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Editor's Note



Amongst the many rites and rituals that reverberate through the sacred shrine of Puri, “Navakalebar” ceremony stands out as a unique feature. The ensuing “Navakalebar” is being held after an interval of 19 years. It involves in the total replacement of worshipped idols with new ones and the burial of the old images at “Koili Baikuntha”. The entire State Government machinery under the leadership of our popular Chief Minister Shri Naveen Patnaik is geared up for this onerous task. The seriousness of the efforts can be felt when 3 Review Meetings headed by Hon’ble Chief Minister, Chief Secretary and ACS are held in the one single day for stock-taking. I personally feel the meticulous planning made with responsibilities fixed, will go a long way to make the world famous event a huge success.

On the 6th of March 2015 the Holi festival will be celebrated all across the State with great delight. The colourful festival connects us with family and friends and refreshes our ties. The young and the old are enthusiastic to celebrate the festival of colours.

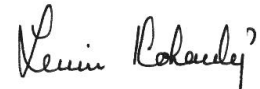
We shall all celebrate the International Women’s Day on the 8th of March. To empower women, the State Government has ensured that they get social, economic and political justice. The 50 % quota for women in PRIs and Urban Local Bodies, the new State Policy for Women and Girls is a step forward in that direction. It is a matter of grave concern that crime against women is not just a simple outcome of difficult social and economic circumstances. Rather, gender-based violence is a consequence of unequal power balance between men and women in India and a reflection of dominant gender norms prevalent in society.

In the current times we are shocked when just after the PDP and BJP Government took charge in J & K under aegis of Central Government, the Chief Minister, thanks the people from across the border for smooth conduct of the elections. As a student of Political Science, it seems to me that the J & K C.M.’s statement is unfortunate and mocks the overwhelming public mandate.

The whole State is taken aback by the neglect to Odisha in the Central Budget. As a part of the sadistic plan of the Centre, it has announced special package of Rs.20,000 crore

for poll-bound States like Bihar and West Bengal while ignoring the genuine claims of Odisha. No special assistance has been announced for “Navakalebar” festival although the State Government has been requesting the Centre since last one year. The backward regions of the State with high tribal and *dalit* population have also been ignored.

The people of the State will celebrate the 99th Birth Anniversary of legendary leader Biju Patnaik on the 5th of March 2015. Biju Babu who dedicated each drop of his blood for the people of Odisha was an epitome of dedication, selfless service and sacrifice. He was also a pioneer proponent of devolution of power to the grass root level. That is why his Birthday is celebrated as the Panchayati Raj Divas. The main thrust of the policies, programmes and activities of Panchayati Raj Department now are all-round development of the people through participation, self-help and empowerment. Under the strong leadership of our Chief Minister multiple schemes of the State are being implemented through the Panchayati Raj Department at the grass root level for the socio-economic upliftment of the common man. It aims to bring about qualitative change in the lives of the rural people. In order to further decentralize the participatory processes Gram Sabha and Palli Sabha has been empowered to prepare annual action plan taking into consideration the local situation, select beneficiaries under poverty alleviation programmes, select village level leader to execute various developmental projects and supervise the same because the Government is committed to strengthen the PRIs as institution of self government.



Editor, Odisha Review

The God of Intimate Things

Sudhir Kumar Das

I would think until I found
Something I can never find,
Something lying on the ground,
In the bottom of my mind.

- *James Stephens*

Apparently these lines hint at an unending search, a quest for harmony within the self and with the natural process of life, the world and also the spiritual truth, the God. The poet expresses the longing for trekking a spiritual path. He seeks a sense of oneness with God's creation. The poet finds him in the midst of agony, angst and anxiety of the world. He is tired of life. As a result he earnestly desires liberation from the deceptive world. He is after spiritual treasure which still eludes him. His quest is elusive, not conclusive, not positive.

Similarly the search for Lord Jagannath, the reigning deity of the whole universe is an illusory but perennial quest. No amount of search or research would be able to trace Him to time,

history or reality. He is not history but mystery. He is timeless. He is not real but extra-real, surreal. He is not an event but a rare inexplicable moment. He is centered in the hearts of all; memory, perception as well as their loss came from Him.

Not only the good but also the bad comes from the same divine source. Since only One is there even the bad must be attributed to that One. Memory, perception and forgetfulness all come from that source only.

When we are more baffled about His genesis and purpose, we have recourse to misleading epithets like Imperishable, Ineffable, Inscrutable,

Unmanifest, enigmatic, Unsearchable, unfathomable, Unapproachable, Inflexible, Inexhaustible, Incomprehensible, Incalculable, Esoteric, Recondite, Abstract, Abstruse etc. all these treat Him as an outsider and take Him afar from us.

When our so-called intellectual curiosity to know Him leads us no where we go a step



further in the process of distancing him from us by describing Him as a bundle of contradictions, a queer mixture of opposites. He has strange forms and bizarre ways of working. He is half yet full, incomplete yet complete, imperfect yet perfect, strange but familiar, beautiful and ugly. He is the deity of the savage and the civilised, of the rich and the poor. He is the Lord of the flux and the inflexible. He is the “Being” and the “Becoming”. He is a continuous process; an unending flow. He is the Great Initial. As Shakti, He is the source of all creative energy. He is the Trinity of Love, Beauty and Truth. He belongs to reality but doesn't end with reality, he transcends it. He is “Sasuddha Nirmala Jnana”, “Sadhana” and “Siddhi”. He is the Primordial Being which may also indicate nothingness. He is the ineffable Brahman, One and non-dual. He is the Supreme Integration to accommodate the divergent demands of different religions. No word or no medium is spacious enough to hold Him. He is the source of language, yet a victim of linguistic crisis.

There are periods in human history which are characterized by a loss of the sense of values, and the times we live in are pre-eminently such an age. Our times are out of joints. The centre cannot hold, things fall apart. We are trapped in an inordinately complex situation. It is strange new world we are confronted with. Trust deficit and erosion of values are our major concern. We worry about the future as we have never worried before. Violence, cruelty, hatred, permissiveness and promiscuity have degraded us to the level of beasts. Alienation, anxiety, absurdity, neurosis, purposelessness, void, silence have taken a heavy toll of our culture. We have lost contact with nature and with our own selves. We are broken into fragments. We are experiencing identity crisis.

Our greatest problem is survival. The question before us is- “can we set our land in order”? Probably we could if we realized how to surrender our ego, how to re-establish our link with that thing which is higher, greater, graver and deeper than us who pervades the universe. But in the midst of a bleak global scenario, rays of hope are still there. Amidst the gathering gloom of uncertainty and insecurity there is a growing a feeling that this vale of tears will be a vale of soul making.

And this is possible by the unique centre of trust that still holds and prevents things from disintegrating. That reliable source is Lord Jagannath. The Jagannath Cult is a unique cult. It is able to combine diverse faiths, cultures and creeds. Lord Jagannath is the unique centre of harmony. He accommodates different sects and beliefs. In Odisha, the cult of Jagannath is a part of its cultural life. It reflects the collective unconsciousness of the Odia race.

Lord Jagannath provides ample food for scholars and their research work. But what about the common man? The ordinary devotee? How does he look at Him? What is his reaction to Him? How is the inaccessible easily accessible to the illiterate rustics even? The fact is that we are yet to know who exactly He is. But whoever He may be we very much need Him today. He is no more an out of the world experience for His ardent devotees. To know Him we need not go to the libraries. We have to dive deep and get immersed in Him. To know Him we have to be a part of Him. He is in our own blood, in our system. No scholastic approach can lead us to Him. “Ānanya Bhakti”, “the one pointed devotion” and “love” can enable us to build our intimate moments with Him. Love is his language and compassion is His credo. His message is “Life is hard, hence compassion”. The symbol of aspiration of the

whole mankind is an ideal state of ever relenting love and bliss. He is friendly, amiable, amenable, affable, benevolent, genial, generous, cordial, gracious, expansive, sociable, warm, good-humored, persuadable, susceptible to devotees imploring. He is the God of empathy, magnanimity and understanding.

To get him we have to move closer to Him, to be intimate with Him. We have to feel Him, implore Him for mercy. Like the Biblical character Job we can ask Him the reason of our unmerited suffering. He will respond, receive. He will redeem our suffering and restore us our loss. Sudama, Balaram Das, Salbeg, Dasia, Bandhu Mohanty to name a few devotees who did not get at Him through scriptures but through ardent, committed, single-minded devotion. They did not have intellectual carvings. They knew the secret of communication with Him. They were thoroughly merged, absorbed in Him.

When the Odia Poet Gopal Krushna Patnaik sings,

"Anusarita Prabhu ! Kalajaka gala sarita"

He does not vent his anger, despair or remorse for wasting his entire life awaiting the Lord's mercy. Rather he is willingly reconciled to

his present predicament and hopefully looks forward to further waiting because for him, waiting is getting.

For a great devotee like him, Lord Jagannath is not transcendent but immanent, inherent and very intimate. He is intensely human and humane. For him he is not extra-ordinary, but very ordinary, anthropomorphic God. "He is something lying on the ground, in the bottom of our mind". He knows how to wait patiently can alone get at Him. The ever merciful God is always ready to shower His benediction on him. For a receptive heart he is ever present. For a dedicated mind he is palpable, palatable, tangible, very much ethereal and not celestial. He is a good example of synergy of convergence of intimate moments of responsive souls. He is a symbol of integration, in a fast disintegrating world. He provides adequate infrastructure of hope and security to those who share their moments of privacy with Him. He is very cosy, very close, very comfy, very comfortable, very homely and very intimate. He is the God of small things the God of intimate things. He is God the Intimate.

Sudhir Kumar Das , Near Jhadeswari Club, Puri-752001.

Toward A Results - Based Panchayat Governance

Anup Dash

Contemporary debates on “democratic decentralization” originate from a crisis of governance, characterized by growing i. *Legitimacy deficits* (citizens’ mounting disillusion with their government; their exclusion and marginalisation from the political process; lack of government responsiveness to peoples’ needs; growing loss of a sense of connection with their elected representatives and bureaucratic officials, erosion of trust and confidence of people in government institutions and officials), and ii. *Bureaucratic deficits* (inefficiency, corruption, lack of transparency and accountability). The crisis of governance is global, but more serious in the developing world.

In the context of this crisis, “decentralisation” is widely accepted as a powerful means for governance reforms and democratic renewal through reorganizing the power structure so as to change the huge monolithic structure of the government and bring it closer to the citizens by creating “small governments” at the local level closer to people – the Indian model of which is the Panchayati Raj, founded on the 73rd Constitutional amendment.

It is premised on the assumption that local authorities have better access to information about their constituents and that they are more easily held accountable by the local population. This will

improve governance not only by increasing the efficiency, but also by increasing its transparency and responsiveness. Thus, it is designed as a means to deepen democracy, strengthen participatory form of development, make it more accountable and responsive, enhance the effectiveness of public policies and service delivery, and give greater voice to the citizens. It is a more “agency” focused approach to governance, which shifts the pendulum from “electoral politics” to “the politics of everyday life”, and from a focus on “institutional power” to “peoples’ power”. It makes a departure by placing a new emphasis on *governance* – involving citizens and the plurality of stakeholders in the pursuit of the public good, not just on the official processes of the government.

But where are we today after 20 years of the Panchayati Raj reforms? What has been our experience so far? To what extent have the new experiments in giving power to the people deepened democracy? What are the developmental impacts? What is the changing nature and dynamics of the state-society relationship on the ground? In a word, what are its successes and breakdowns? What are the lessons and key messages for us after two decades of its experimentation?

The early optimism around the goal of “power to the people” slogan driving democratic

decentralization in India has now faded. The experience over the last twenty years suggests that we have not achieved a well functioning system to realize the goal. Rather than a robust strategic change, we are stuck more in a process of piecemeal change – often sporadic, conflictual and uncertain – driven by the letter and not the spirit of the Constitutional amendment. Thus we have created a formal architecture with structural extension of democracy to the lower levels.

This formal extension of democracy to the lower levels is a necessary condition, but not a sufficient condition to improve governance and enrich the quality of democracy to yield developmental impact. In itself, it does not guarantee the quality of democracy. It is merely the skeleton, the flesh and blood comes from citizens engagement, which is the more substantive element of democracy. Formal extension of democracy through Constitutional changes, without its substantive element will not go very far in deepening democracy. Constitutional and legal changes open up an “invited space” for democratic participation only. They represent the “supply-driven” approach to the extension of democracy. In the absence of the practice of citizenship by the people in their everyday lives, this “space” comes under the danger of abuse, capture and monopoly by the spurious elements, thus defeating its very purpose. This happens when there is a shortfall in the “demand side”. This is the current problem with our Panchayati Raj system. We need to mobilize the “demand side” and bridge the supply-demand gap through active citizenship building – strengthening the power of citizenship is in its practice.

The Panchayati Raj system has been designed to decentralise and off-load the state to lower levels of government to improve governance, enhance the quality of rural services

and to make governments and communities work better in meeting local needs. However, given the structure of the government, the nature of our bureaucracy, the various asymmetries in our rural lives that create barriers for a democratic and mutually reinforcing state-society relationship at the local level, this structural framework for devolution of power to the decentralised state has not been able to create a culture for good governance or to improve performance quality in rural services.

Even the lowest tier of the government at the Panchayat level has turned out to be a government with a “control” function without creating much space for civic engagement and a multi-actor collaboration in meeting community needs. There is no free-flow of information, no easy access to officials, no system for redress and follow up, corruption and fraud in distribution (of benefits), complicated and time-wasting process, etc — all of these add up to governance failures at the Panchayat level. There is now a compelling need a more coherent and robust process of reforming governance at the Panchayat level – a process going beyond mere “cosmetic” reforms to a more coherent and robust process changing the fundamental character of governance by making it *Results-Based*.

The CAG audit report shows that the Gram Panchayats are able to mobilize only 2% of the total receipt of their grants-in-aid as their own sources of revenue. Thus, Panchayats primarily act as the service delivery arm of the state government. Agencies responsible for providing services to rural communities have, as usual, focused on “inputs” only, without any attention to the outcomes or the *results*. The typical “audit” mentality limits bureaucratic attention to keeping ledger books in order, without building up any mechanism for self-correcting their

strategies on the basis of information collected against locally-defined benchmarks and standards to improve performance and achieve results and enhance impact. Against this prevailing landscape of local rural governance in general, and service delivery in particular, *Results-Based Panchayat Governance* is a new language for governance to pay increasing attention to results on the ground.

Results-based Panchayat governance is an innovative strategy to bring a fundamental change in the character of government institutions at the lowest level. Its foci are i. to establish a results-oriented and accountable style of operation, ii. develop more effective quality control in service provisions as well as better gender-sensitive targeting methods to improve access with an emphasis on the vulnerable and excluded, iii. measure outcomes and use them as a major input to rural service management, iv. build up multiple poles of collaboration and partnership among various state and non-state actors, v. strengthen citizen engagement, vi. improve communication and transparency of results reporting. In this sense, what we need to develop is a management tool for making continuous improvements in performance quality, achieving higher levels of efficiency and effectiveness for greater democratic and developmental impact. The goal is to make the Panchayatiraj institutions achieve positive community outcomes of their services and the resultant impact in rural poverty alleviation through greater efficiency and higher performance quality. As a governance reforms initiative, results-based governance can be launched best at the Panchayat level, because it is most effective at the level of the government closest to the citizens. Further, citizen engagement (a key element in this process) is best possible at the local level.

The major attributes of the results-based governance are accountability and transparency, partnership, and citizen engagement. Government agencies need to share information not only as a legal obligation (the citizens' right to information), but also more proactively as a social need for legitimacy. The results-based governance initiative would evolve a process to achieve this in a non-threatening way. This innovative approach to governance can only be successful through a collaborative approach, by building up a public-private as well as a strong community partnership. A broadly shared vision for the community, articulation of community goals, sets of priorities, resources and strategies required to achieve them are all very critical elements of this new approach to governance. Citizen engagement forms its participatory "core" to create a common understanding and also to ensure commitment. Special attention has to be given to such questions as who a service or programme is designed for and whom is it reaching, who is excluded and why, how to increase the depth of poverty outreach of welfare programmes. Information Technology and advances in data management as important new tools could be used to increase our capacity to measure and track results, thereby bringing the advantages of e-governance into this process. These would all be designed as part of a new conversation (hitherto missing) between citizens and the local government. It goes beyond the concept of "informed" citizens to "engaged" citizens, and thereby changes the governance relationships in rural communities in fundamental ways.

The Panchayati Raj department of the Government of Odisha, in its *Outcome Budget 2012-13*, declares to "make the programme more result-oriented by shifting the focus from "Outlays" to "Outcomes", and claims to make The Outcome Budget "a tool to track not just the

intermediate physical ‘outputs’ that are more readily measurable but also the ‘outcomes’, which are the end objectives of State intervention” (p.3). But it is, at best, merely a cosmetic change in the top-down budget-making system, and the latest add-on to our “wish list”. We need to move on to create the institutional infrastructure, cultural capacities, social environment and the governance engines that can drive this fundamental transformation to a results-based Panchayat governance.

Given the history and culture of the functioning of government institutions, especially in rural communities – poor sense of

accountability, no learning culture, no culture of interacting with citizens around common goals and objectives, — the Results-Based Panchayat Governance is a paradigm shift, and involves cultural change among public officials at the grass-roots level. But as the process will move, it will generate a lot of hope, excitement, positivism and confidence as also ownership among the different governance partners. Odisha should lead this new initiative and provide a model for others.

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Be Cheerful But Calm

K.C. Patnaik

If one believes in Vedanta one should be cheerful at all times. No where our scriptures teach us to be pale and gloomy. While speaking on Bhakti Yoga – above hundred years ago Swami Vivekananda said – Let the mind be cheerful but calm. Never let it run into excesses because every excess will be followed by reaction. The stage of excessive merrymaking should be avoided. What one should aim at, is to be cheerful all the day- all the time round the year. However, even while being cheerful, the mind should not act too much in worldly affairs. This really one kind of bliss- the bliss which you cannot read and understand in the books but which can just be experienced by you. The mind should always be calm- calm at the time of prosperity and equally calm at the time of adversity. The calm mind only thinks positively in any sphere wherever you want it to be taken

whether the thinking is on spiritual front, business front money making ideas or on family problems and so on so forth. Calmness of the mind could be achieved by an hour of spiritual reading. This is a sure and tried formula. Vivekananda goes on to say that by being pleasant always and smiling it takes you nearer to God – nearer than any prayer or such other Upasanas. This cheerful is the passport for entering the kingdom of God. So let us accept this hard fact that by being cheerful we make no loss, rather unexpected dividends can be reaped. Cheerful you shall be and God you shall see.

K.C. Patnaik, K.B. Street, Old Town, Bhubaneswar-2.

Working of PR in Odisha : Training and Capacity Building

Dr. Harihar Dash

Rural local Government in the process of democratic decentralization is known by the popular name Panchayati Raj. It has been in operation since the early years of independence with greater responsibility to satisfy the local needs and aspiration of the rural people. It is a system of direct and active involvement of the people of a local area into the administration of local affairs, for the satisfaction of local needs with the help of the local resources and through organized local efforts.¹ The success of a democratic system largely depends upon the existence and efficient operation of such a system of local government at the grassroot level.

PR SYSTEM IN ODISHA:

The PR system in Odisha is as old as the province itself, but in its present form, it came into existence in 1994. Prior to that it was governed by the PS and ZP Act of 1959. In the year 1961 a 3-tier Panchayati Raj Institution (PRIs) was established in the state covering all villages with the objective of removing illiteracy, poverty and diseases. It was however amended in 1962, 1965 and 1968. The 1965 amendment provided direct election of the Sarpanch of the Gram Panchayat by the people. The 1968 amendment substituted the District Advisory Council in the place of Zilla Parishad.

The Panchayati Raj system during 1950s and early 1960s was under the control of different departments like Board of Revenue, Department of Agriculture and Community Development and Political Services Department before it was placed

under the Department of Planning and Co-ordination with a Secretary to head the Department. In July 1962, a new department of Community Development and Panchayati Raj was created. The Panchayat Samitis and Zilla Parishads and former District Boards came under its purview.

DEVELOPMENT AND DEVOLUTION OF POWER:

The 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act, 1992 transfers the representative democracy into participatory democracy with devolution of power to PRIs in the Country. The Act came into force on 24th April, 1993 and ensures the right of the states to take local factors of geographical, politico-administrative and others into consideration while adopting the new system.² Odisha Panchayat laws were amended in consistent with the provision of the Act and provision of Panchayat Extension to Scheduled Area Act, 1996 (PESA). Odisha is the first State to conduct PRI election in 2002 according to PESA Act, thereby ensuring social justice to scheduled tribe communities.

Government of Odisha is committed to strengthen PRIs as institutions of self Government. In the year 2003, 21 subjects of 11 departments were transferred to Panchayati Raj Institutions. District level Officers, Block level Officers and village level functionaries of 11 departments have been made accountable to Zilla Parishad, Panchayat Samiti and Gram Panchayat respectively for implementation of subjects/

schemes transferred to PRIs.³ They will place plans and schemes for discussion and approval in the meeting of the respective level of PRIs for economic development and social justice of the people. Government has signed an MoU (Memorandum of Understanding) with the Ministry of Panchayati Raj, Government of India for effective devolution of functions, funds and functionaries as per the mandate of 73rd Amendment of the Constitution.

WORKING OF PR IN ODISHA

The structure of PRIs in India varied from state to state from a 3-tier structure in Village, Block and District level to a 2-tier structure at the Village and Block level. A few states had only a single tier Panchayat at the Village level. The experiment was started in Rajasthan with 3 statutory institutions of Village Panchayats, Panchayat Samitis and Zilla Parishads.⁴ This 3-tier model structure was adopted by the state of Orissa and has continued to operate over a period of three decades up to the historic amendment of 1992. Out of the 3-tiers of Panchayati Raj, the intermediate tier, the Panchayat Samiti is made the implementing agency for all programmes.

Funds for community development given as grant- in-aid to Panchayat Samitis, Zilla Parishads were abolished in the year 1968. The Panchayat Samiti emerged as an important institution for implementing developmental programmes, poverty alleviation programmes and social security schemes. However even before the 73rd Amendment of the Constitution, Odisha had taken the lead in providing reservation in favour of SCs, STs and women in 3-tier PRIs. A distinguishing feature of the Panchayati Raj System in Odisha is that either the Chairperson or the Vice-Chairperson of all the 3-tiers of PRIs is a women. Despite these important roles, PSs and GPs could not emerge as institution of self Government. Those wishing to take a deeper look into the malady would find factionalism, casteism, communalism and groupism and the nasty game

of Politics that has been carried to the doorsteps of innocent villagers. In fact, the PR began to totter and in some states even crumble, under the heavy weight of political factionalism, scramble for control over patronage among politician and bureaucrats, scarcity of economic resources and not the least of all, the general apathy of the people.⁵

TRAINING AND CAPACITY BUILDING

The entire contour of the democratic decentralization has completely changed by the 73rd Amendment Act. It is considered now as a very important department not only for the quantum of funds it handles, but also for the fact that its activities have a direct bearing on rural development and poverty alleviation. Political education and training to the representatives of the PRIs, thus required, without which they cannot become well functioning and active participants in the democratic system. As such, traditionally, various training institutions, i.e., State Institute for Rural Development, Panchayati Raj Training Institutions (PRTIs), Extension Training Centres (ETCs) etc. are involved in delivering scheme-specific training programmes, including those aimed at improving capacities of elected representatives and officials of PRIs. A number of NGOs too have been working in this area either directly or in partnership with the training institutions. The Ministry of Panchayati Raj (MoPR) has also provided funds and other support under Rajiv Gandhi Panchayat Sashaktikarana Abhiyan (RGPSA) to strengthen the state and district level training institutions to enhance their CB & T delivery capabilities in partnership with the state Panchayati Raj Departments.

