-13.

**10.2** The total revenue expenditure is estimated at Rs.41431.97 crore during the financial year 2012-13. Thus, after achieving revenue balance, a surplus of Rs.2410.77 crore has been projected in the Budget Estimates for 2012-13 which is 0.93% of GSDP. The Fiscal Deficit is projected at Rs.4751.93 crore which is 1.83% of GSDP.

**10.3** The year end debt stock for the financial year 2012-13 is estimated at Rs.43054.06 crore which is 16.55% of GSDP.

## **11. Tax Proposals**

**11.1** As I have indicated earlier, we have to make efforts to raise tax/GSDP ratio of our State. Therefore, the State Government had appointed an Expert Committee on Revenue Enhancement Measures. The Committee had submitted its report in the meanwhile. One of the major recommendations of the Committee with regard to Commercial Tax Organisation was to raise the lower rate of VAT from 4% to 5%. Moreover, there was a national consensus at the level of the Empowered Committee of State Finance Ministers to raise the lower rate of VAT from 4% to 5% and it was also linked to grant of CST compensation by the Central Government. In the meantime, Government of India have raised rate of tax for declared goods from 4% to 5%. In fact, most of the States have gone for increase of rate of tax from 4% to 5% much earlier. The State had to lose CST compensation of around Rs.260 crore towards notional gain on this account during the year 2010-11 for non-revision of the rate. Considering these factors, it is proposed to raise lower rate of VAT from 4% to 5% w.e.f. 1.4.2012. I would like to clarify here that, this may not affect the prices of essential commodities as most of the packaged commodities and medicines are being sold on MRP. Similarly, as industrial inputs are eligible for input tax credit, it will also not affect the prices of final product.

**11.2** Besides, after sugar and textile fabric were removed from the Schedule to the Additional Duties of Excise (Goods of Special Importance) Act, 1957 these goods became liable to VAT w.e.f. 8.4.2011. However, there was resentment of the traders of the State, since no other State had levied tax on the said items at that point of time. Therefore, the levy of tax was put on hold till a national consensus emerges in the matter. Recently, the Empowered Committee of State Finance Ministers have recommended levy of tax on sugar and textile fabric across the States with effect from 1.4.2012. Therefore, it is now proposed to impose tax on 'sugar and textile fabric' @ 5% under VAT Act w. e. f. 1.4.2012.

**11.3** I am to inform the Hon'ble Members that the additional revenue to accrued from this new tax proposal will not be utilised for increasing the cash balance or for reducing the fiscal deficit of the

Government. As per direction of Hon'ble Chief Minister, I wish to inform the august House that the additional resources to be realised on this account will be fully utilised for increasing the amount of pension being paid to more 37 lakh of old, widow and differently abled persons from Rs.200 to Rs.300 per month from 1st April, 2012. I believe that this bold step of the State Government would go a long way in strengthening the social security cover for the destitute families of our State.

## 12. Conclusion

I have tried to make a balance between the fiscal prudence and people's expectations. I hope this budget will certainly ensure overall development of the State. In this context, I would like to humbly mention that this State is ours and we must strive for its development. There is no room for narrowness. I wish to quote a stanza of the Great Poet of this soil Gangadhar Meher :

*"Utha bhai utha, naveen aloke  
soithile chahin hasuthibe loke  
subha karmapathe hua agrasara  
chakshyu milibaku nahin abasara.  
Matrubhumi matrubhasara badana  
diptakara dei dhana dhanya mana."*

I, once again extend my sincere thanks to you, the Leader of the House, Hon'ble Chief Minister, Hon'ble Leader of Opposition and all Hon'ble members of this august House for giving me a patient hearing. I pray Lord Jagannath for a brighter future for the people of our State.

*/ JAY HIND /*

*// BANDE UTKAL JANANI //*