STATE INSTITUTE FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT :

The PR Department has got a state level institute at Bhubaneswar namely the State Institute for Rural Development for training and capacity building of PRI elected representatives and field functionaries. Originally it was established in 1964

by the Government of India as one of the core distinguished institutions of the country for conducting training and research programmes in Tribal and Community Development. In 1967 it was named as Tribal Orientation and Study Centre (TO & SC) under Government of Odisha. In 1975 its name was changed to State Training Institute of Community Development (STICD). From 1984 onwards as the State Institute for Rural Development (SIRD) it acts as a nodal institute of the state for training, research, evaluation and consultancy in the field PRD, Government of Odisha.⁶

The training strategy of SIRD is envisaged and designed to educate the elected representatives and officials of the 3-tier PRIs on functioning of the local self governance but also enables them in acquiring the knowledge in the implementation of programmes of rural and social development. The capacity building is aimed at fighting ignorance and deprivation. The programme is also aimed at to bring a behavioral change in relationship among the elected representatives and government officials at the grassroot level to work for a holistic community development through a culture of good and responsive governance.

ACTIVITIES OF SIRD

Broadly SIRD activities can be categorized as follows :

- i. Training and Capacity Building.
- ii. Research and Evaluation.
- iii. Publication and Consultancy.

SIRD has conducted 167 training programmes during 2007-08. The main thrust was to sensitize the newly elected PRI members who assumed office in 2007. They were oriented about the important acts and rules of Panchayati Raj, Financial Management and the schemes directly implemented through PRIs, especially NREGS. SIRD concentrated mainly on off-campus mode of training to ensure more coverage of participants. SIRD entered into partnership

with 76 NGOs across the state during Dakshata Programme in 2007-08 in order to expand the areas of the institute.⁷

INTERACTIVE TRAINING PROGRAMMES (ITPs)

SIRD organizes various training programmes for elected members of 3-tier PRIs, NGOs and different level of officials of PR and other line departments both through in-house and off-campus mode. It also develops necessary training curriculum for the participants and develop training modules for various training programmes undertaken in SIRD and 3-ETCs (Bhubaneswar, Bhawanipatna and Keonjhar) of the State. It has also undertaken various Case Studies, Research programmes and Action Research Projects. The institute has the mandate to improve the training capacities of its linked institutions, as such, the Extension Training Centers and District partner NGOs with wide coverage through networking.⁸

PROJECT DAKSHATA

Project Dakshata, an endeavour by the PR Department, Odisha, UNDP, funded by DFID, is a unique initiative for capacity building of the PRIs in Odisha by SIRD. Since the election of 2007, the office bearers of all the 3-tiers could not be provided basic training despite the lapse of a period of one year, the institute thought of about the project.⁹ It aims to strengthen Panchayat elected representatives, functionaries and other department officials to perform their roles efficiently in local governance through capacity building across the state of Odisha. The project period (2007-08) is likely to witness capacity building around 28,000 functionaries and elected representatives. Besides, it aims to develop a capacity building system in the state through strengthening SIRD. State and District level trainers were trained who were emerged later on and became resource persons for the state. To carry forward this challenging task SIRD with partner with competent and qualified academic/training institutions, Civil Society Organizations and private agencies at the state and district level.

Each of the trainees would undergo 15 days of training in 5 different modules on :

- i. Rules and Role Clarity and Responsibilities of the PRIs.
- ii. Financial Accounts and Management.
- iii. Transparency and Accountability.
- iv. Social Welfare Schemes and other line Department Schemes.
- v. Rural Development Schemes in PR Department.

Gender balancing and inclusion of vulnerable and weaker sections will be the cross cutting theme in all the above modules. After accomplishing and achieving this target within the given time, the scope can be enhanced and broadened to other thematic areas.

TRAINING PROGRAMMES BY SEWAK:

SEWAK, the Self Employed Workers Association Kendra, with its well built infrastructure at its rural resource center has been conducting training programmes for PRIs in association with DPNGOs of the State Institute of Rural Development, Odisha since 2008. Empanelled resource persons and officials of the district administrations participate in those training programmes following the curriculum developed by SIRD. In 2009 PRI members from Sadar, Tangarpali, Lephripa and Hemagir Block received training at SEWAK, RRC. About 442 members from 65 Gram Panchayats and 4 Panchayat Samitis were covered in the programme. Between May and October 2010, PRI members from the Tangarpali, Lephripa, Hemagir, Subdega, Balishankara, Baragaon, Rajgangpur, Kutra and Kuanmunda Blocks of Sundargarh district participated in the training programmes. A total of 1171 male and female representatives from 3 Blocks were trained by state and district level trainer paneled by SIRD.¹⁰

Training and orientation to the elected representatives of PRIs certainly a good job in

solving their own problems by themselves. Unless they know the hard realities of the problems, co-operation in the process of solution, Government cannot take the country forward, no matter what amount are spent in developments. It would be better when they are equally efficient in the skill of management and awareness to make the democratic institutions more democratic. The outcome of CB & T programmes in educating the representatives become an assets in the smooth functioning of a democratic country. The new project under new setup to orient and reorient the people on the forward line, irrespective of its success and pitfalls become approximates the dream of Gandhiji. As Gandhi often pointed out, "India lives in its villages and unless village life can be revitalized the nation as a whole can hardly come alive."

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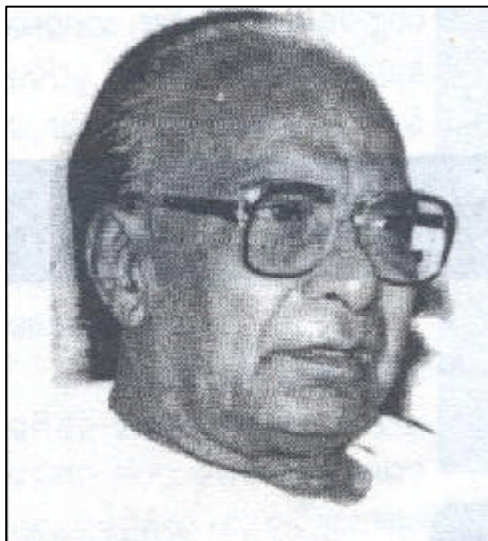
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Biju Patnaik : His Place in Indian History

Dr. Sudhakar Panda

Some leaders in history are born and destined to enjoy more fame far beyond the reputation of their contemporaries. Shri Biju Patnaik was one such rare personality. Everyone in Odisha remembers him with love and admiration. Few writings can capture the commanding presence and political influence of this great man on Odiya minds over the past half a century. And no assessment can do justice to his courage and remarkable valour, his overflowing love for his people and his commitments to his beloved state Odisha. Widely known for his adventurous spirit, he was assigned the great challenging task of rescuing late Sukarno of Indonesia from a dangerous situation that threatened his life. It would always be remembered as a rare moment in history and as an outstanding achievement in the life of Shri Patnaik when he pulled up all his courage to save the late President Sukarno of Indonesia at great risk to his own life. He, in fact, gave a brilliant account of his fighting spirit and achieved international fame.



He lived a life with malice towards none and unbound love and good will to one and all including his political competitors and adversaries. Born in a rich and aristocratic family in the year 1916 at Cuttack, he left the comfortable life of an industrialist and saw a bigger role for himself in state and national politics that would satisfy his passion for serving the people of the country and of his state. His entry into politics with his focus on Odisha's economic development to give its people a life of dignity free from poverty and deprivation, and a voice and an identity to them in national politics stirred up a hornets' nest in a state that was viewed as a calm and quiet state for a long time by the Indian people and authorities.

A veteran politician, he fought against any injustice to the state. His politics reflected his passionate will to win and command the situation and imbue in the people a sense of faith and courage to assert their rights and cry out against any injustice to the state. He was one of the few political personalities in India who could convey his powerful feelings

to any political personality or any authority in power. He had the courage to stand up and protest against any injustice to the people and was always prepared to suffer for his convictions. He played an important role in crystallizing political alignments in the Centre in the late seventies for the formation of the national government and held a responsible post in the cabinet. He was always ahead of his time in his thinking and ready to help other political parties to forge constructive relationships. To build a richer and stronger Odisha, he was always ready to forgive the dissidents and build new partnerships with others. And this made him distinctly different from other politicians of his time. This may help us to understand the gripping influence he had on so many politicians in the state and in the country. Notwithstanding the ups and downs in political life, he remained the ever green and charismatic leader of his people.

He began his political career as a Congressman under the inspiring leadership of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and enjoyed his love and confidence and was widely regarded as the potential Defence Minister of India in 1962 after the Chinese aggression of India. His massive popularity in the state, his closeness to Pandit Nehru and his statesman like qualities increased his national credibility and he was also considered as one of the likely successors to Pandit Nehru.

He served the state as its Chief Minister in 1961-63 and during that period he developed his strategy to revamp the rural economy of Odisha with his emphasis on small and cottage industries. He had a greater vision for the state to see it industrially developed and vibrating. Rourkela Engineering College(REC),now the National Institute of Technology(NIT) came up. Paradip port was set up and the state highway to

link the port with the mining areas of the state was also built. His effort was to build up strong infrastructure for the future prosperity of the state. Fed up with the inner politics of the Congress party, he moved out of the party. He fought and lost elections but was never shaken and always looked to the future with optimism. It was Odisha's good fortune that he became state's Chief Minister again in 1990. It was a great and decisive political victory for the people of the state.

He was a great man who could understand the anguish, helplessness and cruelties that women suffered in the Indian society. His greatest gift to the nation was the legislative act to reserve 33% of seats for women not only in the Panchayati Raj Institutions but also in all government jobs. No other political act could have such powerful impact on the Indian polity and society as this thoughtful act of Shri Patnaik. This opened up social, economic and political opportunities in a scale that would go a long way in empowering women. Not only that. He fought against official apathy and indifference to ensure justice to the poor and needy and did everything he could do for the development of men and women belonging to disadvantaged social groups.

It is worth recapitulating the history of this magnetic personality. Biju Patnaik was a big man with a great mind and the country is yet to appreciate his thoughts and contributions that has shaped the thinking of generations here in the state and in the nation.

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Biju Patnaik : Architect and Builder of Modern Odisha

Dr. Dasarathi Bhuyan

Biju Patnaik was a towering and multi-dimensional personality no less than a colossus in every sense of the term. This legendary leader and idol of the masses had almost a hectic and uninterrupted political career serving his state and the country in different capacities. The uncrowned hero of Kalinga, maker of new Odisha and formidable personality of Odisha politics, Biju Patnaik, was born on March 5, 1916 at Cuttack, Odisha. Indeed he was luckily to be born in a patriotic family. Lakshminarayan Patnaik, father of Biju was a natural inhabitant of village Nuagaon in between Bhanjanager and Belluguntha of Ghumushar area in Ganjam. Ghumushar has been a most important nerve centre of Odishan literature and culture. Village Nuagaon that is situated a few miles below the Kalinga hill is the undying testimony of Kalinga region. Ghumushar is known outside for its unique contribution to the Oriya literature. The tribes of Ghumushar had given a tough fight to the Britishers for a long time during 1766 to 1880. In short, the history of Ghumushar is the endless story of rare glory, greatness, glitter, glamour, patriotism and rebellions all through the pages of history.

Laxminarayan Patnaik came to Cuttack and settled in Tulashipur area in a house known as Anand Bhawan. Very soon Laxminarayan associated with the leaders of Odishan renaissance and became a pioneer of the

formation of the Odisha movement. His wife Ashalata Devi, came from a Bengali family who had sacrificed their lives in the struggle for freedom. Brothers of Ashalata Devi-Bijayasri, Deva Prasad and Anand Prasad were the revolutionary youths who along with Surya Sen were responsible for the Chittagong Armoury Raid of 1930.

Biju inherited the undaunted spirit of his patriotic father and mother. Biju Patnaik's life had, indeed, been one of challenges and adventures. These traits in his character led him to many spectacular achievements. Biju Patnaik was described by Julian Huxley in his memories as "a remarkable Indian whose adventures will surely fill a book," and by Nehru as a man of "energy and certain ability". He became an ace-pilot. During World War II he did not join the Indian Air Force which attracted many young Indians but became a dare devil transport pilot when the British commandeered all commercial planes into a sort of Air command. As he flew these military transport missions, he undertook cloak and dagger ventures to help Indian revolutionaries such as Jayaprakash Narayan, Arun Asaf Ali, Achyut Patwardhan, Manu Bhai Shah and others fighting against the British rule.

During those war days he met a Kashmir girl, Gyan, in Delhi where they played tennis. They

had earlier once met in her sister's place. Very soon they got married in 1939. When the Dutch were at the throat of the Indonesian Republic, Biju Patnaik flew secret missions into the Indonesian Republic and at the instance of Nehru brought Sjahariar, the Prime Minister and Mohammed Hatta, the Vice President of Indonesia.

In the summer of 1947 Biju flew to Jogjakarta on his helping mission. When Biju was ready with his Dakota plane, his wife Gyan was ready too. She went with him to invigorate his spirit who had left behind her a few months old baby.

To reach Jogjakarta Biju had to fly over Jakarta, the capital of the province of Batavia, which was under Dutch control and he was well aware that the Dutch might try to shoot down his Dakota plane. The next day, on his enroute to Jakarta, he was surrounded by Dutch planes. But Biju flew the Dakota to such heights that, the Dutch pilots could not match their aerobatics and finally the Dutch pilots moved away from the Dakota. As luck would have it, Biju and Gyan returned safely after completing their mission.

Apparently, Biju was far ahead of his time and society and also most of his party colleagues in thought and ideas. Much before he became the Chief Minister of Odisha, he had a thorough knowledge about science, economics, politics, geography and history. The new Odisha is the confluence of ancient Kalinga, Utkala, Odra and Kosala. Biju knew very well where the Kalinga was? The Vizag copper grant of 1126 AD depicts that Chodaganga Dev conquered Odisha and assumed the sovereign title of "Lord of Sakala Utkala". He established his capital at Jajatinagar and later on shifted to Abhinava Varanasi Katak (Modern Cuttack) in 1212 - 1213 AD. Bhanjanagar, the birth place of Biju's father was

located in the Kalinga region. The shift of their parents from Kalinga to Utkal or Odra had a great emotional impression on his body and mind. No body taught him to feel proud of being as Kalingan. It came naturally and the general ambiance of his father encouraged that proud. He found Kalinga most interesting in him. The Kalinga Empire became a reality for him. He established his own Airlines christened as Kalinga Airlines. He also established Kalinga Tubes, Kalinga Refrigerators Corporation, Kalinga Iron Works, published Kalinga Oriya daily, founded Kalinga Trust, and introduced Kalinga Prize. When Biju set up the Kalinga group of Industries in the late 40's that were the hallmark of his entrepreneurial mind and the perception of a new Odisha. As an ardent industrialist people called him the "Birla of Odisha". But he lost his mundane life and precious wealth in politics. Had not in politics he could have maintained the status of a TATA, BIRLA or AMBANI. That was the reason he never groomed his children to play politics. He could not see politics as the posterity of his family but literature. His daughter Gita scripted many novels such as 'Karma Cola', 'Raj', 'River Sutra' and 'Snakes and Ladders'. Naveen Patnaik is also a versatile genius in literature. The influence of his patriotic father, the environment and atmosphere of his cosmopolitan family has tremendous impact on his mind. His books reflect his deep interest in Indian cultural history and tradition. 'A second paradise' dealt with Indian culture, 'A Desert Kingdom' with Indian history and 'The Garden of life' with India's environment and traditional knowledge. All these three books were published not just in India but also widely acclaimed in the USA and Britain.

Biju Patnaik's Reign : An Era of Development

The 1961 mid-term poll raised the possibility of an end to political instability, as the

Congress Party under the dynamic leadership of Biju Patnaik emerged victorious with a stable majority. The election result was a surprise to many. For the first time in the electoral history of the State, the Congress Party under the leadership of Biju Patnaik secured absolute majority by capturing 82 seats in a House of 140 polling nearly 44 per cent of the total votes. Biju Patnaik who flushed with his magnificent victory in the 1961 election was awarded with the Chief Ministership of the State but appeared to think too much of himself. He gave an impression that he was all-powerful to do anything he likes. He made many promises of bringing about industrialization in the State. However, due to his strong initiative, the construction of Paradeep Port and Sunabeda MIG factory was started. During his tenure as Chief Minister, the Lok Sabha elections were held in 1962. That was a big opportunity for Biju Patnaik to demonstrate his leadership before the party High Command. In the election, the Congress could win 14 seats and a massive 55.5 per cent of votes. The Ganatantra Parishad whose vote share was 29 per cent in the last Lok Sabha election suffered badly with only 17.4 per cent votes. Thus, the massive victory for the Congress Party in the Lok Sabha election during the Biju Patnaik's tenure as Chief Minister clearly demonstrated his full control over the party and the confidence he enjoyed from the people of the State despite factionalism in the party and opposition of the Mahatab group after he became the Chief Minister.

In Odisha, Biju Patnaik embarked on this path of industrialization and development almost with a reckless abandon. In fact, his first spell of chiefministership in the 1960's was an era of industrialization and development. Ambitious and enterprising as he was from his boyhood, Biju Patnaik always cherished a dream to industrialize Odisha and turn himself into a top- flight industrialist by setting up large industries in his state

without any help from capitalists like the Birlas, Dalmias or Tatas and show to the people in Odisha that it was possible for them to take up big enterprises on their own. After becoming a member of the State Legislative Assembly Biju showed restlessness to develop industries for him. And with Mahatab at the helm of affairs in the state Biju had no difficulty in obtaining state patronage. Mahatab tried to give him all legitimate help from government side. With such help Biju set up Orissa Textile Mills and also Kalinga Airlines. Soon he set up other industries like Kalinga Tubes, Kalinga Iron Woks, and Kalinga Refrigerator Corporation and in fact became monarch of an industrial empire in Odisha.

All his earnings and income derived from his business activities were invested in Odisha for the purpose of setting up industries and development of scientific and technical education in Odisha. In 1947 he founded a Public Charitable Trust called the Kalinga Foundation Trust which established the chair of Geology in the Utkal University, the international Kalinga prize for popularization of science.

It is obvious that in the late forties both Mahatab and Biju Patnaik came close to each other for their mutual interest. By 1950 Biju had practically become the principal financial prop of the party and Mahatab always encouraged him to remain as an industrialist without cherishing any political ambition.

The spirit of adventure that had once prompted Biju Patnaik in his young days to move to the cockpit of an airplane from the less thrilling job of a ground engineer again goaded him to grasp the wheel of the administration in his own hands and steer the state through a rather uncharted course to a bright future of his dreams. Biju employed all his organizing ability for winning the mid- term poll in 1961. In the hustings Biju

raised high hopes in the minds of the people with promises that under his rule milk and honey would flow in the lanes and by-lanes of the poor state. He used to urge the people to draw inspiration from his life- how he became a man of crores within a few years from a very humble beginning. In June 1961, Biju took over as the Chief Minister. Once at the helm of affairs, Biju tried to see that his ideas and dreams of making Odisha a modern industrial state came true. His greatest obsession was the sickening backwardness of Odisha. Naturally, he concentrated all his efforts in finding ways and means to make up the Lee way. With his great pull with the Prime Minister Nehru, Biju not only accelerated the process of development but was able to locate a number of prestigious projects in the state, e.g.- the Paradip Port, Sunabedha MIG factory, Talcher Thermal Power Plant, Balimela Hydel Project, the Express Highway and many more. The concept of Panchayat industries to boost the rural economy was given a trial. A system of competition amongst the Panchayats and Panchayat Samities was introduced. The winning Panchayats were to get small scale industries as a prize up to the value of Rs. 1 lakh each and winning Panchayat Samities were to get medium scale industries up to the value of Rs. 1 crore each. By this method in geometrical progression, the entire state would have been industrialized within a span of 20/25 years. The scheme not only received the approval and active support of the Planning Commission and the Government of India but also inspired several State Governments to take up similar projects.

These apart, Biju Patnaik was fortunate in having a Governor who was equally energetic. He was Ayodhya Nath Khosla, an eminent engineer who gave all help and encouragement to Biju Patnaik to give shape to his ideas. Khosla himself drafted a ten-year plan for the integrated development of the river basins of Odisha. The

plan covering the period from 1963-1973 was called the Odisha's decade of destiny. This was a modern industrialist's approach to a conservative bureaucracy. Truly, the state had embarked on a new adventure under his stewardship. Everything was going tempo. But it was rather strange that a man like him, who had the noble ideas of building the state's economy round the peasantry, was oblivious of a very fundamental aspect in his zeal for setting up a major port at Paradeep and to connect it by an Express Highway to facilitate iron ore movement by road. Both the costly projects proved to be a heavy burden on the state Exchequer and resulted in a lop-sided growth of the state since not much resources were left for the development of agriculture and irrigation, two most vital sectors for a poor state like Odisha, where 80% of people lived on agriculture. Moreover, by taking up the Paradeep Port Project he threw on the public exchequer a liability of about Rs. 16 crores - the amount spent on the project. The project became sort of a white elephant and Biju Patnaik had to face hostile criticism from his political opponents. The port was eventually taken over by the Government of India but the dispute over the reimbursement of the cost persisted and continued to be a bone of contention between the Centre and the State.

Due to implementation of the Kamraj Plan he had to resign from his office at the instance of the Congress High Command for organizational work of the party on a full-time basis. Thus, Biju Patnaik's resignation ended the hope of political stability. Even with an absolute majority behind it, the Congress could not provide political stability in the State and the Party had three Chief Ministers in six years. After Biju Patnaik's resignation Biren Mitra formed the next Congress Government on October 2, 1963. Biju Patnaik was made the chairperson of the State Planning Board to look after planning and development of the State, the post that he held until January 29,

1965. Soon after Mitra assumed office, the Mahatab group triggered the student movement and took active role in ousting the Biju-Biren Ministry. The Assembly was stormed by the students' mob and it was hurriedly adjourned. The Chief Minister was in tenterhooks. Within a few days, disturbances broke out all over the state causing students' agitation of a serious nature. Hurt emotionally and prompted by a desire to get rid of the administrative burden, Biren Mitra took unilateral decision to resign without consulting the Party. To revive the Congress image, the succession to Biren Mitra fell on the head of Sadasiva Tripathy. Biju Patnaik regarded as the "Super Chief Minister" and still his sway was over the organisation. He had the final say in the matter and his choice fell on Sadasiva Tripathy, Revenue, Forest, and Excise Minister in Mitra's Cabinet. After the resignation of Sadasiv Tripathy's Ministry in 1965, Mahatab walked out of the Congress with his seven trusted lieutenants and formed Jana Congress with Pabitra Mohan Pradhan as the President to "oust Congress from power." The General Election in 1967 came off at the peak of anti-Congress wave in the country. The Congress for the first time suffered setback in so many States in its electoral history. Among the prominent Congress leaders who suffered defeat were Biju Patnaik, Nilamani Routray, and Satya Priya Mohanty along with many other ministers. The Jana Congress's electoral adjustment with the Swatantra Party was in a strong bid 'to end the misrule of corrupt Congress leaders' paid good dividends. A coalition Ministry therefore, was formed taking the members of the Swatantra and the Jana Congress Parties. Rajendra Narayan Singh Deo of the Swatantra party became the Chief Minister and Pabitra Mohan Pradhan of the Jana Congress became the Deputy Chief Minister.

New alignments started taking shape during presidential election of August 1969 in

the Odisha Congress which was also divided over the presidential poll. The followers of Biju Patnaik voted for the official Congress candidate Sanjiva Reddy while others exercised their "conscience vote" in favour of V.V.Giri who was regarded as Indira Gandhi's man. By that time, Biju Patnaik fell from the grace of the Prime Minister because of his pro-Sanjiva Reddy stand. As Biju Patnaik was defeated in the Assembly poll, he sought election to the Rajya Sabha. The Party recommended his name to the Central Parliamentary Board which rejected it and selected Narayan Patra as the Party's candidate though his name was not sent by the P.C.C. The followers of Patnaik revolted and set up T.Sanganna as their candidate. The outcome was a setback for the Congress(R) as both the official nominees' Patra and rebel candidate Sanganna were defeated. Ultimately, the High Command accused Patnaik and suspended him on May 24, 1970 along with a few of his followers. Biju Patnaik, therefore, left Congress and formed his state-based party "Utkal Congress". After the birth of the Utkal Congress, a new spate of developments took place in Odisha. Mahatab was waiting for such a situation. With Patnaik in it, he disliked Congress, when he was out, and he tried his best to enter into it.

Biju Patnaik in the Opposition Bench

Biju Patnaik's contribution to India's democracy was the role he played tenaciously and repeatedly in Odisha and at national level for forming opposition unity through times of factional politics. The Indira wave virtually had no impact in the General Election of 1971 to the Odisha Legislative Assembly. The Swatantra Party secured 36 seats and the Utkal Congress of Biju Patnaik 32 seats, which after September bye-election became 36 seats. The Jharkhand, the P.S.P., and the C.P.I. secured four seats each. The CPI (M) begged two and Independents secured four seats.

Soon after the election the attempt for a Coalition Government of Congress and Utkal Congress could not succeed. A coalition government was formed and Biswanath Das assumed the charge of office on 3rd April 1971 in Odisha. The government headed by Biswanath Das depended on the Swatantra Party, the Jharakhand Party and the Utkal Congress. Despite his stay outside the formal power structure, Biju Patnaik was the unquestioned master of his Utkal Congress Party and coalition government.

The Coalition Ministry came to the edge of fall down because of disagreement among the partners. By hook or by crook, the coalitions continued till June 1972. In the same time, the Utkal Congress Legislative Party under the leadership of Biju Patnaik, (this had 34 members) decided to rejoin the Congress Party. But the Congress Party admitted only 28 members of the Utkal Congress Party and the rest six members including Biju Patnaik remained in the opposition as Independent members. The Congress party, thereafter, formed Ministry with Smt. Nandini Satpathy as Chief Minister.

Thus, the Utkal Congress was again revived in November 1972 and an 18 member legislative party including the "left out" seven Biju Patnaik as the leader. In February 1973, a combined front styled as the Pragati Legislative Party with the members of the Swatantra Party, six members of the erstwhile Utkal Congress Party and the members of the Independent Congress group was formed. The Pragati Party elected Biju Patnaik as its leader and he became as the leader of the opposition. On 1st March 1973 when the Assembly was in session, the political situation took a sudden turn. 25 members of the Congress Party including two Cabinet Ministers defected from the Congress and joined the Pragati Legislative Party. The Satpathy Ministry resigned

immediately after that and the State came under President's rule on 3rd March 1973.

Elections to the 147-member state Assembly were held on February 22 and February 24, 1974 in a favourable climate for the Congress. The Congress fought the election in alliance with the CPI. Therefore the fight was virtually restricted to the Congress and the Pragati combine of Utkal Congress, Swatantra Party and Samjukta Socialist Party. The emergence of the Pragati Party before 1974 elections was a significant development in the direction of bipolarization of the party system in the State. Biju Patnaik's idea of an all-India alternative was in fact realized in 1974 with the formation of Bharatiya Lok Dal.

In the years 1974 and 1975 India faced a political turmoil of enormous proportions. Around this time the issue of corruption became the biggest issue. Jaya Prakash Narayan's anticorruption movement was gradually taking unshakable roots by which time the Allahabad High Court judgment came. Raj Narayan's election petition in the Allahabad High Court made all the difference. Raj Narayan challenged Indira's victory on the ground that she committed electoral malpractice. Mrs. Indira Gandhi's electoral victory was soon giving place to Raj Narayan's court victory. With the judgment in hand the opposition gave her two options; either to quite or face countrywide agitation. Indira Gandhi was not so weak leader to abdicate power by such provocations. A disillusioned Indira Gandhi became captive of circumstances of her own making. There was no alternative, except turning to the Constitution and Proclaiming National Emergency.

On June, 25th 1975, President Fakiruddin Ali Ahmed signed a proclamation declaring a state of emergency in India on the ground of internal disturbances. Again on July 1st,

1975, the President signed another ordinance amending the maintenance of Internal Security Act (MISA) whereby the government could detain anyone it likes without assigning the grounds. The tenure of Lok Sabha was extended for one year. Many opposition leaders were put behind bars. At this Biju Patnaik and other leaders went to Jagjivan Ram with a suggestion that if he could come out from the Congress immediately they would support him. Biju Patnaik and Chandrasekhar spoke for the Janata Party. Nandini Satapathy and K.R.Ganesh spoke for CPI only after they had finally checked up with their erstwhile comrades. Jagajivan Ram called his supporters to reach Delhi. When many arrived Ram said that he was leaving the Congress and he was going to announce this in the Congress Election Committee. On January 29th Ram finally decided to come out of the Party.

But on January 17, 1977 Indira Gandhi announced the dissolution of the Lok Sabha and holding fresh elections to the House in March 1977. After Indira Gandhi declared the election dates all the opposition parties met in Delhi instantly. The Jana Sangha, Bharatiya Lok Dal, Congress (O), the Socialist Party, the Congress for Democracy and Bharatiya Lok Dal merged together and named as the Janata Party.

In Odisha, the Janata Party under the leadership of Biju Patnaik fought the elections in alliance with Congress for Democracy (C.F.D.) and the CPI (M). It bagged 16 (Janata 14, C.F.D. 1, CPI (M) 1) of the 21 parliamentary seats. Congress Party got only 4. In the Elections to the Odisha Legislative Assembly the Janata Party led by Biju Patnaik swept the polls while the Congress was completely routed. Out of 147 seats the Janata Party got 110 seats, Congress 26, CPI and CPI (M) one each and Independents nine. This was for the first time in the history of Odisha that a party under Biju won the election.

The most remarkable feature of poll outcome was re-emergence of Biju Patnaik as the undisputed leader of Odisha. With a landslide victory of 110 seats a Ministry was formed with Nilamani Routray, a close lieutenant of Biju Patnaik, as the Chief Minister on 26 June, 1977.

Biju Patnaik's Last Chance to fulfill his Dreams

Following the election debacle of the Congress (I) in the Parliamentary elections of November 1989 at the national level in general and State level in particular. Janaki Ballav Patnaik, who frustrated the efforts of all his political rivals to remove him from the seat, owned the moral responsibility for the failure of the party in elections and as such resigned from the position on 1st December, 1989. Mr. Hemananda Biswal, a former critic, political rival of Janaki Ballav Patnaik and former Minister of Janaki Ballav Patnaik's Cabinet became the leader of the Congress Legislative Party and he took over as Odisha's Chief Minister on 5th December, 1989.

The Janata Dal led combine under the leadership of Biju Patnaik won a five-sixth majority, cornering 130 of the 147 seats with the Janata Dal alone getting 123. The Congress (I) secured only 10 seats. Biju Patnaik had played the pivotal role in the formation of National Front Government at the Centre and his contact with the Prime Minister V.P.Singh developed his image in Odisha. Biju Patnaik's appeal to the people to give him a chance at the fag end of the political career to build up Odisha of his dream had magic impact on the people. Waving of loans of small farmers' up to 10,000/- also attracted the mass. The Boffors deal of Rajiv Gandhi also had an impact on the people.

With a triumphant majority, Biju Patnaik returned as the Chief Minister of Odisha after a long gap of 27 years. His comeback was acclaimed all over the State as the emergence of

an era of industrialization. The people of Odisha also nurtured a hope of getting something from Biju Patnaik at the fag end of his life. Before the election, Biju Patanaik was too in the asking of a 'last chance' to serve the people. Biju Patnaik had cherished a dream of establishing a Second Steel Plant and empowering the women. During the Chief Ministership of Biju Patnaik, the process of liberalization, privatization and globalisation, which was started by the Centre assistance, was streamlined. More and more private investors were attracted to invest in Odisha's market. He tried his best to establish a second steel plant in Odisha and selected Daitari as the proper place for the Second Steel Plant.

When Biju became the Union Steel Minister during 1977, he tried to set up a shore based steel plant at Paradeep. But things couldn't move ahead because Moraraji Desai's government fell half way through its tenure. Biju's plan suffered a setback. When Biju Patnaik again came to power in 1990 he was overconvinced that Odisha needs another Steel Plant and it was time to give solid shape to the concept, which had failed to take off. Biju always wanted to set up the plant in Paradeep because of the exportability of the product. A South Korean Company Pohang Iron and Steel co. (POSCO) was asked to study the feasibility of a port-based Steel Plant. The team of experts, however, showed unwillingness to Paradeep. Paradeep had another disadvantages attached to it. The Dredging Corporation of India in a report had said that to develop Paradeep for a Steel Plant would take 15 years of time and an amount of 250 crores would be needed as development costs. Finally, Biju gave in and Daitari was selected to be the right place for the second steel plant. The next step he took was a joint sector company called Kalinga Steel Limited to replace Janaki Ballav Patnaik's Nilanchal Ispat Nigam. The

Kalinga Steel became the joint venture of the Government run concern IPICOL and Jindal Strips Limited was to set up the plant at Daitari. Before Jindals came the South Korean firm POSCO, had tried but backed out on the question of the place where the plant should come up. Although the investment of Jindals for a mega-project was totally beyond their corporate capability, they invested 70 crores in another project and finally they withdrew. After the oust of the Jindals, Biju Patnaik invited the Tata's to come and set-up the Steel Plant. To entrap the Tatas Biju offered many facilities. As all his efforts had gone into frivolous, he arrived in London in November 1991 to fructify his dreams. He persuaded Swaraj Paul, Chairman of the CAPARO group. Biju saw high hopes in Swaraj Paul. But his dream of 3 million tonne steel project received a severe jolt when the Germany unification came about in 1990. Without the help of congress Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao, it was difficult to get foreign financial assistance directly for the Kalinga Steel Project.

When he invited the South Korean Steel making firm POHANG Company to become a major partner along with the Jindal Strips, the Central Steel Minister accused him of violating the protocol by approaching a foreign company at his own. In the meanwhile the Narasimha Rao government at centre implemented the new Indian economic policy. These were governed by the principles of liberalization, privatization. Freedom to the entrepreneurs to establish any industry or trade or business venture was encouraged. State control, licenses, and permits system were also discouraged. For Biju Patnaik this was a golden opportunity. Again he successfully motivated Swaraj Paul to shoulder the responsibility of the Kalinga Steel. On 10th May, 1992 the Bhoomi Puja was held at Jakhapura near Daitari with the presence of Swaraj Paul, Biju Patnaik and the

British High Commissioner in India. Meanwhile the Union Cabinet cleared the establishment of a giant steel plant in Odisha. Swaraj Paul was ready with the investment of money. But something happened in the midst, when Swraj Paul wanted to clarify that he was only an investor and not the principal promoter of the project as envisaged. He also said that the CAPARO group is also an equity investor and not leader as far as debt equity was concerned. Unless debt equity could be done at 3 is to 1 there was no way of proceeding with the Project. When this information reached Biju's secretariat every thing seemed to be unsettling for him. Finally, Swaraj Paul washed his hands off in the project. Three years of protracted negotiations, years of wavering and gallons of hopes all were dashed to the ground. A dream of Biju Patnaik became unfulfilled. However during the second term of Chief Ministership from March 5, 1990 to March 15, 1995 Panchayati Raj movement gained momentum under his dynamic leadership. He took a revolutionary step to reserve 33 per cent of seats for women in the three-tier of the Panchayati Raj system. As a mark of his profound love for Panchayati Raj institution the people of Odisha observe his Birth Day (March 5) as Panchayati Raj Divas.

The "son of the soil" breathed his last on 17th April 1997 at the age of eighty-one. The whole country was stunned and messages condoling his death and eulogizing his contributions started pouring in from far and near.

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Activities and Achievements of Panchayati Raj Department

The Panchayati Raj Department has been entrusted with implementation of various Poverty Alleviation Programmes in the State. The Poverty Alleviation Programmes mainly cater to the needs of rural families living below the poverty line. These Programmes can be grouped under the following four broad categories :-

1. Self Employment Programme

National Rural Livelihood Mission (NRLM) :-

During the current financial year 2014-15, upto January' 2015, an amount of Rs.3709.28 lakh has been utilized out of the total available funds of Rs.9756.13 lakh and out of 57237 number of targeted SHGs 5132 numbers of SHGs have been validated. 4088 SHGs and 1044 SHGs have been graded as Grade-I & Grade-II respectively out of total functional SHGs.

2. Wage Employment Programme

Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS):-

The basic objective of this scheme is to enhance livelihood security of the rural poor in rural areas by providing at least 100 days of guaranteed wage employment in a financial year to every household whose adult members volunteer to do unskilled manual work. This work guarantee can also serve other objectives like generating productive assets, protecting the environment, empowering rural women, reducing rural-urban migration and fostering social equity among other.

It is a Centrally Sponsored Programme with the following funding pattern between the Centre and the State. While the Central Govt. will bear the entire cost of wages of unskilled manual workers and 75% of material cost and wages of skilled and semi-skilled workers, the State Govt. will bear 25% of material cost and wages of skilled and semi-skilled workers. In case of failure to provide employment within the stipulated period, i.e. within 15 days from the date of application, unemployment allowance has to be paid to the concerned job seekers and the same is to be borne by the State Govt.

Up to the end of 2007-08, 24 districts were covered under this scheme. During the financial year i.e. 2008-09, six more districts have been added w.e.f. 01.04.08 and the SGRY scheme which

was being implemented in these districts, namely Cuttack, Jagatsinghpur, Kendrapada, Khurda, Nayagarh and Puri have been merged with MGNREGS. At present all the 30 districts are being covered under MGNREGS.

Upto January' 2015 in the current financial year 2014-15, an amount of Rs.105658.47 lakh has been utilized against the total available fund of Rs.106980.26 lakh. The utilization of fund is 99%. 405.60 lakh persondays have been generated against the total target of 633.13 persondays.

3. Rural Housing Programme

i) Indira Awaas Yojana (IAY):-

The scheme provides coverage of at least 60% SC/ST BPL rural households and 40% from other categories. Priority is given to freed bonded labourers, fire victims, families of defence personnel and paramilitary force killed in action and physically handicapped persons. The beneficiaries are selected by Gram Sabha / Palli Sabha from among rural families living below poverty line. Grant-in-aid is provided to the beneficiaries under the scheme and houses are constructed by themselves. It is a centrally sponsored scheme with funding pattern of 75:25 between Centre and State.

Upto January, 2015 in the current financial year 2014-15, an amount of Rs.41926.72 lakh has been utilised out of available funds of Rs.172577.54 lakh. The utilization of fund is 24%. 13528 number of houses have been completed against the total target of 152966 houses.

ii) Indira Awaas Yojana (FRA):-

Govt. of India sanctioned 99,986 number of additional houses under IAY in 18 IAP districts @ Rs.75000/- per unit and 10 Non-IAP districts (except Jagatsinghpur & Puri districts) @ Rs.70000/- per unit for the beneficiaries of Scheduled Tribe and other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006 during 2011-12. During 2013-14, an amount of Rs.141.30 Crore has been released against the target of 36238 number of houses. It is a centrally sponsored scheme with funding pattern of 75:25 between Centre and State.

Upto January'2015 in the current financial year 2014-15, an amount of Rs.6773.04 lakh has been utilised out of available funds of Rs.17853.10 lakh. The utilization of fund is 38%. 3720 houses have been completed out of under construction houses of previous year.

(iii) BIJU PUCCA GHAR (BPG):-

The Mo Kudia scheme is renamed as "Biju Pucca Ghar (BPG)" Scheme. The unit cost for new construction of dwelling house for the year 2014-15 is Rs.70,000/- for non-IAP districts and Rs.75,000/- for IAP districts. The entire fund is provided by the State Government. Upto January '2015, in the current financial year 2014-15, an amount of Rs.10779.26 lakh has been utilized out of available funds of Rs.76863.26 lakh. The utilization of fund is 14%. 1108 number of houses have been completed against the total target of 428:29 houses.

4. Infrastructure Development

(i) Backward Regions Grant Fund (BRGF):-

Backward Regions Grant Fund (BRGF) is designed to redress regional imbalances in development. The fund will provide financial resources for supplementing and converging existing developmental inflows into 20 identified districts. It is a Central Plan scheme being implemented from 2006-07. The entire fund is borne by Govt. of India.

Upto January'2015 in the current financial year 2014-15, 6484 number of projects have been completed with expenditure of Rs.19783.64 lakh out of total available fund of Rs.31031.07 lakh. The utilization of fund is 64%.

(ii) Gopabandhu Gramin Yojana(GGY) :-

It provides additional developmental assistance to targeted 11 districts of the State which are not covered under Backward Regions Grant Fund (BRGF). The principal objective is to provide rural infrastructure primarily Bijli, Sadak & Pani to every revenue village in the identified districts.

It is a State plan scheme launched in 2006-07 and the entire fund is provided by the State Government. Expenditure to the tune of Rs.6876.03 lakh has been incurred upto January'2015 in the current financial year 2014-15 against the available funds of Rs.24877.69 lakh which constitutes 28%. 3027 number of works have been completed out of 6221 number of works taken up.

(iii) Cement Concrete Road (CC Road) :-

The State Government have decided to give thrust to the scheme for construction of cement concrete roads in the villages in every nook and corner of the State with special focus on SC/ST/PVTG (Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group) habitations. It is a State plan scheme launched in 2010-11 and the entire fund is provided by the State Government.

Expenditure to the tune of Rs.25495.75 lakh has been incurred upto January'2015 in the current financial year 2014-15 against the available funds of Rs.54440.54 lakh which constitutes 47%. 9168 number of CC Roads (991.92 Kms.) have been completed out of 15964 number of CC Roads taken up.

Address of Hon'ble Governor of Odisha Dr. S.C. Jamir to the Odisha Legislative Assembly

Mr. Speaker and Honourable Members,

It gives me pleasure to welcome you to the 3rd Session of 15th Odisha Legislative Assembly. Let me take this opportunity to extend my heartiest New Year Greetings to all the Hon'ble Members of this august House as well as to the people of Odisha.

2. This august House has expressed its deep condolence on the sad demise of Late Dr. Ram Prasad Mishra and Laxman Mallick, former Ministers, Late Mohan Nag and Brahmananda Biswal, former Ministers of State, Late Rabaneswara Madhei, Haldhar Mishra and Purusottam Nayak, all former Members of this august House who have made significant contribution to the development of the State. I request Hon'ble Members to join me in paying tribute to Late Rameshwar Thakur, former Governor of Odisha, Late Bhupal Chandra Mohapatra, former Minister and Late Tarini Charan Pattnaik, former Member of this august House and Late Padma Lochan Majhi, ex-Constable of 223 Battalion CRPF who are no more with us. The House may convey our heartfelt condolence to the bereaved families of the departed souls.

3. Odisha is now at the cross roads of varying opportunities to grab to further its journey towards an inclusive society. The course we choose now will have a far reaching consequence over the type of state we want to evolve into.

4. Expectations have been continuously soaring for a better future as our efforts towards achieving faster; quicker distribution of gains from the people-centric good governance has taken strong roots. Now this poses even more big challenges before us to be alert, nimble in our response to the emerging expectations from the people. We want people to aspire for their rightful dues and to participate pro-actively in the state's affairs rather than remaining as passive receivers of Government's empathy and sympathy.

5. To make every citizen a key stakeholder in the governance framework, we must find a new meaning to 'pro-activeness' and strive to make it synonymous with our philosophy of governance. Every level of Government that interfaces with the common man must become more responsive, and more delivery oriented on a sustainable basis. It must be our collective endeavor to create an environment of trust that conveys in no uncertain terms our strong resolve to fulfill every genuine aspiration of our

people. And here let me assure that the Government of today has shown in the past and will continue to do so in the days to come with the same vigour and commitment.

6. Odisha has made impressive achievements in terms of economic growth and poverty reduction. Despite the adverse impact of global economic slowdown, Odisha has been able to register a reasonably high average annual growth rate of 6.84% during the first two years of 12th Plan as against National average of 4.7% during the same period. The real per capita income in Odisha at 2004-05 prices has increased from Rs.14,862 in 1999-2000 to Rs.25,415 in 2012-13 and Odisha is the only state in our country where there is a highest reduction in poverty levels of 24.6% between 2004-05 to 2011-12.

7. My Government has consistently and continuously strived to achieve a sustainable and inclusive higher economic growth, accelerated overall development, reduction in regional, social and gender disparities and a faster rate of poverty reduction.

8. To sustain the targeted growth rate and also to meet our inclusive growth goal, my Government is seeking out partnership with private sector for development of required infrastructure and delivery of services through PPPs.

9. In addition to the developmental works taken up by the Government under various Plans, Schemes, Programs, my Government has been keenly monitoring the outcomes from the other schemes such as MLALAD Scheme, the Special Development Programme, the Special Problem Fund and the MPLAD Fund. I am happy to inform you that my Government has been able to spend 81% of the funds released under MLALAD Funds completing 89% of the projects recommended and 84% of the funds released under MPLAD Scheme completing 94% of the projects taken up.

10. We are blessed to witness the Nabakalebar of Lord Jagannath which will be held this year. We expect millions of devotees thronging to Puri, to have a darshan of Lord Jagannath in our soil. Managing such massive gathering poses great challenge to the administration, especially in these challenging times of heightened security threats. Let me assure you all that my Government has already put in place a well thought out strategy, coupled with concrete action with a dedicated control system for smooth conduct of the event of our most revered deity.

11. Provision of safe drinking water, sanitation, sewerage, drainage, expansion of power grid stations and refurbished power distribution network, augmentation of road network with Puri and trunk roads connecting Puri, improvement of railway station including better passenger amenities, upgradation of health delivery systems, creation of Trauma Center and intensive care units will be made ready to ensure a unique experience to the people.

12. The improvement in fiscal situation has given us considerable space to shift our focus to create capital assets, which is being financed from the surplus that my Government is able to generate in the revenue account. We have not resorted to any kind of market borrowing since last eight straight years and this is definitely a good lesson for others to emulate.

13. Improving efficiency of public spending and getting more value out of every rupee spent are two prime objectives of our public financial management. To achieve this, my Government has separated agriculture from the main budget and adopted an exclusive budget for Agriculture, automated the Treasury

Management System through adoption of latest IT enabled services. Using the Central Electronic Payment Processing System, we have introduced 'e-disbursement and e-cheque payment system' for settlement of all payment to different kinds of vendors including contractors. My Government has completely automated the Local Fund Audit Process and has recently launched Odisha Central Audit Management Portal for effective monitoring of response to audit observations by CAG.

14. Being an agrarian state where more than 60% of the population depends on it for their livelihoods, my Government has always been very sensitive to the needs of the agriculture sector. That my Government has successively bagged Krishi Karman Award instituted by our National Government to recognize consistent growth in production and productivity of food grains is a testament to our deep commitment to this sector. Let me take this opportunity to convey in no uncertain terms our deep sense of appreciation to the resilience displayed by our farmers in the aftermath of devastating Phailin & Hudhud and through their efforts, our state is going to register the highest ever food grain production of 120 lakh tons this year.

15. Several schemes launched by my Government in the past such as Biju Krushak Vikas Yojana, Jalandidhi aimed at enhancing the socio-economic status of our farming community have indeed started showing good results that has given us the necessary confidence to encourage more farmers to avail the benefits.

16. To sustain the growth in the agri-sector, my Government has taken several measures to increase access to inputs and other services. My Government will augment the soil testing facilities by adding three static and three mobile laboratories.

17. An interest free, short term corpus fund of Rs.100 crores will be provided to MARKFED and OAIC for easing procurement and supply of chemical fertilizers to our farmers. Another Rs.100 crores of interest free corpus fund will also be made available to agencies responsible for ensuring quality seeds to farmers that will enable the agencies to procure and pre-position quality seeds at desired location well ahead of sowing season.

18. In order to conserve indigenous plant varieties, my Government has established a Gene Bank under Protection of Plant Varieties and Farmer's Right Authority (PPVFRA) that has already registered 438 farmer's varieties in paddy, which is unique in our country. Commercial Agri-Enterprise is a programme to attract youth to the business opportunities in the farming sector. My Government has already established 889 Commercial Agri-Enterprises in the state.

19. To ensure that our state does not lag behind in the production of Horticultural crops for which we have the most suitable climatic conditions, my Government has decided to provide additional 20% incentive from State Budget, over and above what is available under National Horticulture Mission to attract prospective entrepreneurs into the broad spectrum of activities in the Horticulture Value Chain.

20. Recognizing the criticality of access to assured irrigation, my Government through a scheme "Sustainable Harnessing of Groundwater in Water Deficit Areas", remains committed to provide irrigation to every farmer up to 5 ha in Khariff season and 2 ha in Rabi season. To achieve this, my Government has already installed 21,423 bore wells.

- 21.** Under the Integrated Watershed Management Programme, my Government is currently implementing 2,885 micro-watershed projects covering 1.12 lakh hectares and we have already formed 4,176 SHGs under this Programme benefiting 42,086 landless and asset-less households across the state.
- 22.** To augment steady supply of qualified and skilled manpower to the agriculture sector and also to provide high quality research and development back up, my Government has decided to establish a 2nd Agriculture University in the KBK region.
- 23.** Extension of assured irrigation services to all farmers of the state by bringing additional 10 lakh hectares of land under irrigation in the next five years is being taken up by my Government through mega lift, minor & micro irrigation projects and completion of major and medium irrigation projects.
- 24.** My Government has launched a new scheme “Irrigation Road Construction & Improvement Scheme” to upgrade the status of river and canal embankment roads. For better flood control and development of suitable drainage systems, my Government has started the Drainage Improvement Programme as well. For ensuring proper upkeep of irrigation assets through participative irrigation management system introduced by my Government, we have been able to involve 22,444 Pani Panchayats for managing the affairs of irrigation in 15.28 lakh hectares of irrigated area in our state.
- 25.** For my Government, promotion and strengthening of cooperative movement in the state has always been a top priority and to meet our goals for this sector, my Government has not only brought necessary legal reforms but also consistently raised budgetary support to this key sector.
- 26.** My Government has adopted a multi-pronged approach for the betterment of farming community covered under the co-operative sector. Through Kisan Credit Cards, my Government is extending crop loans and to encourage timely repayment of outstanding loans, Odisha State Co-operative Bank has introduced Kisan Credit Gold Card that provides free accident insurance cover of Rs.25,000/- and consumption loan of Rs.5,000/- to non-defaulting farmers. Buoyed by the success that my Government has achieved in the disbursement of crop loan to farmers, we have targeted to disburse Rs.8,500 crores of crop loans in the year 2015-16.
- 27.** To ensure that farmers get minimum support price for their paddy and to prevent distress selling, my Government is engaging PACS in paddy procurement as an additional agency. Modernization and upgradation of plant and machineries of the three sugar mills in the co-operative sector, establishment of market yards under 13th Finance Commission grant, creation of warehousing facilities, establishment of threshing floors in the paddy procurement districts and provision of free mobile phones to farmers are some of the key highlights of my Government’s engagement in this sector.
- 28.** Left Wing Extremism continues to be a big challenge for my Government in the expansion of inclusive development activities into the remote areas, though its intensity has greatly reduced in the recent past. The significant achievements of our Law and Order machinery in containing this form of extremism must be appreciated and encouraged and their resolve to eradicate such a menace hindering growth and development of vulnerable sections of our society must be strengthened. Indeed, this has been the motive force of my Government and we continue our determination in facing any challenge thrown by such groups.

- 29.** My Government is working to fill the security vacuum in new areas by augmenting the strength of Special Operation Group and Special Intelligence Wing. We are doubling the strength of District Volunteer Force. We have created Four Special Security Battalions and Odisha Special Striking Force by inducting ex-servicemen for guarding vulnerable police stations, jails etc. We have also created the Odisha Auxiliary Police Force by inducting local tribal youth from affected districts to strengthen the district police. Parallely, my Government has revised the Surrender & Rehabilitation Scheme to lure more cadres to give up arms.
- 30.** To augment State Police and to fill up vacancies and new posts created to operationalize Marine Police Stations, Mahila & Sishu Desks, Anti-human trafficking units, Immigration Office at International airport in Bhubaneswar, 3,026 posts have been created and are being filled up. To counter threats likely to come from sea route, my Government has established 13 more Marine Police stations at strategic locations in the state.
- 31.** To prevent crime and to offer timely redressal to such victims, my Government has already sanctioned 37 Integrated Anti-Human Trafficking units all over the state and Special Prosecutors engaged for expeditious trial of such incidents. Parallely, my Government is taking steps to modernize the policing infrastructure and has decided to leverage IT enabled services to improve effectiveness and enhance efficiency levels. My Government has already introduced CCTV surveillance system in Bhubaneswar and Puri and the Crime and Criminal Tracking Networking System is in advanced stage of implementation.
- 32.** During the current year, my Government has established 9 new Courts of different ranks in the State to speed up the disposal of pending cases. Besides, 30 new Courts of Additional Civil Judge, one each in every Revenue District Headquarters, especially dedicated to try offences in respect of the District triable by the Judicial Magistrate, First Class, committed against women are being opened.
- 33.** The Swachh Bharat Abhiyan, which is being implemented in both rural and urban areas of the State has gathered momentum, generated sufficient awareness and has provided the right platform in the direction of a clean India. My Government has since been working in this direction and has already succeeded in the construction and usage of 40,04,107 individual household latrines, 70,724 school toilets and 24,993 Anganwadi toilets.
- 34.** Providing shelter security to the rural poor is another priority sector for my Government. Through its own flagship scheme “Biju Pucca Ghar Yojana”, my Government proposes to convert all Kucha houses in the rural areas of the State in to Pucca houses. My Government has allotted around 42 thousand houses under Biju Pucca Ghar Yojana and proposes to complete at least one lakh houses under rural housing programme including these houses through incentives during this financial year. To empower the women in rural areas, the Biju Pucca Ghar Yojana houses will be allotted only in their favour. Apart from this, my Government has announced a Shelter Security Mission to be launched soon to ensure housing for the homestead-less urban and rural poor having no roof over their head.
- 35.** My Government has also taken a number of initiatives to improve the living conditions of people living in the rural areas, especially those pertaining to providing safe drinking water and access to hygienic sanitation facilities. By now, my Government has already installed 3,95,920 spot sources and 9,618 piped water supply projects across the state and is working to install another 32,450 spot sources and 1,300 piped water projects.

36. My Government has taken several initiatives for achieving the goal of inclusive urbanization in the state. The major thrust is on improving urban governance, infrastructure, service delivery and poverty reduction. My Government has decided to constitute Odisha Capital Region Development Authority (OCRDA) for planned urbanization and holistic development of the Capital region with a dedicated fund created to cater to the financial requirements of providing core infrastructure like BRTS, MRTS, ring-roads, sewerage and drainage.

37. As the demand for faster, safe and convenient mobility is gathering pace across the state, my Government has started preparing an Integrated Comprehensive Mobility Plan, initially for Cuttack-Bhubanesar-Puri-Konark region. We have augmented the number of inter & intra city buses through support from State in addition to those availed from JnNURM. My Government is extensively using PPP mode for delivery of infrastructure services and through Odisha Urban Infrastructure Fund, we have been able to extend financial support to such projects. I am happy to inform you all that the 77 ULBs that are left out of National Urban Livelihood Mission, have been brought under a new scheme, "Odisha Urban Livelihood Mission" to be launched soon by state Government as a state funded scheme.

38. My Government is in the process of engaging 16,601 Siksha Sahayaks to improve the quality of teaching as well as to keep the PTR as per RTE-SSA guidelines and has started a unique Programme in school called "Sahaja" that aims to provide additional hours of support to slow learners in schools. My Government has established the State Institute of Educational Management, Administration and Training to improve the quality of training to teachers and undertake research and development in the school education segment. As my Government is proposing to establish a model public school in each of the 314 blocks of the State with the objective of imparting quality English medium education to rural students at the block level, my Government is establishing 162 such Model Schools well equipped with ICT Infrastructure, Internet Connectivity and a full time Computer Teacher this year.

39. To increase digitization footprints in education sector, as a starting point, my Government has centralized admission by leveraging ICT, has instituted a Personnel Information Management System for Government and non-Government colleges. My Government is also determined to introduce Smart Classes and digital evaluation of answer scripts in the coming days.

40. My Government has streamlined the application/ selection/renewal and distribution of scholarship through an on-line system and at present offering such scholarship to a total of 14,500 student pursuing +2, +3 and PG Courses and has enhanced the amount to Rs.3,000, Rs.5,000 and Rs.10,000 per annum respectively. Similarly, 10,000 brilliant students pursuing higher education in the fields of Technical/ Professional streams are awarded Rs.10,000/- scholarship per annum, while for girl students, the scholarship amount is raised to Rs.12,000/-.

41. After having achieved unprecedented success in attracting investments into the state, my Government is now on a consolidation phase to ensure such investments are actually grounded and the huge downstream opportunities are availed by our entrepreneurs. While the Aluminium Park at Angul, the Plastic Park at Balasore and Bio-Tech Park at Bhubaneswar are progressing, we are working out the modalities to make PCPIR at Paradeep a reality. Further to provide better connectivity to industry and faster evacuation of raw materials, my Government is developing two rail corridors connecting Angul to Duburi and Sukinda.

42. Recognizing the urgent need to promote MSMEs in Odisha, my Government has taken steps to improve the business eco-system for this sector. Web based applications have been developed to smoothen transactions at various stages of starting the business, availing incentives etc. To provide further impetus to my Government's drive at developing entrepreneurship, we will be bringing out the State Entrepreneurship Policy soon and set a target of generating one lakh employment opportunities during the first year of implementation.

43. The Public Sector Enterprises reforms initiated by my Government have delivered significant results. Through the reforms measures, we could reduce the burden of state PSUs on our budget. Given the success the reforms made, my Government has decided to continue implementing reforms and the focus of my Government is now to improve the governance systems in the PSUs, undertake restructuring of some enterprises and apex cooperatives and implement information technologies in the business process.

44. My Government has taken a conscious decision that henceforth, all major minerals, excepting Coal, shall be allocated through public auction so that the much needed transparency can be brought into the state mineral administration regime and also to maximize revenue from this sector for pursuing socially relevant projects and programs. In this regards, my Government has already introduced e-governance systems in the entire chain of activities in this sector to minimize and prevent illegal practices in the mineral sector & has integrated other key players with this electronic system.

45. I am happy to share with you that to guarantee uninterrupted, assured and quality power to the consumers of our state, my Government will be undertaking massive modernization, upgradation of distribution infrastructure including separation of agriculture and non-agriculture feeders.

46. In order to augment the generation and transmission capacity in our state in view of steady increase in demand for power, my Government has taken a slew of measures including construction of 600 MW Power plant by OPGC, formed a joint venture between OMC and OHPC for setting up 3x800 MW thermal power plant besides providing all requisite support to NTPC's project to generate 7,200 MWs. All of you will be happy to note that due to our sustained efforts at creating a reliable transmission infrastructure and its scientific management, we have achieved a record system availability of 98%. And to maintain that level of efficiency, my Government has decided to execute 18 more Grid substations and lay 1,025 circuit Kilometers of lines in the days ahead.

47. In this era of networked economy, growth can only be achieved and sustained if all the constituents of the network work seamlessly. My Government is acutely aware of the imperative need to create that network which will facilitate easier movement of men & materials within the state boundaries. To achieve this, my Government has decided to constitute Odisha Maritime Board that would develop, manage and administer all the non-major ports in the state. My Government has advanced considerably in the development of ports at Gopalpur, Subarnarekha and Astarang.

48. To encourage movement of bulk cargo through waterways, my Government has partnered with Inland Waterways Authorities of India (IWAI) to develop waterways connecting Kalinganagar Industrial cluster with Paradeep and Dhamara Port under the National Waterway No. 5.

49. My Government has increased the number of RTOs from 13 to 35 to bring in proximity to the people to the transport administration, has computerized all the RTOs to bring in transparency & efficiency and raised 52 additional Enforcement Squads. I am happy to state that these initiatives have significantly contributed to revenue mobilization measures of my Government by raising the contribution to the state exchequer from this sector from Rs.178 crores in 2001 to Rs.885 crores in the last year.

50. The “Biju Gaon Gadi Yojana”, a scheme aimed to provide connectivity in the schedule and backward areas is being implemented on PPP mode in which private operators are encouraged to operate small vehicles in the remote and backward areas for which Road Tax and Permit fee are exempted. Also my Government is offering interest subvention on the loan availed for purchasing the vehicle. I am happy to inform this august house that already 256 such vehicles are now plying in 10 backward districts providing assured access to people living remote areas to colleges, schools, markets, hospitals etc.

51. As land is an important source of livelihood and dwelling, my Government has been allotting homestead land and cultivable waste land to homestead-less and landless families in rural areas. It is heartening to inform you that so far, 1,15,827 homestead-less families and 35,780 landless families have been extended the benefits.

52. Odisha is vulnerable to natural disasters particularly those caused by tropical cyclones and high tide surges. Odisha State Disaster Management Authority has done commendable job in the recent incidents of cyclonic disturbances. My Government has decided to raise 10 more Odisha Disaster Rapid Action Forces units to augment its strength. 135 Multipurpose Cyclone Centers in the highly disaster prone districts have already been constructed while another 180 are to be completed very soon.

53. To rehabilitate the Phailin affected people and to help them to build resilient houses and other infrastructure, my Government is implementing the Odisha Disaster Recovery Project wherein we have so far re-located 15,016 families as against the affected 17,248 families at 112 different locations.

54. We are now in a world that is changing every second and unless we stay relevant to the changing times, our ability to offer a clean and efficient governance remains severely restricted. So in order to change the prevailing human capital development policies being practiced, my Government has decided to offer training to officers at various levels at reputed institutions, nationally and internationally.

55. My Government will provide Rs.25 lakhs to any district that has innovated on any of the activities leading to better and efficient delivery of services for their documentation and dissemination. My Government has added 26 additional services to the existing list of 63 services under Odisha Right to Public Services Act to further improve the time-bound public delivery system.

56. To further increase the forest cover to mitigate adverse impacts of climate change, my Government has set a target of planting/distributing 12.20 crores of saplings during this year. My Government has so far succeeded in distributing land rights to the tune of 5,39,532 acres of forest land under Forest Rights Act that includes 17,798 individuals belonging to the most primitive and vulnerable tribal groups.

57. My Government has already established 1,683 educational institutions where 4,51,797 students at present are pursuing education at various levels including 2,60,211 girls. My Government has already

completed construction of 5,287 residential hostels for ST students with all support facilities and another 1,640 hostels are under construction. About 4,14,053 students including 2,51,029 girls are residing in these hostels.

58. My Government is providing pre-matric scholarship to 14,02,217 students from SC and ST communities to support their education and reduce financial burden on their parents. Similarly, 3,22,821 students from these communities are covered under Post-Matric Scholarship Scheme of my Government.

59. Equitable distribution of food grains to all with focus on the tribals, slum dwellers and other vulnerable sections of the society shall be ensured by my Government through the proposed new holistic Odisha Food Security Act. Indicators reflecting the socio economic conditions of a family will be introduced to make the coverage inclusive and holistic. To stop pilferage and ensure complete transparency in the distribution of entitlements to deserving families, my Government is undertaking digitization of ration cards.

60. The National Food Security Act shall cover about 3.26 crore persons and in the process, approximately 72 lakh ration cards are to be issued to the surveyed families. My Government is taking a very proactive role to ensure its proper implementation.

61. To infuse transparency in the procurement of paddy from farmers and to facilitate timely payment into their bank accounts, my Government has introduced Paddy Procurement Automation System at 60 high procurement blocks in our state.

62. My state has the unique distinction of being the first state in our country to have enacted a new law on Excise matters in the lines of the model Excise Policy circulated by Union Government.

63. Considering its latent potential and to make Odisha selfsufficient in fish production by 2020, my Government has worked out a special package that includes easier access to inputs, additional financial support, establishing linkages with other sectors, supplementing central schemes with assistance from State Plan, providing bank linkages and required implements to farmers at subsidized rates.

64. My Government is implementing the Dairy Entrepreneurship Development Scheme to encourage people to take up dairy production. For scaling up artificial insemination, my Government in partnership with National Dairy Development Board will be setting up the Regional State of Art Semen Station at Kathapal, in Mayurbhanj district soon.

65. My Government is creating infrastructure for artisans in the form of construction of 500 work sheds for artisans, providing skill upgradation training and is administering Chief Minister's special package for weavers and artisans. My Government has decided to convert Raghurajpur, the famous "Pattachitra" village into a Model Craft Village and also establish an incubation center at Bhubaneswar to nurture various activities in the apparel sector.

66. A healthy society is a prerequisite to achieve developmental goals and moving purposively in this direction, my Government has constituted the Odisha State Medical Services Corporation for distribution of free medicines through a wide network of Drug Distribution Centers at Government facilities. 102 Ambulance Service has been implemented in the State for pregnant mothers and the new

born babies. The Odisha State Treatment Fund has been made operational in the State to provide medical assistance up to Rupees 3 lakh for treatment of patients suffering from critical ailments. Biju Krushak Kalyan Yojana is being implemented in the State by my Government which provides free health insurance coverage up to Rupees One lakh to five members of a farmer/Agriculture labourer's families. Now it has an astounding coverage of nearly 55 lakh farmer families in Odisha. My Government is adding another 140 ambulances under the "Emergency Medical Ambulance Service" and has decided to start 5 new medical colleges at Puri, Baripada, Balasore, Koraput and Bolangir.

67. The Right to Information Act, 2005 is being implemented by my Government in true letter and spirit. The RTI Central Monitoring Mechanism named 'Lok Sookhana' has been lauded by many including the World Bank for its effectiveness. To bolster the existing RTI framework and to make it more citizens friendly, my Government has decided to create an RTI Call Center, introduce e-payment of RTI Applications and extend such service through the Common Service Centers all over the state.

68. To Keep my State at the top of Digital governance, Introduction of e-governance through Odisha State Wide Area Network to connect the state headquarters with different levels of Governance through broadband, establishment of the Odisha Data Center for managing e-governance applications, 6,264 Common Service Centers being made operational in rural areas for G2C services, and implementation of OSWAS, the fully automated office workflow system in the State secretariat as one of the first states of the country have put my Government digitally ahead so that a transparent and accountable governance system could be delivered in a hassle-free manner to the people of Odisha.

69. In order to eliminate the practice of child labour in our State, my Government is adopting a mix of interventions spanning awareness creation to strict enforcement and penalty.

70. To ensure safety and welfare of migrant workers, my Government has started registering such workers under the Odisha Building and Other Construction Workers Welfare Board so as to extend benefits to such workers as well and has entered into tripartite agreement with neighboring states to protect their interest even at the place of migration. The Package for Construction Workers introduced by my Government is meant to meet the aspirations and manifold work place needs of this segment. My Government has recently announced enhanced benefits under the Construction Workers Package to benefit such workers in a more effective manner.

71. To address the health concerns of BPL families and workers engaged in various industrial and commercial establishments, my Government has brought about 44 lakhs BPL families under the Rastriya Swasthya Bima Yojana and 3.5 lakh families under the ESI scheme. My Government has decided to extend the ESI coverage to new areas such as Khuntuni and Chendipada and also tied-up with super specialty hospitals in the state as well as outside for providing super specialty care.

72. Through Maha Samadhan Sibirs, Samadhan Sibirs and Krushi Samadhan Sibirs organized at different locations in the State; my Government has been very proactive to public grievances. My Government will be intensifying such outreach initiatives in future to ensure that every problem of the public is resolved at their nearest locations.

73. To keep our rich, unique and unparalleled cultural heritage intact, my Government is taking sincere steps for their promotion, preservation, revival of some of the near extinction folk forms through

the revival of Bhagabata Tungis, pension to Indigent Artists, installation of statues, grants to cultural organizations, creation of Zilla Kala Sanskruti Sangha and Block Kala Sanskruti Sangha that aim at providing livelihood to traditional folk artists and protection of traditional folk forms.

74. The State is committed towards both social and economic empowerment of women. To empower girls and women, Odisha State Policy for Girls and Women has been framed with the provisions of inheritance, equal land rights, free homestead land of 4 decimals to homestead-less women of lower income group, special package for differently-abled women among other things.

75. With the launching of 656 kilometres 4 laned Biju Expressway to be built at a cost of Rs. 3200 crores as a life-line road network connecting eight backward districts of Western Odisha and KBK region, my Government has shown its commitment and priority in strengthening the road network in Western and KBK Districts of Odisha.

76. Considering the contribution of the State Highways in improving the Socio-economic condition of the people, my Government has undertaken a new initiative namely State Highways Development Programme for all-round development of the State Highway Network of Odisha.

77. A large number of village roads have been converted into Cement Concrete Roads and all-weather connectivity to unconnected habitations has been ensured by constructing bridges under Biju Setu Yojana throughout the State. Recently, the State Government has undertaken another ambitious connectivity programme, Mukhya Mantri Sadak Yojana to provide all weather connectivity to small habitations with population up to 100 not covered by any other connectivity programme.

With active support from different sections of the society, Odisha so far has made significant progress in many sectors. Our aim is for holistic development, by striking a balance between our efforts and opportunities in a way that facilitates fulfillment of needs in its entirety.

The exuberance, restlessness and soaring ambitions of our youth must be addressed innovatively and carefully for the most productive use so that they scale new heights and carry forward the rich legacy of Odisha into the future. We need to create these avenues for young people to contribute and excel and add value to our society. We need to expose them to the many possibilities that are coming up and the way technology is harnessing such possibilities. We need to ensure that there is a secular access to opportunities and we are ready to incubate, mentor and support all such volunteered initiatives. I appeal to all of you to join us in these collective efforts of ours and take Odisha to enviable heights. I now leave you to your deliberations and wish you all success.

JAI HIND

PANCHAYATI RAJ :

An effective Institutional Setup for Decentralized Administration and Planning

Basudeb Sahoo

A few days before death Gandhiji wrote in Young India “True democracy cannot be worked out by twenty persons at the Centre. It shall be worked out only by the villagers.” Again in 'Harijan' he wrote: “Independence must begin at the bottom, when Panchayati Raj established public opinion will do what violence can never do” (Harijan 26.07.46 and 1.7.47)

Our Constitution in Article-40 directs to form Village Panchayat as the unit of self governance. In 1958 to make Community Development Programme as reality Balwant Roy Committee recommended to introduce three-tier Panchayati Raj in the entire country. In 1978 Ashok Mehta Committee offered some important suggestions on the basis of which some states introduced Panchayati Raj. The recommendations could not be implemented in all States due to the short-life of Janata Government. Rajiv Gandhi Government in 1989 had drafted a proposal to introduce Uni-Pattern Panchayati Raj in all States. Strong opposition of some states and the sudden demise of Rajiv Gandhi brought an end to this effort. In early 1990, the farsighted and people-oriented Chief Minister Biju Patnaik introduced in Odisha a progressive Panchayati Raj providing 30 per cent reservation for women to the applause of the people of the State.

Goal of Decentralization:

Decentralization of planning needs decentralization of administration for its success. Long back in 1933 in his book 'Whether India' Jawaharlal Nehru had stated, India's freedom movement is not for the benefit of the rich privileged classes but for the majority which comprises peasant labourers, petty traders and others belonging to the lower middleclass. Leaders like Gandhi, Jayprakash, Ram Manohar Lohia all stressed the need for welfare of the common man. Hence the need for integrating planning from below with bottom-up governance was keenly felt.

Decentralization is widely regarded as necessary condition for socio-economic and political development. The values of decentralization have wide appeal regardless of ideology or political theory. Concentration of power in fewer and fewer organization inevitably results from technological, organisational and political development. This necessitates constant attention to the application of decentralized apparatus in both political and economic realm to mitigate the evils of concentration.

Economically decentralization is built to improve the efficiency with which demands for locally provided services are expressed and public

goods provided. Decentralized decision making expands scope of consumers' choice, reduces costs, improves output and effectively utilizes human resources.

Politically decentralization strengthens accountability, political skills and national integration. Democratic decentralization enhances the opportunity for local people to participate in decision making resources. Devolution of power to the people, is the ultimate goal of democracy. Devolution implies transfer of decision making powers and resources to take to lower level of authorities which are democratically elected and largely independent of Central Government.

Panchayati Raj after Janata-Government: Stint at Decentralized Planning

Janata Government's novel step of integrated rural development gave a thrust to Panchayati Raj. Ashok Mehta's two-tier Panchayati-Structure, Zilla Parishad at the district level and Mandal Panchayat for a group of villages with a population of twenty to thirty thousand was followed by West-Bengal, Andhra Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir and Karnatak. In 1983 Karnatak followed the West Bengal experience which began in 1978.

The historical evolutions of Panchayati Raj system mentioned earlier reflected transformation of Panchayats from mere development agencies to proper political institution.

Notwithstanding these changes, there was no Constitutional safeguard for the Panchayati Raj institutions. The need for such a safeguard was felt in Karnatak in 1985. It is only under the Congress Government in 1992 that Constitutional safeguard was provided for the whole country through 73rd amendment, it was ratified by 13 out of 25 states. Yet the law was about judicial law and order aspects.

The reasons why Panchayati Raj could not take effective form till 1992 may be disdain of urban and rural elite for Panchayati Raj and absence of mass awakening. The success of Panchayati Raj in West Bengal, Karnatak and Andhra Pradesh prompted Congress Government to bring about 73rd Amendment.

Panchayati Raj after 2007:

The Central Government gave a boost to the Panchayati Raj administration by passing a law in 2007. Many states ratified it and followed its guidelines. Odisha followed it since 2011.

In three-tier Panchayati Raj which has been working in Odisha since long there are three institutions, Gram Panchayat at the bottom, Panchayat Samiti at Block level and Zilla Parishad at District level.

The functions of the Gram Panchayat may be broadly classified into three categories:

- a) Those that may be called 'representative' functions where the main role is to voice and represent the Community's opinion on matters affecting etc.
- b) Those that may be called, 'regulatory and administrative functions' which consist of regulating the conduct of individuals and institutions e.g. watching the work done in the village school, registering birth and death, enforcing measures of safety and sanitation, securing minimum standard of cultivation etc.
- c) What may be called 'Service or Development functions' such as promotions of education, health, communication and irrigation.

Panchayat can take more and more responsibilities in the fields where the community can be mobilized for the achievement of common ends.

Above Gram Panchayat there is Panchayat Samiti Co-terminus with the Block. The Samiti has the entire charge of all development work within its jurisdiction. The State Government retains only the functions of guidance supervision and higher planning.

At the top there is Zilla Parishad as a body to co-ordinate and supervise the functioning of the Panchayat Samiti.

Panchayat Samitis are king-pins in decentralized development. They are charged with functions like agriculture development, rural health, drinking water, training, road communications, development of cottage industry, Cooperative Societies. Zilla Parishads are given the responsibility of supplying seeds, transmitting new farming technology, setting-up of Schools, Public Health centres, providing vaccination, planning for scheduled castes, Ashram Schools, constructing bridges, encouraging entrepreneurship.

As is evident from the list of functions entrusted to the Samitis and Parishads, they need adequate staff and finance to discharge them satisfactorily.

Odisha has 6234 Gram Panchayats and 314 Panchayat Samitis. The State Government Sanctions funds to the Panchayat Samiti and Zilla Parishad on the basis of their activities and tax collection efforts, which does not appear ideal to the critics.

Criticism and Suggestions:

Critics had pointed out three major drawbacks of Panchayat administration in the past:

1) First, there was no devolution of economic power to match the devolution of political power.

2) Second, there was not well-thoughtout relation between political authority and bureaucratic setup.

3) Third, the people's representative had no adequate appropriate consciousness and training to shoulder the new responsibility.

Though the situation has improved during the last two decades, yet there are lot of lacuna in the working of the Panchayati Raj.

4) Yet the presence of inequalities reinforced by caste and economic conditions has obstructed participation of all sections making democracy the privilege of a few. Of course the reservation for scheduled castes and OBC to a great extent has reduced in equality.

5) Gram Sabhas and Public meetings are not regularly held to discuss on urgent problems facing the villagers and scrutinize the actions and focus on future programmes. Such meetings were held in West Bengal and Karnatak in the past where success of Panchayati Raj was commendable.

6) With the tremendous rise in expenses in general elections, election expenses in Panchayati Raj have shot up so high that poor individual cannot fight as a candidate. Hence election is fought on party line which is antithetical to Gram Swaraj. Candidates are selected on the favour of the party leaders not on the basis of dedication and honesty.

7) Panchayati Raj is now run to a great extent by the grants of the Central and State Government. This creates dependency of the Panchayats and reduces their autonomy.

8) Another defect in the working of the P.R.I. is found in the absence of rapport between officials and non-official actors. The superiority and inferiority complex often stand on the way of proper cooperation between educated officers and less educated people's representatives.

It is heartening to note that with spread of education and passage of progressive measures like reservations for the weaker and marginalized sections and R.T.I. the democratic spirit at the grass root level has sufficiently developed. To further improve autonomy and accountability in the Panchayati Raj following suggestions are offered.

- i) Training programme for the Panchayat representatives should be organized at intervals.
- ii) Meetings of the Gram Panchayats and P.S. and Zilla Parishad should be held regularly.
- iii) Harmonious relation between the officials and people's representative has to be built up.
- iv) The participants in Panchayat administration should work in a dedicated spirit to realise the all round development, social and economic condition particularly people, on the lower rung of the ladder.
- v) It is high time that definite portion of the State and Centre's budget be allocated to the P.R.I. at the beginning of the financial year so that P.R.I. would not starve for funds and feel really autonomous.

vi) In rural area participatory civil society approach should be adopted wherein the N.G.O. would take active role in raising burning issues and draw the attention of the P.R.Is. It is important that a synergy of both state and people/ civil society accountability has to be achieved.

vii) Food security and quality education being primary goal of democracy P.R.I. should take responsibility to locate dire distress of the people and lapses of educational institution and take immediate measures to improve the situations.

The edifice of the structure of Panchayati Raj institutions rests on the stability of four main pillars, namely autonomy, accountability, social capital and participation and empowerment. It is the responsibility of all who love real democracy to strengthen these pillars to make decentralized planning and governance real and fruitful.

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Inclusive Governance, Panchayats and Women's Empowerment : Ideas, Issues and Interventions

Prof. Navaneeta Rath

Equitable participation of women in politics and government is essential to the building and sustaining democracy. To quote the lines of the Inter-Parliamentary Union incorporated in the Universal Declaration on Democracy "The achievement of democracy presupposes a genuine partnership between men and women in the conduct of the affairs of society in which they work in equality and complementarily, drawing mutual enrichment from their differences".¹ So, democracy needs the support and service of men as well as women and should be based on a system of inclusive governance.

Inclusive Governance and Empowerment of Women: Ideas

From the perspective of the women, participation of women in the system of governance symbolizes equality and freedom enjoyed by them and the space given to them not only in the decision making body, but the position guaranteed to them in the society. Women's participation in decision making and their inclusion in governance thus is an emblem of a progressive and prosperous society. It is assumed that inclusive governance is the key to inclusive growth and is an instrument for women's empowerment.

Empowering women on one hand involves making them self-dependent, self

confident and independent to the extent where they can assert their rights; and promote their participation in the institutions and processes of the society. The concept of empowerment has swept the world's thinking to strengthen the women resources since the mid 1980s. This was as an alternative strategy to tackle the problems of women's subjugation and segregation by integrating her, giving her due position and identity, power and share in the process of nation building. The tool of empowerment has been accepted as the potent tool for uplifting the plights of women and safeguarding her human rights. Rappaport (1987)² defines empowerment as a process that conveys a psychological sense of personal control or influence and a concern with actual social influence, political power and legal rights. Mc Ardle (1989)³ comments empowerment is a process whereby decisions are made by the people who have to bear the consequences of these decisions. Conger and Kanungo (1980)⁴ observe empowerment as an internal urge for exerting influence and control.

Women in India since long were in a state of disempowerment. They suffered from gender based inequalities. Women belonging to minority communities, marginalized groups, Dalits and tribal groups were doubly disadvantaged in character. It was thought that political

disempowerment of women was the root cause of their economic and social impoverishment and disempowerment. This denied their enjoyment of rights, access to resources and to have a risk free life and a better relational status in the society as human beings.

So far as power is concerned, women have always been outside the margins of political power. Right from the family to the community, their decision making power was always limited and many times absent. On the basis of the observations made by the Committee on the Status of Women in India⁵ and the recommendations of the National Perspective Plan for Women⁶, the Government decided to bring the women into the ambit of the decision making process right from the grass root level. The reservation of seats for women in the Panchayats through the 73rd and 74th amendment acts was the maiden step undertaken by the Government of India towards gender inclusive grass root governance. The 73rd amendment has mandated representation of at least one-third women through election instead of the earlier provision of one or two women nominated by government or co-opted by the predominantly influential, powerful male membership/leadership of these Panchayats. The reservation was made for at least one-third membership and chairpersons' positions in Panchayats at all the three levels. Thus, now all Panchayats, at every level will have at least one-third women members, (they can contest for other seats too), and at least one-third of Panchayats at each level - district to village- will be headed by women chairpersons.

The state of Odisha was one of the pioneering states to implement the provisions and to ensure a space to rural women in political decision making process. This was against the principles of public/ private dichotomy that had long debarred women's inclusion in politics. Today

the inclusion of women in Panchayats has tried to cut across the culture of patriarchy and gender subordination suffered by women. This is giving a real sense to the process of democratic decentralization and gender inclusive governance. Women's inclusion in politics through their participation in the Panchayats has put an end to their yearlong exclusion from power corridors. The reservation and of late the fifty per cent reservation has increased their visibility and opened avenues for echoing their voice in the local decision making bodies. This is a step forward to the process of their empowerment.

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, 6,236 Gram Panchayats including 6,236 elected Sarpanches 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 elected representatives in the three-tier rural local self governance system out of which 50 per cent women are elected members that signalise gender inclusive governance system in operation⁷.

How far Inclusion is empowering for Women?

No doubt the visibility of women in the Panchayats has increased in manifold levels. The process of inclusion is well reflected from their numbers and presence in the decision making institutions. But the reality negates the avowed purpose of gender inclusion that is empowerment. A stock taking of the functioning and representation of women in the Panchayats bring the following observations to limelight.

At the Panchayat level, women's representation in politics has no doubt become

phenomenal, but the real participation is still lacking. Women till the date are not participating in a meaningful and effective way and their record as decision makers is quite poor. Till date they lack proper knowledge about their expected roles which retard their role performance. Their knowledge about the items on which they can legislate, agenda of the meetings, generation of revenues is very low. This restricts their deliberative and legislative ability as decision makers. Passivity of women in the forum of the decision making body make them disempowered. Thus, mere representation by numbers has not brought much change in their attitude and actions. So the old practice of male dominated, dictated and directed Panchayats continues to exist.

Put into Lester W. Milbrath's⁸ political participation model, in India women's participation in the Panchayats is essentially transitional and not spectatorial or gladiatorial in character. Transitional activities include attending meetings just as members, becoming neutral and alternative listeners, while coming in contact with public officials. Spectator activities give coverage to voting, influencing others to vote and joining a political discussion. Gladiatorial type of participation implies taking stewardship in raising funds, deciding the vision and action plan of the Panchayats. This is a reflection of the actual empowerment of women in the local self governments. But such type of activities is missing with the elected women representatives of the state. So when gender inclusive governance fails to develop influencing and implementing capacity in the women, it can be said to be a failure in the empowerment process of women.

On the basis of their level of involvement, Robert A. Dahl's⁹ fourfold model can be applied. The fourfold model of political participation according to Dahl is political stratum, the power

seekers, the powerful and the apolitical stratum. In case of Panchayat level of participation of women, the scenario is dominated by the apolitical stratum and the other three categories are missing. This indicates that the participation is just at its infancy and lacks maturity. This is more ornamental having no real empowering yield.

So, in the Panchayats over all, we find two groups of women representatives. They are those who have occupied invited space and those who have adorned created space. Majority of women adorn invited space. Due to the compulsion of the provisions of reservation, they are propelled to occupy seats. Mainly, they are directed and dictated by their male counterparts. In this case they do not feel themselves to be empowered rather they become the dictate carriers of their politically suppressed and segregated male family members without any type of initiations and innovations on their part. Those women who have created a space are self propelled, more effective, more public-oriented and delivering and have made their presence felt in the Panchayat. They have contributed towards making the vision of inclusive governance and empowerment realities. But their number is quite meagre.

Political power has not insulated women from facing gender-based violence. A new study conducted by the Centre for Social Research and UN Women has found that gender inclusive governance has made women vulnerable to high levels of violence. The forms of violence do not only include sexual or physical, but also emotional and psychological violence. It was found that India is much worse than Nepal and Pakistan in physical violence (45%), verbal abuse (49%), and threats (45%). Particularly, the women in the Panchayats are more vulnerable to such violence which makes them feel disempowered.

In many occasions political connectivity of the families make Panchayats the citadel of privileged women. So the common woman finds no space in it. This elitist trend is not true inclusion and this cannot empower women as a community.

Issues faced by Women in Inclusive Governance

Issues in gender inclusive governance not only make inclusion of women difficult, but fail to empower them adequately. The common issues that need urgent attention are:

Ideological Factors: Patriarchy as a system of male domination shapes women's relationship in politics. The gender role ideology is used as an ideological tool by patriarchy to place women within the private arena of home as mothers and wives and men in the public sphere. This is one of the vital factors that shape the level of women's inclusion in the system of governance. The domestic space of women prevents providing public political space to them.

Patriarchy shapes society's perception of women that they are vulnerable, in need of male guardianship and unsuited for political life. Patriarchy portrays women as weak, dependent and incapable of making smart decisions. With the constant reinforcement of the notion that women are inferior in every aspect, it becomes hard for women to pursue their political rights as an active participant in the decision making bodies. The patriarchal ideology glamorizes the reproductive and care-giving role of women. It believes women need support from their male counterparts as they are incompetent, indecisive and have inferior intelligence. Gender stereotypes cloud the judgment of the common people of the community and prevent in creating a culture that will promote women's pro active role in governance. This emerges in the studies of several researchers like Mohanty (2002)¹⁰, Satpathy (2002)¹¹, Parida (2010)¹².

Political Factors: The nature of politics is an important factor for the inclusion or exclusion of women. Women are brought into politics as the dictate carriers for their male partners, under the pressure of legislations. Male domination of politics, political parties and political structures is another factor that hinders women's true political participation and empowerment. In a male-dominated political structure and process women become invisible and unheard. Their vision never finds place nor is their voice paid any heed to. Male leadership is easily accepted and female stewardship is systematically avoided. Here inclusion becomes a mere political showcasing. In reality Panchayats remain masculine in character.

Socio-Cultural Factors: The gender status quo is maintained through access to resources, availability of opportunities and differential distribution of power and gender role socialization. Culture of patriarchy, culture of silence are the accepted ideal practices which make women's inclusion ornamental in governance and their empowerment a myth.

Economic Factors: In recent days, grass root politics is increasingly becoming commercialized. Women lack access to and ownership of productive resources, which limits the scope of their political work. Lack of access to capital, credit and technology limits women's effective role in the system of local governance. Without property they feel powerless.

Lack of Social Capital and Political Capacities: Women often lack public contact and networking due to their home confinement which is a basic need of politics. Due to the absence of social capital they lack political skills, proper training and access to information which are needed to manage local politics and to be effective policymakers. This impoverishment makes their

empowerment difficult. Remaining within the fold of the system of governance, they feel disempowered.

Educational factor: Lack of proper education and training defeats the very purpose of gender based inclusion. This increases women's dependency on their male counterparts and fails to invest in them a capacity of choice and to translate that choice into decision and action. This position renders them disempowered.

Interventions Needed to Promote Gender Inclusive Governance and Women's Empowerment a Reality

Gender equality and women's empowerment are not only human rights; they are also imperative for achieving inclusive, equitable and sustainable democracy. It is high time now to eradicate the namesake participation of women which not only denies inclusive governance, but also defeats the very purpose of women empowerment. In order to ensure inclusive governance achieve its purpose, women's inclusion in local politics and empowerment are to be strengthened and made meaningful. There are a range of possible mechanisms by which a quantum leap can be achieved in women's empowerment through inclusive governance. These are:

- The structures, policies, norms, practices and values of political parties which play a decisive role in local governance system need a profound change to impact on the level of women's participation in the system of governance.
- A significant strategy to improve women's participation in decision making is by imparting adequate training to them to develop their skills and gender sensitivity. Confidence building and capacity building are

the twin requirements to accommodate women meaningfully in the system of governance. Knowledge of the Constitution, Panchayat manuals, and legislative procedure is to be gained by women to participate in the system of governance.

- Women's participation need not be measured in terms of number. It is quality, substance and spirit that matters. For this the articulation should be spearheaded through primers, parties, media, and local leaders. Mock Panchayats in schools, women political icons interacting with the budding local women politicians can contribute significantly towards this process.
- Adoption of multipronged strategies to improve women's access to education, employment, health, social security, and other fundamental economic, social and cultural rights can also increase the degree of women's inclusion in local politics and make them really empowered.
- Organization of regular and comprehensive impact assessments of empowerment policies and programmes for women's participation in decision-making bodies can have its impact on the decision making ability of women and can fascinate them to participate in political decision making process.

Tackling gender-based violence also needs to be made a priority within government agendas.

If these interventions can be taken on a long term basis, then women's inclusion in governance will become easy, hassle free, fulfilling in character. A high level of community consciousness, critical thinking in women, collective mobilization and responsibility sharing, cultural transformations and women's conscious

efforts as change makers can make inclusive governance fulfil its vision and empower women successfully.

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ARTICLES/WRITE-UPS REQUIRED FOR THE "NABAKALEVARA" SPECIAL ISSUES OF "UTKAL PRASANGA" AND "ODISHA REVIEW"

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Laws for Women : Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013

*Dr. Amrita Patel
Namita Palo*

The issue of violence against women has become center stage of public policy and rightfully so. However violence is all pervading and its manifestation is not just in crimes against women but more deep rooted in social practices which discriminate against girls and women. This discrimination results in not only less girls being born but more girls dying before the age of 6 years, more girls drop out from the educational system. The discrimination that girls and women face runs all through the life span – from at birth to the old age whether in private domain or in public space such as workplace. Violence against girls and women is so grounded in the norms, attitudes and practices that we often fail to recognise it. Forms of violence such as sexual harassment are often justified and tolerated. Sex selective abortions, early marriages and pregnancy, sexual abuse, domestic violence, forced prostitution, trafficking, dowry torture, rape including sexual assault, denial of care, and abuse and neglect of elderly women, witch hunting are forms of gender based violence that still persist today.

Laws are an instrument for addressing the specific violence against women and this article discusses one law in particular which has recently been enacted and which has a great potential of alleviating instances of violence against women in the workplace. The law however has to be

galvanised and there is an urgent need for collective and concerted multi-dimensional and multi-pronged action by all stakeholders so that girls and women get to lead a safe, secure and dignified life. Social change is the ultimate goal by way of which discrimination against the girls is eliminated and violence free life is possible. The patriarchal norms and practices deeply entrenched in the collective social psyche impairs the development of girls and women. The social fabric of the state is sewn with the discriminatory attitudes and customs which though women have crossed, are still the major barriers. The social, economic and political progress of women will truly be visible and flowered only when the deep rooted discrimination and prejudices against the girls and women will be done away with.

The Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013 is a follow up on the Supreme Court judgment known as the Vishakha judgment which was given in 1997. The judgment specifically state that: Each incident of sexual harassment of woman at workplace results in violation of fundamental rights of gender equality and right to life and personal liberty. It is a clear violation of rights under Article 14, 15 and 21 of Constitution of India. One of the logical consequences of such an incident is also the

violation of victim's fundamental right under Article 19(1) (g). The meaning and content of fundamental rights guaranteed in the Constitution of India are of sufficient amplitude to compare all the facets of gender equality including prevention of sexual harassment or abuse.

The Supreme Court of India, addressed the existence of sexual harassment at workplace, acknowledging it for the first time as a human rights violation and subject to legal recourse. This was in response to a petition filed by women's groups after the gang rape of Bhanvari Devi, a village development worker, by 5 upper caste men of the village as a 'punishment' for stalling a child marriage. The Supreme Court judgment (1997) covered the following: 1) Definition of Sexual Harassment; 2) Complaints Mechanism within workplaces; 3) Preventive Measures to deter Sexual Harassment at Workplaces; 4) Third Party Harassment.

The Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act 2013 has thus been enacted to provide protection against sexual harassment of women at workplace; Prevention and Redressal of complaints of sexual harassment. The Act in its Section 2n defines Sexual harassment as any one or more of the following unwelcome acts or behavior (whether directly or by implication), namely physical contact and advances, or a demand or request for sexual favours, or making sexually coloured remarks, or showing pornography, or any other unwelcome physical, verbal, non verbal conduct of sexual nature.

Interestingly an aggrieved woman means in relation to a workplace, a woman of any age whether employed or not, who alleges to have been subjected to any act of sexual harassment by the respondent. This means that whether employed or not, any act of sexual harassment as

defined in the said Act perpetuated on any girl or woman in a workplace as defined in the Act will be the subject of legal purview. In relation to a dwelling place or house, a woman of any age who is employed in such a dwelling or house will be termed as an aggrieved woman.

Workplace includes any department, organization, undertaking, establishment, enterprise, institution, office, branch or unit which is established, owned, controlled or wholly or substantially financed by funds provided directly or indirectly by the appropriate Government or the local authority or a Government company or a corporation or a cooperative society; any private sector organisation or a private venture, undertaking, enterprise, institution, establishment, society, trust, non governmental organization, unit or service provider carrying on commercial, professional, vocational, educational, entertainment, industrial, health services or financial activities including production, supply, sale, distribution or service; Hospital or Nursing Homes; any sports institute, stadium, sports complex or competition or games venue, whether residential or not used for training, sports or other activities relating to it; any place visited by the employee arising out of or during the course of employment including transportation provided by the employer for undertaking such journey; a dwelling or a house.

All workplaces should have an Internal Complaint Committee comprising of one Presiding officer; not less than two employees and one more member from a non governmental organization or association committed to the cause of women or a person familiar with the issues relating to sexual harassment.

In a district, a committee known as Local Complaints Committee (LCC) has to be constituted. The District Officer shall constitute

the Local Complaints Committee in a district. In Odisha vide notification number 23399 dated 7th Dec 2013 of the Women and Child Development Department, the Collector of each district is declared as the District Officer for that district. The Local Complaints Committee shall constitute of one Chairperson who is an eminent woman in the field of social work and committed to the cause of women; one member nominated amongst the women working in the block, taluka or tehsil or ward or municipality in the district, two members to be nominated from amongst non governmental organizations or associations committed to the cause of women or a person familiar with the issues relating to sexual harassment. Member : ex officio : the concerned officer dealing with the social welfare or women and child development in the district.

For the purpose of making an inquiry the ICC or the LCC shall have the same powers as are vested in a civil court under the Code of Civil Procedure 1908 when trying a suit in respect of the following (Section 11(3)) : Summoning and enforcing the attendance of any person and examining him on oath; Requiring the discovery and production of documents and any other matter which may be prescribed.

Any aggrieved women may make in writing a complaint of sexual harassment at workplace to the Internal Committee/ Local Committee within 3 months from the date of incident or the date of the last incident in case of a series of incidents. The inquiry should be completed within a period of 90 days (Section 11(4)). Appeal has to be done within a period of 90 days (Section 18(2) of the Act). Punishment with fine upto Rs 50,000 (fifty thousand) can be done on the employer if there is no Internal

Complaints Committee as per subsection (1) of Section 4 or if the employer has not taken action under section 13, 14 and 22 or if the employer has contravened or attempts to contravene or abets contravention of other provisions of this Act or any rules made under the Act (Section 26(1)).

The ICC or the LCC can forward a complaint to the Police for registering the case under Section 509 of the IPC and any other relevant provisions of the IPC within 7 days (Section 11(1)).

The Court will take cognizance of the offence on a complaint made by the aggrieved woman or any person authorized by the ICC or the LCC (Section 27(1)). No court inferior to that of a Metropolitan Magistrate or a Judicial Magistrate of the first class will try any offence punishable under this Act (Section 27(2)). Every offence under this Act is non cognizable.

The very purpose of the Act is to provide a legal space for women, who are in workplace either as worker or as a customer or for any reason what so ever, to complain about any instance of sexual harassment and get redressal. The law of the land stipulates that the women whether in formal and informal workplace do not suffer for want of any legal instrument. Sexual harassment of women at workplace is not to be brushed aside and the government is duty bound to fulfill the commitments in the said Act so that women are able to work with dignity and equity.

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Decentralized Planning and Budgeting Process in Odisha : Key Opportunities

Pravas Mishra

The process of decentralized planning got its momentum after the 73rd Amendment of Indian Constitution during 1992. The village level Panchayats were the units of local governance and administration during the British regime. Under the First Government of India Act, 1919, Madhusudan Das was appointed Minister of Local self-government in the new Government of Bihar and Odisha, but was forced to resign. He had moved a resolution for the formation of a separate Odisha Province in the plenary session of the Indian National Congress in 1903. However, the first evidence of the idea of a three tier Panchayati Raj System comes from Mr. D.P. Mishra, the then Minister for local self-government in Central Provinces and Berar under the Govt. of India Act (II) of 1935. He suggested a three-tier structure of local government with district as the nodal point. Since then it has been observed that the degree of devolution of power in Indian States has gradually increased, thus giving the common Indian villager a hope and optimism that the Gandhian ideal of a system of governance from below will be achieved at some point of time.

Evolution of Decentralized planning in Odisha

Pre-independence period

Odisha as a province was formed on 1st April 1936. The election for the first Provincial

Assembly took place in January, 1937 which included 56 seats meant for elected representatives including 41 general rural seats, 6 for scheduled castes, 2 for women, 2 for landlords, 4 for the Mohammedans and 1 for the Christian community. In pre-Independence period there was no uniform pattern of local governance in Odisha. It was governed by different local acts like Bihar and Odisha Local Self-Government Act, 1985; Bihar- Odisha Village Administration Act, 1922; Madras Local Boards Act, 1920. Besides, Sambalpur Local Self-Government Act, 1939 was also in force, which was inherited from the local administrative system of the former Central Provinces and Berar.

Post-Independence period

In the post Independence period, the Odisha Gram Panchayat Act of 1948 was passed in the new Assembly with its developmental, civil and judicial functions. In 1956 Shri Nabakrishna Choudhury, the then Chief Minister of Odisha introduced Anchal Sasan in continuation to Gram Sasan as mentioned in the Odisha Gram Panchayat Act of 1948. The Odisha Anchal Sasan Act that came into force after the abolition of Zamindaris in 1952 aimed at establishing administrative decentralization. Following the recommendations of Balwantray Mehta Committee, Odisha passed the Panchayat Samiti

and Zilla Parishad Act of 1959. These acts provided for the establishment of Samitis at the intermediate level and Zilla Parishad at the district level. Thus a three-tier system evolved with establishment of Panchayat Samitis and Zilla Parishads on January 26, 1961, along with the already existing Gram Panchayats. During the year 1964, a comprehensive Odisha Gram Panchayat Act, 1964 was passed replacing the 1948 enactment. The functioning of the 3-tier system continued till 1968 when the government abolished the Zilla Parishads on 1st November 1968 by amending the Odisha Panchayat Samiti and Zilla Parishad Act, 1959. In an attempt to revitalise the PR bodies the Odisha Government in 1991 passed three important Acts - the Odisha Gram Panchayat (Amendment) Act, the Odisha Panchayat Samiti (Amendment) Act, and the Odisha Zilla Parishad Act. Through these acts the Odisha Government ushered in rapid changes in the powers and functions of Panchayat Raj bodies with a view to enabling them to bring out rural development through people's participation. All the above Acts were further amended to bring them in conformity with the Constitution's 73rd Amendment Act of 1992. The State Assembly passed the required conformity Acts in 1994, 1995, and 1997 to set in place the present form of the 3-tier system of Panchayati Raj. The First Amended State Act came into force from April 24th 1994. The three-tier PRIs as per the 73rd Amendment Act came into operation mode after the elections were held during the year 1997.

Decentralization of Planning Process in Odisha

The Amendments during 1992 in India's Constitution sought to institutionalize the concept of decentralized planning keeping in view the 150 recommendations of the 7 Round Tables Conferences of Ministers in charge of Panchayati

Raj, organized by Ministry of Panchayati Raj, Government of India. The seven Round Table Conferences were held from July to December-2004, at Kolkota, Mysore, Raipur, Chandigarh, Srinagar, Guwahati and Raipur. A Compendium of 150 Resolutions of the Seven Round Tables was assimilated in the form of a Road Map to ensure devolution to PRI's in Odisha.

The powers devolved by the Government of Odisha to the 3 tier PRIs were as follows:

- District level Officers, the Block Level Officers and Village Level functionaries of the 11 Departments will remain accountable to Zilla Parishad, Panchayat Samiti and Gram Panchayat respectively for implementation of subjects/schemes transferred to PRIs. But they will continue as the employees of their respective Departments.
- The District level, Block level and G.P level functionaries of different Departments will attend the meeting of Zilla Parishad, Panchayat Samiti and G.P respectively.
- They shall plan on the schemes for discussion and approval in the meeting of respective level of PRIs.
- The President, Z.P, Chairman Panchayat Samiti and the Sarpanch G.P are delegated with power to sanction the leave of Head of Office/Institution of 11 Departments working at the respective level.

Certain special provisions were considered necessary for the Panchayats of those areas where tribal population was preponderant. Certain tribal enclaves within the States other than the North-Eastern States of India are known as the 5th Schedule areas. It was provided in the 73rd Amendment that its provisions would not be directly applicable to these areas. They could be extended in the 5th Schedule areas only by a law

of the Parliament. Such law could make necessary modifications of the Constitutional provisions to ensure that the Panchayats of these areas can adequately take care of the social, cultural and economic interests of the tribal communities. Consequent to the recommendations made by the Bhuria Committee headed by Dileep Singh Bhuria in June 1994, the Panchayat (Extension to the Scheduled Areas) Act (PESA Act) was passed by Parliament in 1996, to extend the provisions of the Constitutional Amendment to the fifth schedule areas of nine States. These States are required to make Amendments to their respective Panchayats Acts in terms of the Central Act.

In an attempt to assess the extent of devolution of Functions, Funds and Functionaries in Odisha, Indian Institute of Public Administration (IIPA) with the support of Ministry of Panchayati Raj had conducted a study during 2012-13. Odisha is placed eleventh in devolution index among twenty eight select states of India.

State Budgeting process of the state

Odisha has a very impressive decentralized planning mechanism where the community needs are reflected through local government institutions. The consolidated planning at different levels are realized when those are translated into budget allocations. Thus, there is a need for integration of State Budget processes into decentralized planning processes of the state. Budget making process of the state is comprised with formulation, enactment, implementation and auditing.

Under Article 202 of the Constitution of India, a statement of the estimated receipts and expenditure of the State for each financial year has to be laid before the State Legislature. This statement is known as the “Annual Financial Statement” or “Budget”. The financial business of the Odisha Legislative Assembly is governed

by the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in the Odisha Legislative Assembly. The Budget of the State is based on the departmental estimates submitted by the Controlling Officers and these departmental estimates are themselves mostly based on the estimates submitted by the district officers of the Departments. The controlling officers examine the budgets received from Estimating Officers to see that they are formally correct, that all details and explanations have been given and that explanations are adequate. After this formulation, the budget is presented for discussion and approval by the legislative body in the State Legislative Assembly.

Thus, looking at these two processes, there is a need for integration of planning and budgetary processes at the Panchayat as well as State level.

Opportunities ahead

Capacity Building of the Panchayat Members on State Budget and its processes

State Institute of Rural Development (SIRD) in Odisha has been undertaking series of training programmes on the role and responsibilities of the Panchayats. The training framework also addresses the capacity deficit of the Panchayat members in the village and panchayat level planning. This helps them to perform their roles and responsibilities from time to time. Along with this, there is a need for inclusion of state budget processes so that the Panchayat representatives will be well informed about the time frame and enactment procedures. This will help them to prepare plans for their Panchayats accordingly.

Budget literacy materials for the Panchayat Raj members

Newly elected Panchayat members have very little idea on the administrative procedures

as well as enactment process of budgeting in the state. The budget documents presented in the Odisha Legislative Assembly are very difficult for them to understand. Thus, the budget documents should be made simple for the Panchayat members. State can also publish separate comprehensible budget documents which will be used and referred by the Panchayati Raj members.

Generation of internal revenue of Panchayats

Though the Panchayats have lots of roles and responsibilities which comprised implementation and monitoring of development programmes, their financial autonomy needs to be improved. There are lots of resources which are underutilized needs attention of the Panchayat Institutions. Proper utilization of these resources may lead to enhancement of internal revenue of Panchayat Institutions in the long run. State can provide revolving resources to Panchayati Raj institutions having well developed business model to generate resources.

Development of inventory of internal resources of Panchayats

Given the enhanced capacity of the Panchayat Raj Members, the State can help them to develop inventory of resources at Panchayat level. These resources can be made web based which can attract different Departments of the State for inclusion in their respective planning.

Over the last more than two decades, decentralization has been the major focus of the planning process. The National government from time to time has been insisting to prepare micro plans at the Panchayat level. The state government has also been instrumental in making devolution of functions to the Panchayats. Contributions of the Panchayats in the budgetary processes of the State can open up new opportunities to address lots of needs and aspirations of the people.

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Working of Gram Sabha in Scheduled Areas under PESA Act-Odisha Perspective

Dr. Pramila Prava Patnaik

Abstract

The present paper attempts to examine the role of Gram Sabha in the functioning of PESA Act and is based on the study¹ undertaken by the Institute of Social Sciences, Bhubaneswar. The present paper tries to examine working of Gram Sabha in schedule areas in respect of (i) control over money-lending, (ii) matters of prohibition or regulation or restriction of the sale and consumption of intoxicants, (iii) ownership of minor forest produce (MFP), (iv) land transfer (v) regulation of village market. These issues were approached by administering household questionnaire, conducting FGDs, interviewing PRI functionaries, officials and non-officials and field observation.

Odisha is located between 17 N and 22.3 latitudes and between 81.3 to 87.5 E longitudes and represents a State situated on the coast of Bay of Bengal, which is surrounded by Andhra Pradesh in the south, Bay of Bengal in the east, Chhatisgarh state in the west, West Bengal and Bihar states in the north. Odisha has a landmass of 1, 55,707 sq. km. with 3.68 crore population as per 2001 census and now at 4.19 crore as per 2011 census. The density of population increased from 236 per sq. Km. in 2001 to 269 per sq. Km in 2011. In Odisha, literacy rate has increased

by 4.6 times from 15.80 per cent in 1951 to 73.45 per cent in 2011, growing at an annual compounding rate of 2.59 per cent as against 2.35 per cent per annum at the national level. Whereas male literacy has increased 3.02 times from 27.32 per cent in 1951 to 82.40 per cent in 2011, female literacy has grown much faster (i.e., 14.24 times) from a low base of 4.52 per cent in 1951 to 64.36 per cent in 2011.

The population of Scheduled Tribes (ST) and Scheduled Castes (SC) in the state is 9590756 and 7188463 respectively (2001 census). The ST population constitutes 22.84 per cent of the total population of the state and 9.19 per cent of the total tribal population (104281034) of the country. The SC population constitutes 17.1 per cent of the state and 3.6 per cent of the total SC population of the country. Considering the development index, the President of India, during 1956 declared 62 different tribal communities of Odisha as scheduled tribes out of which 13 are considered as Primitive Tribal Groups (PTG) redesignated as Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTG) for special treatment. The scheduled tribes in Odisha speak as many as 74 dialects.

With the passing of the 73rd Constitutional Amendment in 1993, the Panchayati Raj Institutions secured constitutional status but this

amendment did not apply to Scheduled Areas under Article 244 of the constitution. The Panchayats Extension to Scheduled Areas Act (PESA Act), 1996 envisages the establishment of village Panchayat as self-governing institution. The basic provision of the PESA is aimed at facilitating participatory democracy in tribal areas by empowering the Gram Sabha to manage and control its own resources. The Gram Sabhas are given special functional powers and responsibilities to ensure effective participation of tribal communities in their own development in harmony with their culture so as to preserve/conservate their traditional rights over natural resources. The Act is intended to restore primary control over natural resources including land, water, forest, minerals and bestow ownership rights of Gram Sabha over Minor Forest Produces.

In the amended legislation the following subjects and responsibilities mandated for Panchayats in Scheduled Areas were entrusted to the three-tier Panchayat Institutions in Odisha. Gram Panchayat is given the power of (i) Enforcement of Prohibition of regulation or restriction of sale and consumption of any intoxicant, (ii) Ownership of minor forest produce, (iii) Prevention of alienation of land and restoration of any unlawfully alienated land and Scheduled Tribes, (iv) Control over money-lending and (v) Management of village markets. At the intermediate level, the power of control and supervision over institutions and functionaries of various social sector programmes and preparation of local plan including tribal sub-plan are entrusted to the Panchayat Samiti. Matters relating to grant of prospecting license or mining lease of minor minerals or concession for exploitation of minor minerals by auction and acquisition of land for development projects or resettlement or rehabilitation of persons affected by such projects are kept at the level of Zilla Parishads. In these

matters, prior recommendation and consultation respectively of Zilla Parishad is mandated under the law.

The writings and findings from some authentic literatures provide enough scope for the relevance of present paper on “Working of Gram Sabha in Scheduled Areas under PESA Act-Odisha Perspective”. These reveal the existing practices of functioning of Gram Sabha in Scheduled Areas under PESA Act. Some related studies undertaken by different researchers and institutions like the Study on “Impact of State Legislation on the Empowerment of Gram Sabha in Scheduled V Areas” undertaken by NIRD study team tried to assess the impact of state legislation on the empowerment of the Gram Sabha (self-governance) and the levels of awareness of people and their consequent participation in the deliberations in Gram Sabha. Another study by the team on “Gram Sabha and Social Audit in Schedule V Areas”, focused on the analysis of ‘social audit role’ of the Gram Sabha in the framework of the provisions of PESA in the Schedule V Areas. The ‘social audit’ concept broadly envisages the exercise of these powers by the Gram Sabha effectively. M. Aslam in his article on “Empowering Gram Sabha: Heart and Soul of Panchayati Raj System in India”, suggested some necessary steps for creating conditions, which are conducive to the process of self-governance at the grassroots level. K.K. Patnaik in his article on ‘Gram Sabhas in Scheduled V Areas’ pointed out some gaps and suggestions in regard to functioning of GS and role of GS in Scheduled V Areas. He mentioned that PESA Act provided for the Gram Sabha or the Panchayats at appropriate level to be consulted or its prior recommendation obtained before performing any action on the aforesaid subjects but many states including Odisha exercised their option to entrust such powers

either to the Gram Sabha or the Gram Panchayat or any other tier of Panchayati Raj Institutions.

Money Lending

The Odisha (Scheduled Areas) Money Lenders' Regulation 1967 has been amended by the Odisha (Scheduled Areas) Money-Lenders (Amendment) Regulation, 2000 (Regulation 1 of 2001). As per amended regulation, no money-lender shall advance loan to any person belonging to a scheduled tribe, except on the prior recommendation there of the concerned Gram Panchayat accorded with the concurrence of the Gram Sasan. A money-lender, before advancing a loan to any person belonging to a scheduled tribe, shall send the proposal there for to the concerned Gram Panchayat for its recommendation which shall be communicated by it within a period of 45 days from the date of receipt of such proposal. If the Gram Panchayat fails to communicate its recommendations or refusal within the aforesaid period, it shall be deemed that the Gram Panchayat has accorded recommendation. If it refuses to accord required recommendation, it shall communicate the reasons there for in writing, to the money-lender (Section 7-A).

It is revealed from the study that (i) people are not aware about rules regulating money lending and role of Panchayat there in particularly under PESA Act.(ii) Money-lending, with verbal understanding is prevailing among the friends and relatives.(iii) Loan is secured either in the form of kind (paddy) or in cash. In case of kind, the rate of interest goes as high as 50% and 20% in case of cash loan. (iv) People also take loan from SHGs. (v) People also depend on cooperative societies (LAMP) for purchase of fertilizers and manures. The study reveals that the impact of money-lending by licensed money-lenders under the money-lending Regulations is now minimal due

to induction and entry of micro-finance institutions and functioning of SHGs. However, personal loaning is still in force.

Consumption of Intoxicants

The Bihar-Odisha Excise Act 1915 has been amended in 1999 (Act 2 of 1999). As per the amended provision, no license could be granted in the scheduled areas for manufacture, possession or sale, or any exclusive privilege for manufacture or sale, of any intoxicant, except with the prior approval of the concerned Gram Panchayat accorded with the concurrence of the Gram Sasan. The authority granting license for the above purpose shall refer every proposal to the concerned Gram Panchayat for its decision within a period of 30 days from the date of receipt of such reference. If the Gram Panchayat fails to communicate its decision within the period of 30 days, it shall be deemed that the concerned Gram Panchayat has accorded the required approval.

The key findings of the study are (i) Gram Sabha is called for discussion on opening of liquor shop. Resolution is sometimes passed against people's opinion. Sarpanch imposes/forces upon ward members to sign-such resolution on the pretext of securing pension or any other benefit. Ward members sign without knowing/reading the contents of the resolution.(ii) Illegal liquor shops are opened with the knowledge of Sarpanchs. Licensed liquor shops are opened without the knowledge of people. (iii)Some Sarpanchs are reportedly not sending consent letter within 30 days as stipulated under rules for opening of liquor shop. (iv) Even some of them appear to be not knowing about the procedure of opening of liquor shop. (v) Even some of them might be deliberately causing delay in sending reply within the stipulated time. (vi) On this score, it speculated that they might be influenced by monetary benefit from the liquor- license applicants. On the whole, people

and elected representatives are not aware about the detailed provisions of PESA Act.

Minor Forest Produce

As per Odisha Gram Panchayat Minor Forest Produce Administration Rules, 2002, Panchayats are to regulate collection and trading of MFP vide Gazette Notification No. 2091, dated 15.11.2002. The GPs were given overall responsibility to regulate collection and sale of as many as 68 items of MFP. One more item has been added to the list thereafter. The main objectives behind making such legal provisions were to ensure payment of fair price to MFP collectors for their produce, develop a marketing network for trading in MFP, regulate and control activities of traders in order to reduce monopoly of middle men in MFP trading and check exploitation.

It was found from the study that (i) people are not aware of MFP rules. (ii) Traders of MFP do business without registering their names in the Gram Panchayat concerned. (iii) In most of the cases price is fixed by the traders. Since people are not aware that prices are to be fixed by Panchayat Samiti (uniform price), they offer goods at traders' price. MFPs are sold without following the price-list fixed by Panchayat Samiti and displayed in GP office. So at times, the primary gatherers of MFP sell the products at a cheaper rate as dictated by the traders. The primary gatherers in some areas sell MFPs at a price than the price fixed at Panchayat Samiti level which is too low. Suo-motu registration of traders for trading in MFP is very less. Functionaries in weekly market inform, convince and mobilize for registration of traders with the GP concerned. (iv) The role of GP has been limited only to registration of traders and collection of registration fee of Rs.100. Beyond this, they don't monitor the activities of the traders in procurement of MFP

in the Panchayat area. (v) GPs don't perform this because they claim that they have not been provided with appropriate power to control MFP trade. (vi) If the primary collectors and SHGs collectively bargain with the traders for fair price, then the traders stop coming to the area for buying MFP. There is no alternative buyer arrangement available to help the primary collectors to sell their products. It is very difficult to monitor the activities of the traders as they don't report to the GPs from where they are buying, what quantity and where they are storing the produces etc. No reports on the prescribed format are being submitted to the Gram Panchayat by the registered traders. GPs have not taken any action against them yet. (vii) Fixation of price is not done in time by the Panchayat Samitis and after fixation of prices, it is not properly disseminated to the GPs. (viii) The GPs also don't take appropriate measures for informing primary collectors on the price fixed.

Land Transfer

One of the main features of PESA is to prevent alienation of land and restore unlawfully alienated land of schedule tribes. Although Odisha Scheduled Area Transfer of Immovable Property (OSATIP), Regulation 2 of 1956 has been in force, it has come to the notice of the government that large-scale alienation of tribal land to non-tribals has been made in the scheduled areas of the state and as such, it had become a matter of great concern for the State Government as well as the Government of India. Amended Regulation of 2000 emphasizes on the fact that such transfer of immovable property shall take place among members of STs and not in favor of any non-ST person. Further, the total extent of land for such transfer was enhanced from minimum one acre to two acres in case of irrigated land and five acres for non-irrigated land. A non-tribal man married

to a tribal woman shall not be eligible for transferring land under this clause. The amendment contains various executive instructions for effective implementation of the Regulation. As per the amended provisions of the said regulation, transfer/alienation of land of STs to persons not belonging to STs has been completely banned. Any such transfer shall be null and void if the same has been made without written permission of the competent authority. In case any transfer has been made in contravention of the provisions in the Regulation, the competent authority either suo-motu or on a petition filed on that behalf, shall declare such transfer as illegal and shall restore the land to the lawful land owner or his/ her heirs following the prescribed procedure. The regulation also provides for eviction of persons in forcible occupation of land belonging to members of STs and restoration thereof. The regulation provides for penal action in respect of illegal transfer as well as unauthorised occupation. The study findings show that (i) transfer of land in form of mortgage between tribals is still continuing on verbal understanding. (ii) Land transfer from tribal to non-tribal has been stopped since 2002 by amending 1956 regulation. (Regulation-2).(iii) People are aware about the ban of land transfer from tribal to non-tribal. But between tribals, the conditional transaction of land was not known to people. This needs to be disseminated further. (iv) It is noticed that restoration is done in pen and paper only. In most of the cases, the land remains with the second party (non-tribal) only. Physical possession of restored land is actually not given effect to. (v) As per the report given by functionaries, GP is not intervening in any land issues. They are not aware about the role of GP in resolving land related issues.

Village Market

The management of village markets is an important task assigned to the Panchayati Raj

Institutions under PESA. Village market normally exists in every GP. It is revealed in the present study that market is regulated either by Panchayat directly or by Panchayats through auction or by cooperative society or by RMC. GP markets are invariably put to action. They are regulated and controlled by Gram Panchayats. In some Gram Panchayats, markets do not exist. Therefore, people depend on neighboring markets beyond the GP's area.

Conclusions

The following suggestions were emerged from the opinions of various key stake- holders and study results :

- ❖ Extensive training and awareness programmes should be undertaken at block and GP level.
- ❖ Elected representatives of PRIs should be given intensive training on PESA Act and role of Gram Sabha for effective implementation of the Act.
- ❖ WEOs should identify the illegal money lenders and bring to the notice of the concerned BDOs/sub-collectors for taking action against them.
- ❖ The MFP price determined at Panchayat Samiti level should be communicated to Panchayats regularly by a specific date and month in lease year. Price list should be displayed at Panchayat office and public places including village markets. Monitoring by Panchayat functionaries is highly needed to identify the traders doing business without registering with Panchayat. If any such case is detected, he should be penalized. The Gram Panchayat should be empowered to take legal action against illicit liquor business.
- ❖ Local leaders should be vigilant when the process of opening of liquor shop starts. The

opinion of Gram Sabha on liquor license should be binding and absolute.

❖ Close monitoring is essential to stop transaction of land transfer between tribals which is still prevailing on verbal understanding.

❖ Market infrastructure should be developed. Markets under the control of RMC should be transferred to the Gram Panchayats.

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Footnotes

¹Study on “Implementation Status and Gap between Provisions and Practice of PESA Act : A Comparative Diagnostic-cum-Evaluation Study” was undertaken by the Institute of Social Sciences, Bhubaneswar during 2012 supported by SCSTRTI, Bhubaneswar.

The study covered 4 districts, 8 blocks, 16 GPs, 130 villages and 1528 households. Nabarangpur, Sundergarh, Keonjhar and Kandhamal districts of Odisha were selected for the purpose.

This study was empirical in nature. Data was collected from both primary and secondary sources. Primary data included (i) Household survey (ii) FGD (iii) Semi-structured/informal interviews with the key stakeholders like elected Panchayat representatives, officials, NGOs/CBOs, Village leaders and cross-sections of society (iv) case studies (success/failure) (v) Field Observations.

Secondary data was collected from published/available records of Census of India, PR Department and Directorate of Economics & Statistics, Government of Odisha, GPs, Blocks, Zilla Parishads, ITDAs/Special Projects/Revenue/Block authorities/offices and other published/ unpublished reports.

The qualitative aspect of the study was assessed with the help of statistical tools like (i) Likert Scaling Technique(LST) with slight modification (for the purpose of the present study) adopted to assess the qualitative variables by putting score value. (ii) Regression and Corelation models were used to establish relation between the variables (significant/ insignificant).

Dr. Pramila Prava Patnaik, Senior Research Officer, Institute of Social Sciences, Bhubaneswar.

Vidhan Parishad : A Developmental Council not a Political Asylum

Subhrata Pattnaik

According to Plato, democracy is a charming form of government, full of variety and disorder; and dispensing a sort of equality to equals and unequals alike. Change is the call of the day. Human beings are the supreme creation. Starting from the creation people have accepted new things and changed themselves according to the need of the time in every sphere of life. Vidhan Parishad in the State Legislature is a new thought for Odisha eventhough it is already accepted and followed in almost seven states in the country like India and successfully it is continuing.

The Constitution of India provides for a legislature in each State and entrusts it with the responsibility to make laws for the state. However, the composition of a State Legislature can be different in different states. It can be either bicameral or unicameral. Presently, only seven states (Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, J&K, Karnataka Maharashtra, Telengana and UP) have bi-cameral legislatures. Twenty two States and two Union Territories (Delhi and Puducherry) have unicameral Legislatures.

In case of a bicameral state legislature, the upper house is known as State Legislative Council (Vidhan Parishad) and the lower house

as the State Legislative Assembly (Vidhan Sabha). Where there is only one House of the State Legislature, it is known as the State Legislative Assembly. Odisha has a unicameral legislature with Orissa Legislative Assembly as its all powerful house.

The initiative of the state government to have a legislative council is a right move towards good governance. Unlike the Legislative Assembly, the Legislative Council is a permanent body. Each member serves a six-year term, with terms staggered so that the term of one-third of a council's members expires every two years. This arrangement parallels that for the Rajya Sabha.

Odisha government's move in setting up a Legislative Council has triggered debate. Questions are being raised about the utility of the Council that would make Odisha one of the few states to have a bicameral legislature. While there is concern over the kind of financial burden the move would entail, the motives of the govt are being questioned. Here we present the voices of eminent personalities on the vexed issue:- will the legislative body prove to be beneficial or will it end up burning a hole in the state's exchequer instead seems to be the question on everyone's minds.

Biswachintamani Ambika Prasad Pani
Dean, Nalanda University



The debate for setting up of a Legislative Council otherwise known as Vidhan Parishad in Odisha has gained ground very recently. When the ruling party made such a proposal it did not even feel it necessary to have a consultation with the stakeholders, even though their approval was vital. Now the present government tried to make its proposal justified by saying that it was in the interest of the state and for meeting its development. But the real intention behind it is under severe doubt. If the government made this proposal observing the existence of the second house in other seven states in India then this justification is invalid. Because from among all those seven, six are very large except Jammu Kashmir. And to say, when in the Legislative Assembly, 147 constituencies have been represented, is it not enough to meet the interest and development of the State? And when 147 members are not able to make the state developed then would we ever imagine that the next 49 members (as the strength of proposed Vidhan Parishad) would make Odisha a developed one? When the state revenue collection is incredibly coming down and the state government is not able to have alternative resources to implement its programmes, then how can it manage to run a second house? The sessions of the legislative assembly are not being held properly and having been cutting down by resolution. When the function of Legislative Assembly is going through such irregularities, then how can we expect that the apparatus of Vidhan Parishad would not be falling down in near future? So what is the need of establishing a second house amidst several such inadequacies and difficulties. It is not only the waste of money, but a sheer waste of time also.

Dr. Dipak Kumar Dash
Christ College, Cuttack

The Constitution of India provides for a State Legislature for each State. However, it depends upon the wishes of the people of each state whether to have a bicameral or a unicameral State Legislature. The State Legislatures of Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Jammu & Kashmir, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh and Telengana have bicameral legislature. This system is a healthy trend for participatory democracy. Even J.S Mill was a supporter of it. Recently the process of the creation of second chamber in Odisha will definitely provide a platform to intellectuals, young minds which will help to build up a new horizon in the galaxy of knowledge. But if we analyse the political scenario of Odisha since last 25 years, we can find a single party or coalition is in power. Now BJD government has 117 MLAs. In this atmosphere, the proposal to create a second chamber without consulting all parties is not at all praiseworthy. It may be used as a political rehabilitation centre and at the same time it will be very much expensive. So the creation of second chamber in Odisha Legislature may be moved with a proper procedure designed with debate, discussion and consultations.



Mr Santosh Pattnaik
Ex-Manager, United Bank of India

To have or not to have a Legislative Council has indeed, become a bone of contention. A number of states that have had their Council abolished have subsequently requested its re-



establishment; conversely, proposals for the re-establishment of the Council for a state have also met with opposition. There have been numerous instances in different states where members of political parties, having failed to secure an Assembly seat in the election, have subsequently been nominated and reinstated in the Legislative Councils. Such unhealthy practice obviously contradicts the very purpose of the Legislative Council which, is supposed to offer an opportunity to members from different fraternities such as scientists, educationists, lawyers, artists and journalists, etc who are neither involved nor interested in mainstream political activities, but endowed with rich experience and expertise can enhance the quality of good governance. Of late, amidst criticism from various quarters including the Opposition BJP and Congress, the Odisha government has initiated the process for setting up a Legislative Council in the state. While the ruling party, with its thumping majority of 117 members in the 147 member Assembly is in a comfortable position to pass the bill on its own for setting up a 49-member Legislative Council, it ought to ensure that the Council ultimately does not become a springboard for the backdoor entry of unsuccessful politicians. On the contrary, by inducting deserving and dedicated professionals from different walks of life without any fear or favour would certainly negate the apprehension of opposition parties who view the proposed Council as a rehabilitation centre for its cronies. The purpose should be to accommodate people from various professional interests in the Legislative Council who, through their expertise and experience can act as the friend, philosopher and guide of the Legislative Assembly. It would certainly be a boon to have the guidance of eminent experts in different fields who can be instrumental in the progress of the State.

Mr Prasanta Pattnaik
Asst Director of Fisheries



I welcome the proposal for the establishment of the Vidhan Parishad in the state. Its functioning will be more or less similar to that of the Rajya Sabha at the Centre. Many states do have Legislative Councils. However, I strongly feel that Odisha should also have a Legislative Council as it would give impetus to the state's progress. Deserving politicians and eminent personalities who are unable to win elections to the Assembly will get a chance to be a part of the Legislative Council and thus be a part of the decision - making process. Intellectuals backed by political outfits can help the government in improving existing schemes and launching new ones for the downtrodden. The members of the Vidhan Parishad can discuss many key issues which would help the State Assembly address them sooner, thus expediting the economy. The presence of Legislative Council in the state will help improve the efficiency of the Legislative Assembly which will prove to be a benefit for the state.

Mr Soumen Banerjee
Advocate, High Court



The existence of a Legislative Council has proven politically controversial. May the arguments be in its favour or against the topic, the controversy remains the same.

The makers of the Constitution have deliberately given a secondary position to the Council of States so that both the chambers in the state do not compete with each other for supremacy. The purpose was to accommodate

various professionals in the Legislative Council, who through their experience can act as the friend, philosopher and guide of the Legislative Assembly. Hence in Odisha at this spur of moment, the irony of the state is that a Vidhan Parishad is needed for the better consideration of the budget and bills passed in State Assembly, for the convenience and for the better upliftment and economically cost effective for the citizens of Odisha.

Be it as it may be, if some amount of money is spent no doubt a fruitful conclusion for the people of this state shall come in terms of better result as many intellectuals, elderly and experienced people are involved in the law making process of the state.

Mrs Suroma Mohapatra
Social Activist

The idea is something very interesting. To me it is a very bold step to smoothen the work of the State Legislative Council. Vidhan Parishad will consist of 1/3rd of the total number of MLAs. Members will be selected from the public sectors, from expanded middle class of the society. The highly educated and specialists from different fields can participate and contribute in the Council debates. It may be an expensive affair but keeping it aside the most important and attracting feature of Vidhan Parishad is that 1/12th members will be elected by state university graduates of not less than three years-standing. Youngsters will get opportunity to take part which will indeed prove to be a very good step in order to enhance the quality of governance. In order to develop the present scenario of Odisha, we not only need political



background but we also require eminent personalities, dignitaries and dedicated people to influence the public and for which transparency is very much essential. There should be no doubt in setting up a Council in the state as it will bring into notice the hopes, expectations, different opinions of the people and the Vidhan Parishad will surely help the State Legislature in getting the work done quickly. I guess it would be a wise decision if the state goes for Vidhan Parishad.

Namrata Pattnaik
HR Manager and Media Head
PGL Group of Companies

It is good that the state is going to have a Vidhan Parishad as intellectuals from different fields and sectors will get an opportunity to become a part of our legislative process. The Vidhan Parishad will comprise people drawn from all walks of life and they will be able to raise their voices on issues concerning their areas, thus boosting representation. Not being bound by the diktat of their party, they will be able to debate issues more freely without any sort of hesitation. So, I would strongly appreciate if Odisha could also have a Legislative Council like the other seven states of India in order to enhance the governance.



Conclusion

According to the Constitution, a state can have its own Legislative Assembly. A state with more than 140 MLAs can also have an Upper House in the form of a Legislative Council. It is generally observed that many bills are passed in the Assembly without any or adequate discussions. So, the Council formation will involve larger sections of people's representatives from various walks of life with vast experience — who

can hold discussions before final adoption of the bills.

This can be an opportunity for people, who are not in mainstream political activities, but can contribute immensely in decision-making. As reported, the proposed Legislative Council in Odisha will consist of 49 members, which is one-third of the state's 147-member Assembly. Besides politicians, this House would consist of members from different fraternities such as scientists, educationists, lawyers, artists and journalists. While the Governor will nominate 16 members from various fields, 16 more will be elected by local bodies such as municipalities, NACs and so on, four will be selected among Lecturers of different Colleges or Universities and the rest would be elected by MLAs.

Here we cannot ignore the financial implications as it would involve additional expenditure to a substantial extent. The people, who will be involved as Member of the Council, will be provided with same facilities and perks that have been extended to the Members of the Assembly. That would be a major burden on the state exchequer. Though a Legislative Council has almost no power in relation to finance, it can still attempt to control the executive by putting questions to Ministers, raising debates, and discussing adjournment motions to highlight alleged lapses by the State Government. However, the Council cannot remove a government from office. With its membership of professionals, this body should be seen as a guiding influence on the Assembly, rather than its rival.

The existence of a Legislative Council at times can be politically controversial. There are instances in different states where members of political parties, after failing to secure an Assembly seat in the election, have been nominated and reinstated in the Legislative Councils. This practice consequently negates the very purpose of the initiative to involve professionals from various walks of life. The original purpose to have it gets defeated by facilitating backdoor entry of unsuccessful politicians.

The Council can control the executive by way of putting questions to Ministers, by raising debates and adjournment motions to highlight the lapses of the government but it cannot throw a government out of power. The makers of the Constitution have deliberately given a secondary position to the Council of States so that both the chambers in the state do not compete with each other for supremacy. I do agree with statements given by Mr Santosh Pattnaik and Mr Soumen Banerjee, "The purpose was to accommodate various professional interests in the Legislative Council, who through their experience can act as the friend, philosopher and guide of the Legislative Assembly". Lastly, I would like to conclude by adding up that it should be a developmental Council and not a political asylum.

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Decentralized Planning for Rural Development - Issues and Challenges

M.N.Roy

Introduction:

1. Planning is an integral part of functioning of any government. Planning for well-being of the people requires proper understanding of the local context including economic, social and cultural issues relevant for the area. Panchayat, as the local government, has to plan for 'economic development and social justice' as per the Constitution and is uniquely placed to plan with participation of the people by fully appreciating the local context for effectiveness of such plan and efficiency of its implementation. However, there are several constraints, both structural and functional, in true decentralization of the planning process. The administrative structure of the Panchayats is quite weak and there has been little functional devolution for making them responsible for holistic planning as a local government. The Centrally Sponsored Schemes provide the bulk of the resources for planned development in rural areas and funds flow along with central guidelines, which more or less follow blueprint approach with some operational flexibility at the local level. Even that flexibility is not fully utilized due to poor capability and functioning of the Panchayats. With little devolution of functions in true sense, the Panchayats implement the schemes as mere agents of the Union and the State Governments. Lack of rational devolution of functions, inability

of the States to put in place other necessary collateral measures coupled with inadequate capacity of the Panchayats pose a major challenge in true decentralization of the planning process. This paper analyses the issues involved and possible way out.

Background of Planning in India

2. After Independence, India established the Planning Commission through a resolution of the Government of India (GOI) in March 1950 without any legislative support. The Planning Commission was made responsible for assessment of the socio-economic situation of the country, including incidence of poverty and prepare policy for social and economic development. The country adopted the USSR system of five year planning from the year 1951, when the first plan was launched. The State Governments also established their Planning Commissions/Boards to prepare State Plans, which are to be approved by the Planning Commission for enabling flow of central resources. However, the state plans and priorities are substantially guided by the resource allocation for different sectors by the Planning Commission. Flow of funds from the Union to the State Governments through various Centrally Sponsored Schemes and Centrally Sector Schemes (CSSs) started increasing with more and

more CSSs being taken up, particularly from the 1980s. Gradually funds flowing to the State Governments as per decisions of the Planning Commission, which has element of discretion at the central level, started increasing and eventually exceeded the formula based transfer of funds as per recommendations of the Union Finance Commissions, as a part of federal fiscal arrangement. The process also led to top down approach in planning in the entire country. The States have to bear part of the fund for implementing Centrally Sponsored Schemes as State share. As a consequence, funds available for planning within the state remain committed to bear the state share of these schemes leaving little resources to fund its own plan to meet local needs not addressed by any CSS. Thus, the entire plan expenditure within a state remains broadly guided by central plan and related schemes with common guidelines for the entire country.

3. Need for decentralized planning by breaking up the planning exercise into National, State, District and Local Community level, was felt in the 1st Plan itself. However, nothing concrete was done. The District Development Council was introduced in the 2nd Plan. There was no enabling framework to prepare or integrate the plans at district level and there was no decentralized plan in practice. Panchayats were established as per recommendation of the Balwant Rai Mehta Committee but those bodies had hardly any power and resources to make plans'. The first Administrative Reform Commission, constituted by the GOI, highlighted the need of district planning in its report of 1967. The Planning Commission came out with a guideline detailing the concept and methodology of drawing up such plans within the framework of annual, medium term and perspective plans. Only a few states made an attempt but those were not integrated

into the annual plans of the states. The Ashok Mehta Committee on Panchayati Raj recommended in 1978 that "Panchayats ought to be strengthened into agencies capable of undertaking local planning". However, only a few states had functional Panchayats during that period.

4. A Working Group on District Planning headed by C.H. Hanumant Rao in 1984 brought out the fact that State Plans were being formulated by sectoral departments without much consultation with the District Development Council. The Working Group also recommended establishment of District Planning Committee and suggested that the same should consist of a Chairman, Member-Secretary and about 50 members and the Collector should be the chief coordinator. The District Planning Body should be assisted by a Chief Planning Officer and technical experts in various disciplines and there will be officer at Block level for planning. A few states started preparing district plan but there was hardly any participation of the people. The scenario continues even after the Constitutional mandate for preparing district plan introduced through the 74th Amendment of the Constitution. The current status has been aptly summarized by the Ramchandran Committee, constituted by the Ministry of Panchayati Raj, GOI in the year 2006, which observed that "over a period of four decades since the beginning of planned development, there were several suggestions and attempts at decentralized planning. The conditions required were also outlined and repeated. However, the increase in the number of ministries, departments and parastatals at the Centre and in the States and the vertical planning, preparation of programmes and methods of funding stood in the way of decentralized planning becoming a reality".³

The Constitutional Mandate for Decentralized Planning

5. Establishment of OPC received Constitutional mandate after the 73rd and the 74th Amendments of the Constitution. The Article 243 ZO was introduced through the 74th Amendment which provides for constitution of a OPC to consolidate plans of the Panchayats and Municipalities and to prepare a draft development plan for the whole district. This implies that the Panchayats and Municipalities must plan and then only those can be consolidated by the DPC. In fact, the Panchayat, as the third stratum of government, has been envisaged to plan and implement scheme for 'economic development and social justice' and the Article 243 G of the Constitution provides that Legislature of a State may, by law, endow the Panchayats with such powers and authorities as may be necessary. So, it is the State Government who ultimately decides on the powers and functions of the Panchayats to enable them to plan in respect of those functions. However, in spite of legal provision and a strong rationale to decentralize planning there has been little progress in that respect.

Rationale for Decentralized Planning

6. There are several important reasons for more decentralization in planning. The country is vast with different developmental needs and one blue print for the country as a whole, as is being practiced now, does not fit all. At the higher level plans are worked out sector wise with little convergence and often oblivious of widely varying ground realities. Planning at the local level can take care of the problem since the problem and developmental needs are known more precisely at that level. It is also possible to ensure better convergence of various activities at that level to make the plan more holistic. The other important

reason is that participation of the people in the planning process has intrinsic value in making governance inclusive and the development sustainable. This also helps to tap the social capital and enhance the same. The people add to the available resources through their contributions in cash and kind and also come out with innovative ideas. The democratically elected local government provide the right forum for mobilizing the people and participate in the planning process which makes subsequent implementation easier. The accountability mechanism is easier to operate at local level and the local government can be held responsible for any failure. However, when such plans are prepared with participation and ownership of the people, they also remain accountable along with the Panchayats. The community feels motivated to participate in planning for their own development and watching for any failure for taking corrective actions under leadership of the Panchayats. This can make the most optimum utilization of public resources and is not biased by any departmental narrow outlook but driven by a holistic view taken by the people themselves whose well being is the primary objective.

7. There is, however, need to guide the local plans so that the national and state priorities are duly considered along with the local needs in allocation of resources in putting up a united effort from centre to the village level in attaining various goals of development. The Planning Commission and the state level Boards/Commissions are to take up these responsibilities. They have, however, generally not been so concerned in the past for strengthening the decentralized planning processes and in some states it is the Panchayat Departments who have tried to promote decentralized planning as a part of decentralization process and often with little support from the line

departments. So, there has been little will for the State Government as a whole to decentralized planning and the institutional framework for planning remained weak. The line departments continue to prepare scheme specific district plans. In some cases such plans are endorsed by the Panchayat functionaries like the Sabhadhipati of the Zilla Parishad as Chairperson of the DPC or Chairpersons of respective Standing Committees as a token involvement of the Panchayats without any institutional linkage.

Institutional Framework and Processes for Decentralized Planning

8. The legal framework does not guarantee planning in decentralized mode in absence of appropriate institutional framework. Although DPCs have been constituted in all states but these are mostly non-functional. In many places the DPC meets only to approve plans of certain CSSs, prepared bureaucratically, where such approval is essential to release funds to the district. Non-functioning of the DPC is partly due to its structural weakness. The DPC has been visualized as a mere committee without any administrative structure or permanent secretariat. There is neither any professional with expertise in planning nor any fund with the DPC to support, guide and coordinate planning of large number of local governments within a district. Actual planning has to be done by the Panchayats and Municipalities and until such plans are prepared and DPC has a role in guiding preparation of such plans there is hardly any function of the DPC. How the DPCs will function and what procedures will be followed to prepare plans at Panchayat levels have not been well prescribed by the GOI presuming that the activity falls within the domain of the State Government. The Planning Commission has come out with a District Planning Manual and all the states were advised to develop their own manual

in local languages, which has not been followed". Most states have issued guidelines for decentralized planning but those hardly help the Panchayats to plan because of several factors including poor devolution of functions.

Lack of Adequate Devolution

9. Planning by any government essentially entails allocation of resources for development in respect of those services for which the government has responsibility. So, clear devolution of functions for which the Panchayats are responsible and, therefore, accountable to the people is a prior condition to plan for discharging those responsibilities. Availability of funds and freedom to use the same are the next requirements to effectively plan at the local level. It obviously also requires enough expertise at the local level to assess the need of the local area for which the Panchayats are responsible, work out various alternative options and to prepare projects/schemes to address the local needs through executable actions. All these require adequate devolution of functions, funds and functionaries under control of the Panchayats, which has not happened in most states, except implementation of the schemes belonging to the Panchayat and Rural Development Department(s). Proper devolution of functions which makes Panchayat of any tier clearly responsible and fully accountable for delivering certain services is an essential precondition for proper decentralization of planning.

10. The Eleventh' Schedule of the Constitution has recommended 29 subjects for devolution to Panchayats. However, subjects as a whole cannot be devolved and only certain activities which can be best performed at the local level needs to be delineated through the process of 'Activity Mapping' and devolved specifically

so that whatever is devolved is specific and with clear accountability. Many of the orders of devolution are very general and are mostly related to either selection of beneficiaries or assisting the state implementation agencies in implementation of programmes through awareness generation and mobilization of the people. Assignment of exclusive responsibilities on the Panchayats is missing in most states. Thus, there is little accountability framework which helps the people to question the Panchayats why they have not discharged their responsibilities related to the activity which has been assigned to them. Procedures for involvement of Panchayats in schemes managed by the State Governments are also not clear for the Panchayats to play their roles. There is little communication between the line departments and the Panchayats to clarify the issues of the problems faced by the Panchayats and the Standing Committee system is not that strong to meet the requirement. Many line department functionaries are rather apprehensive of the Panchayats and treat them as sub-offices of the PROD and not as the third stratum of government, which creates a distance between the two. Order of devolution issued by some of the line departments are not actively pursued by their field officials in absence of monitoring by the departments and lack of dialogue maintains the distance between them and the Panchayats. So, the Panchayats remain generally confined to activities including planning, which are looked after by the Panchayat and Rural Development Departments).

11. Devolution of funds is equally important for the Panchayats to exercise their discretion in resource allocation for planning. That requires allocation of funds through clearly earmarked head of account within the departmental budget. This has been the recommendation of the Thirteenth

Finance Commission, and many states have started following this though amount of such budget provision is very little. In states like Kerala and Karnataka there is separate budget volume which shows funds to be devolved to local governments under different heads of accounts and that gives some assurance in release of funds to the Panchayats. Release of funds to the Panchayats by other Departments, whose budget do not have exclusive provisions for Panchayats, is at the discretion of the Department concerned and is uncertain. The Planning Department also do not always clearly communicate the resource envelop to respective Panchayats before they start of the planning process. This leads to the general practice of planning for the sector as and when information on fund is available and the time varies from sector to sector or even scheme to scheme, which makes holistic planning almost impossible. Integrated district plan, where prepared, is generally completed well after the beginning of the financial year and as a mere bureaucratic exercise with little element of participation of the people. The plans are also hardly followed in actual execution of various schemes.

Constraints in Decentralized Planning

12. The most important constraint, apart from not having clear devolution with accountability, is that the resources that flow to the Panchayats are mostly through the CSSs, which are to be spent as per central guidelines. In addition to that most of the CSSs are implemented by line departments, in many cases through district level societies with little accountability to the Panchayats. The main target being absorption of the available funds there is little concern for outcome and the need to involve the people to make the outcome effective. The plans are prepared departmentally in isolation with no holistic approach to ensure convergence

with activities of the other departments. The situation is almost the same for the CSSs implemented by the Panchayats such as MGNREGS, BRGF etc. Each CSS demands their own district plans to be submitted to different central authorities at different times. However, Panchayats can attempt bottom up planning and some convergence provided they have the capacity and have other collateral arrangements in place. Generally both are missing.

13. The planning process has to start at village level through identification of the problems and opportunities and working out what are possible to be implemented at that level with their effort as well as using their own revenue, such as funds received as per recommendation of the Central and the State Finance Commissions and their own source revenue and funds available under various programmes. The problems are that availability of funds under the CSSs or even the awards of the Finance Commissions are not clearly known to the Panchayats except having some broad idea based on historic trend. The SFC grants are uncertain, both in terms of amount and time by when any Panchayat will receive that and often are not really untied. Own source revenue, which the Panchayats mobilize locally is too little and is often even less than 5% of total plan size of any Panchayat. Thus, they are left with only making operational plan of utilizing CSS funds within the boundaries of the respective guidelines. In fact, that amount is also not always known and even where the Panchayats can have an idea of the amount the same is uncertain in terms of time of availability. Any Panchayat can receive funds only when the entire district becomes eligible which delays availability of funds on time to well performing Panchayats (in terms of utilization of funds) when funds are lying unutilized in other Panchayats. Ultimately, what boils down is that

the Panchayats start planning for the activities only when funds are received and to receive funds plans are submitted by the Department with little consultation with the Panchayats.

14. Yet, there is scope of planning at the local level, such as at GP, using available untied and own funds. There are many local issues which are not looked after by any department or are very much within the domain of the Panchayats, which can be best addressed through local interventions. In fact, except regulatory activities, many of the developmental projects for rural areas can be taken up by the Panchayats without formal devolution of authority. For example, any GP can plan to improve storage of rain water or recharging ground water, to improve nutrition of their children or to promote pisciculture in local tanks using their own funds or some of the programme funds where guidelines allow taking up such activities. Some of the social sector interventions, like organizing women in Self Help Groups or promotion of hygienic behaviour require little funds. However, there is need for clear understanding of the issues and support of suitable professionals. There is dearth of expertise with the Panchayats and professionals who work for various government departments have little mandate and accountability for extending necessary help to Panchayats. There is need to develop capability of the Panchayats and clearly defined accountability of the government employees at respective level for lending professional services to the Panchayats on demand. This has not happened and Panchayats receive little professional support of experts of line department for planning and implementation of their schemes.

15. Another major problem is absence of data with the Panchayats. Management Information System of all the important CSSs like

NRHM, ICDS, SSA, RKVY etc. is highly centralized to generate report for the higher tiers of government only and it does not give any feedback to the field level. District wise data is generally available but data disaggregated up to GP level is not compiled and so there is hardly any Panchayat wise data for all the important programmes implemented by various line departments. The Panchayats, particularly the GPs remain in dark about the programme performances and related outputs and outcome in respect of their areas. Thus, they find it difficult to supplement the efforts of the State Governments through local interventions in absence of such data. Absence of data is another barrier in assessing the status of development within a Panchayat. Developing a vision on the possible road map for development and deciding on priorities for investment, which is the essence of planning, becomes difficult without clear knowledge of current status in various dimensions of developmental outcome.

16. In respect of social sector development, improving delivery of services through existing state run institutions like the schools, health centres, ICDS centres etc. is often more important than making new investment. The scope for planned interventions in these sectors has little to do with allocation of resources for taking up new activities. In such cases, it is more important to have planned interventions for proper utilization of the facilities already in existence for reaching the unreached and better outcomes. The problem is more in the social sector because the outcomes are less tangible, have less demand and even mere access to services may not lead to desired outcome, e.g. a student may take admission in school but may be irregular in attendance or may even attend school but the level of learning may remain poor. Planning in these sectors is more necessary to improve utilization of the investment

already made for creating infrastructures and committed expenditure like salary of the government functionaries associated with these programmes. These may involve local interventions and innovations for improving demand of uptake of those services by removing the barriers to access, for which the Panchayats can play an important role. They can also watch performances of these facilities for better delivery and mediate planned interventions by the higher level for improving supply side of service delivery. These are not conventional planning of allocating fund for taking up schemes but planned activities, not always involving expenditure, at local level including being effectively engaged with higher tiers of government for their planned interventions. Lack of capacities of the Panchayats to be able to judge quality of service delivery and organizing local interventions for best use of existing government services for the well-being of their people is a major bottleneck in this respect.

Centrality of People's Ownership and Participation

17. The most important rationale for decentralized planning is direct involvement of the people in addressing their own development. An intervention which has impact only at the local level and can be organized locally is best left to the Panchayat to organize the same. Since the people can get easily engaged with the Panchayat, particularly the GP, there should be maximum devolution to the GPs so that people are directly involved in decision making related to as much expenditure as possible in respect of investments being made within their areas. Apart from the advantage of making the plan more contexts specific to meet the local requirement, ownership and involvement of the people have its own intrinsic value. Development is not merely taking up physical construction or arranging delivery of

services but also includes the process of decision making to have more sustainable development. Many of the collective actions may not have even financial implications but helping the people to understand and analyse their problem and to try solving the same generates social capital, which helps organizing community actions for better living in many other aspects of life and make the society more inclusive. Thus, true decentralized planning should be a bottom up exercise meaning whatever can be handled at the village level should be managed at that level without even asking the Panchayats to intervene. Similarly, whatever can be planned and implemented at the GP level should be planned and implemented at that level. So, decentralized planning should ensure participation of the people to analyse their problems and take care of those which can be handled by themselves, if necessary with support from outside and prioritizing the remaining problems, which should be addressed by higher level governments with their full participation. This should include new infrastructures and activities as well as ways and means of making better use of existing programmes and public utilities which serve them. However, the top down approach to rural development has reversed the scenario and whatever can be planned from above is put for implementation by the line departments and people are asked to participate to make the implementation more effective.

18. Planning at the local level should also lead to better accountability towards the people in utilizing public resources. People should appreciate the value of public money by judging the appropriateness of expenditure decisions. This is possible only when there is more local contribution through tax and non-tax revenue, so that people can question how their money is going to be or has been utilized. At present Panchayats

receive funds mostly linked to schemes and although such funds are generated through contribution by every citizen the complex way in which revenue is collected by the Union and State Governments and part of that is released for implementation of schemes is not usually understood by the people. As a result, they do not feel as bothered for best utilization of the scheme funds as they would have for their own contribution. The Panchayat functionaries and programme administrators are also not sensitized enough in appreciating the value of public money in absence of any hard budget constraint and they are more concerned with utilization of the available funds measured by expenditure and not outcome judged by the people. Even the funds received as entitlement as per awards of the Finance Commissions are spent like an agent and not considering the holistic development of the Panchayat as a mandate. In order that there is more accountability towards the people, which is the only way to ensure expenditure decisions to maximize people's well-being, there has to be more local revenue generation and low share of own revenue continues to be a constraint in promoting good local planning.

19. Given the current low per capita revenue collection at the local level, decentralized planning can focus only on low cost and no cost activities which can be organized at local level. The Panchayat functionaries and the people are to be oriented on their entitlement based on Finance Commission awards and how those should be treated like their own source revenue for making best use through people-centric planning. This, however, requires the State Government not to prescribe use of such funds except mentioning some of the unproductive purposes for which the funds cannot be utilized. Since most of the services delivered in rural areas are owned and managed

by the State Government one important interventions through local planning will be improving access through better demand generation and removing the barriers and watching on the public utilities for improving quality of service delivery. All the social sector developments in the field of education, health, nutrition etc, where the country is lagging can be facilitated with strong local mobilization under the leadership of the Panchayat. However, that also require proper partnership by the State Government departments to work together by clearly delineating their mutual roles and often that is vitiated by the narrow view of the higher government functionaries by looking at the Panchayats as their agent and treating those institutions as their sub-offices.

20. There is need for political will to let the Panchayats become a true partner of development and devolve them with adequate powers along with treating them with dignity so that all development issues are addressed in an integrated manner through local actions at the Panchayat levels and policy decisions at the state and national level. That is still missing both at the centre and the state level leading to stereotypes in development initiatives and centralized planning for the same. The Departments are apprehensive of devolving power to the Panchayats with the argument that the Panchayats have little capacity. The fact is that capacity cannot grow in vacuum and it can be developed only through exercising authority for which devolution is a prior need. There is stalemate on this issue whether devolution will precede capacity building or the other way round over the last twenty years or so after the 73rd and 74th amendment of the Constitution. So, the crucial question is how the capacity of the Panchayats can be augmented at the present low level of devolution so that they can be

entrusted with more powers and authorities in future.

Capacity Building of the Panchayats

21. While adequate devolution from higher government to Panchayats has not taken place the only other alternative is to develop capacity of the Panchayats for properly exercising whatever authority they have. Instead of waiting for formal power and more funds the Panchayats can be oriented to use their social capital to organize local actions with whatever funds they have. In fact, as mentioned before, many of the activities which can be taken up locally are not fund intensive and what is needed is mobilizing the people to take up activities which can be conceived, designed and acted upon locally and acceptance of the interventions by the entire population cutting across political line. This is a very laborious process and requires sustained support of experts to change the mindset of the Panchayat functionaries from absolute dependence on the higher government to value their own initiative to extend even marginal benefits to the people with their own initiatives. Such activities could be both in doing something of their own using resources available within the Panchayat as well as improving benefits flowing from existing government programmes. These lead to incremental capacity gain and also open up a positive spiral of mobilizing more local funds, both in terms of better revenue mobilization by the Panchayat, particularly the GP and voluntary contribution by the people to implement the local plans.

The Way Forward

22. There is no short cut solution for proper adoption of decentralized planning. The process has to start with preparation of village based GP plan for which there should be enough political

will in strengthening the GPs and devolving more functions for the Panchayats to have specific responsibilities, which they can discharge with freedom with due devolution of funds and functionaries. There is no champion at the national level at present in strongly advocating for decentralized planning, which will require lot of structural changes. The Planning Commission started this exercise to some extent during the Eleventh Plan but went back on decentralization during the Twelfth Plan. It is to be seen whether the newly conceived NITI Aayog adopts decentralization as a strategy for promoting growth of the country, which is the main focus of the Union Government at present. However, there is no such indication so far. In this situation developments may happen sporadically in a few states based on commitment of the State Governments. The process of Panchayats acquiring more capability in exercising their available resources and initiating a demand for

more devolution to Panchayats with support of the people should be pursued simultaneously.

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Strengthening Women Power - Angul Mahila Manch

Sarojini Nayak

A group of committed women have been silently working towards social transformation in Angul. They came together more than a decade ago as a part of a community development programme and though not officially registered, they have continued with their mission of becoming change makers in rural pockets. Deriving strength and support from the forum, many non-PRI members who have chosen to abstain from electoral politics have evolved as community leaders in their own right. The creation and working of the group is an effective experiment in building solidarity among women, equipping them with leadership skills and facilitating an interface with different stakeholders for better governance at grassroots.

The formal beginning of the Angul Mahila Manch can be traced to the district level meet held in Angul on August 19, 2004. Considered to be a large gathering by local standards, the meet saw a congregation of over 600 women from the district – many of them being a part of such a convention for the first time in their lives. Though it was a very unusual gathering of women from various grassroot level organizations such as self help groups, anganwadi workers, health workers and also housewives along with a substantial number of elected PRI members, their common goal was empowerment based on three tenants; to create an attitude of cooperation among the

members irrespective of party affiliations, to jointly decide the course of action, and to develop leadership qualities at different levels.

Initially, the project was launched by ISED (Institute of Socio-Economic Development, Bhubaneswar, which had been working in the district for over a decade on issues relating to women empowerment) with the support of UNDP, Ministry of Rural Development and Govt of Odisha. The project was designed in a manner which would effectively encourage women to participate in the political process through mobilization, leadership development, strengthening elected women's networks for better interface with policy makers and planners, address gender priorities, documentation and dissemination of information. It also aimed at formation of forums at the cluster level, resource mapping of Panchayats, setting of information kiosks and strengthening PRIs. The project area initially comprised 209 Panchayats in eight Blocks of Angul district.

Eminent freedom fighter and social worker Malati Choudhury, who had lived and worked in Angul was adopted as a role model. Even today, she continues to inspire the members who strongly believe that each of them have the potential to be like her and bring about

transformation in society. Every year in August, the Manch celebrates the Malati Devi birth anniversary fortnight by organizing various activities such as meetings, social events and launching welfare schemes in the district.

As the Manch expanded, the level of confidence and sense of solidarity among members found a new height. The same women who had remained tongue-tied at village meetings were found to be discussing issues like village development and industrial pollution with government officials at ease. The sense of solidarity prompted women to find new ways of motivating family members to give them the freedom to step out of their homes and be part of the movement. Besides elected representatives, for ordinary women, the forum provided an opportunity to nurture leadership qualities and inclination towards social work.

Women, because of their compassionate nature, tend to deliver better in issues relating to social justice. Instances such as selecting beneficiaries for old age pension, collecting aid for widowed women, helping a family who lost their house to fire, or settling family disputes are better handled by women. However, it does not imply that they cannot handle the so-called larger issues of development and local governance. All they need is some awareness and skills for capacity building. For instance, until resource mapping in villages were carried out few of them were aware of it. Today, they have not only learnt to identify resources, but also find better ways of resource utilization. From their home and hearths, they have moved to the corporate sector and have shown their mettle in fighting industrial pollution that plagues the district. The fight against industries – be it displacement, pollution or mis-utilization of natural resources – is finding an echo in other districts as well.

The impact of the Manch was also felt in the adjoining districts and soon there were requests to form similar units elsewhere. Today, the Manch can take pride from the fact that it has affiliations in several districts of the State. It may not be a structured organization with networks, but the Manch has collaborated with women's organisations in Dhenkanal, Jajpur, Sambalpur, Kendrapara, Jagatsinghpur, Mayurbhanj, etc. and expansion of the Manch continues with the goal of strengthening the state level forum, namely the Rajya Mahila Manch.

A newsletter entitled Mahila Samarthyaa is published every three months and circulated among PRI representatives, social workers, development agencies and women's groups. Besides highlighting activities of the forum, the newsletter carries write-ups on varied subjects relating to women and Panchayati Raj, as also gender issues and disseminates information relating to government schemes. At public forums, the Manch has raised pertinent issues such as delinking party politics from Panchayati Raj and doing away with the discriminatory clause of two child norm for women candidates in Panchayat elections. Much before the Swatch Bharat campaign of the central government got underway, water and sanitation issues had been discussed and highlighted in the meetings. Members are encouraged to contest from unreserved seats with a view to bringing more women to the three-tier system.

Among the many feathers in its cap is the recognition accorded to some members for their outstanding work. The Angul district court has designated the convenor of the Manch – Santilata Sahoo, as para-legal social worker. This is in recognition for her achievements in solving numerous cases of marital and family disputes, dowry and violence against women. Ritarani Das,

a former Sarpanch, contested as an independent member in 2012 and currently serves as the Zilla Parishad Member, Talcher. She has always been in the forefront in matters relating to gender justice in Angul. Sasmitha Behera, Chairperson of the Rajya Mahila Manch has participated in national seminars and has been recognized for her leadership qualities. Members are regularly invited to participate in seminars and conferences across the State.

Odisha has been a pioneer in adopting initiatives for women's participation in local self governance, especially if one were to consider the fact that the 33 percent reservation quota for women in Panchayat was implemented much prior to the 73rd constitutional amendment. Similarly, during the last Panchayat elections which were conducted in 2012, the reservation quota for women was enhanced to 50 percent and as a result, today more than 50 thousand women have come into the Panchayati raj system in the state. So, it is only natural that many organisations – both government and non-government - are playing a significant role in capacity building exercises to train women PRI members to be effective community leaders.

Time has come for the women people's representatives to form their own organizations and fight their own battles. Reservations and enactments have only placed women in the designated positions of governance as evinced by our policy makers. But how do we protect them from the age-old gender bias that exists in an unequal society that considers women the weaker sex? Look around and you will find that it is definitely not an easy road for many women PRI members who have to fight indignities and hurdles at every step while discharging their duties as elected representatives. They are already at a disadvantaged situation because of lack of education and self confidence. Added to that is the dominance by male relatives, proxy rule by husbands, (often referred as sarpanch patis), intimidation by village heads and misguidance by officials are often brushed aside as part of the package. True, there are some remarkable women who have fought this bias, excelled in their work and exhibited tremendous leadership qualities at the grassroots, but their percentage is minimal. Therefore organisations such as the Angul Mahila Manch, which has proved to be a successful experiment, will strengthen women power in local self governance.

Maternity Protection : Efficacy and Impact of the Schemes in Odisha

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Introduction

Women are predominantly engaged in household works and consistently connected with outside world. It has been noticed since long years back that the works contributed by women does not make much substantial economic values even though contributing hard and long hours of work. Conventionally; it is believed that economic production mostly depends on men's work. Considering the situation in our society, It has been overlooked that women support a large part of the world economy by 'free services' in the home and the community.

Almost every society in India; large household works are done by women which includes cooking, cleaning houses, complete caring of children and outside works as well. In fact; the economic worth is ignored as they are not paid against their work. Hence; social importance of women position within the family has also been reduced. Meanwhile; in present society; the socio-economic need and basic requirements of the family have been increasing at a larger scale, thereby compelling the women to work beyond household works. Due to pressure of economic need of the family women generally engage themselves in various productive and unproductive works. Women's economic participation in the process of qualitative economic output mostly depends on their biological and

family economic background, social status and cultural flexibility. It is really not so easy for women to get such opportunities all together, resulted in gender inequality in the family, community, society as well as economic and political system at large. Meantime; women generally neglect their health condition both knowingly or unknowingly. Particularly, women living in rural areas are mostly suffering health complications during pregnancy and lactating period. Household work and child care is the primary responsibility of the women. Considering the overall scenario of women; both government and private entrepreneurs are providing multiple facilities (paid maternity leave, flexible working hours, crèche, rest shed) for women especially during pregnancy and lactating stage. However; the women who are consistently doing physical and manual work in the unorganized sectors have been facing multiple problems throughout their life. The most critical period for women is pregnancy where they need special attention in physical, cognitive and nutritional development aspects.

Maternity Protection in India

Looking at the large number of women employment in broad occupational categories, it was but natural the protective laws to safeguard their health in relation to Maternity and the children be enacted by the Central and State governments. Before the Independence women

workers used to work in all the three shifts including the night shifts. Women workers were employed underground in mines. There was no bar for Women to lift heavy weight which could affect their health. It is interesting to know that the first Maternity Benefits Act was passed in 1929 by the Bombay Government and as a result of the recommendation of the Royal Commission on Labour in INDIA (1931) the Maternity Benefit Act were passed in other states like Madras (1934), Uttar Pradesh (1938), West Bengal (1939), Assam (1944). That shows the growing awareness of the administration due to the active role of the Trade Union movement at that times which compelled the authorities to make some protective laws for women workers which went on improving in their substance in favour of women workers as the years passed.

Maternity protection is being provided through various modes in India today, for e.g, the Integrated Child Development Services scheme provides supplementary nutrition to pregnant and lactating mothers, Janani Suraksha Yojana scheme promotes institutional delivery, MAMATA scheme provides conditional cash transfer to the pregnant and lactating mothers for the purpose of improving nutritional condition and overall development of both child and mother till nine months of child. MAMATA scheme has been targeting to all the pregnant and lactating mothers irrespective of any discrimination except govt. service holders. It covers both organized and un-organized sector workers and given maternity benefits in terms of conditional cash transfer to the respective beneficiaries in four installments starting from six month pregnancy to nine months of child. The rural women of poor state like Odisha has been getting benefits from this scheme and also promoting their nutritional standard. In addition to this; with the substantial assistance of both central and state government the pregnancy and lactating mothers are getting Chhatua (mixture

of protein content ingredient foods) and egg which is largely providing protein to the rural women.

The most productive years of a woman's life are also the reproductive years. In the absence of effective maternity protection, a woman worker would have to leave her job to have the child. Poor health, additional medical expenses and loss of employment make the woman worker economically and physically vulnerable during the period of pregnancy and child birth. Loss of income may force some families to borrow from money lenders plunging them into a debt crisis. The woman worker may not take adequate rest and start working soon after childbirth with adverse effects on her health. The repeated neglect of a woman's health during pregnancy and childbirth manifests itself in high maternal mortality rates.

The Indian Government has put in place a number of measures to ensure a comprehensive approach to cover as many workers as possible both in the formal and informal economy. As a starting point, the Indian Constitution Article 42 under the Directive Principles of State Policy provides that States shall make provisions for securing just and humane conditions of work and for maternity relief. The two main Acts that govern this provision are: The Maternity Benefit Act, 1961 and the Employees State Insurance Act 1948.

The core issue is two pronged: one that of medical and nutritional inputs that are required for a pregnant and lactating woman. The other is that of wage compensation that is required for the confinement period of a pregnant and lactating woman. In a situation where women are crowded in the unorganized sector with no single employer, seasonal employment, sporadic payment, how and who does the wage compensation for wage loss due to pregnancy related confinement is a major concern.

The developing country like India, the rate of under five children has been increasing at rapid

stage as result of infectious diseases and neonatal death as well. Under nutrition is one of the important factors contributing to death of young children. However; malnourished children are associated with respiratory infections, diarrhoea, malaria, measles and other infectious diseases. To prevent from malnourished, every child must have to get adequate breast feeding at least for one year. In the context of Odisha there are 40% has been recorded as underweight¹. Considering the situation; every lactating mother should feed breast milk to their child, so that there is a chance to free from malnourished. In Odisha; rural women are mostly working in different unorganized sector for which they could not feed breast milk on time to the children as and when required. However; conditional cash benefits under maternity provision may adequately help to the mother for breast feeding and it can be considered as compensatory financial support to promote breast feeding.

Under the study of NFHS-3; it has been noticed that the children under 6 years of age, mothers were asked about utilization of ICDS services, including food supplementation, during the pregnancy and when they were lactating.

Pregnant and lactating women are eligible to receive a variety of services through the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) programme. In NFHS-3, among children under 6 years of age, mothers were asked about utilization of ICDS services, including food supplementation, during the pregnancy and when they were lactating. In fact; only 21% of women received food supplementation in the respective areas when they were pregnant and it is also reducing a little bit during lactating period.

Maternity Protection In Odisha

In sociological perspective in every society maternity protection allows women and their partners to make decisions about their babies care & protection. In reality the society should

have a role for taking care of the children's development. The environment should be created in such a way in the society, that, the women would never feel fear of any type discrimination or loss of employment.

Economically; many women want to work and even more women have to work to support themselves and their families. Work assists women to maintain their economic independence. The work of women contributes significantly to economic growth of the family in our society as well as also helps to increase GDP rate of the nation. Specifically in Odisha the work participation rate has been increasing during 2001-2011 decade. In comparison to national average, Odisha state women work participation rate is quite higher i.e 41.79% than 39.80% of national figure². In fact; the productive age group 15-59 years of women workers participation reported as 44.44 % main workers and only 14.04% are marginal workers³. However; economic contribution of women towards state GDP also plays an important role. Considering this; promotion of health and other associated areas needs proper care and attention simultaneously.

On health ground; protecting women workers during pregnancy, after birth and even as nursing period enhances women's health and that of the baby. Maternity protection supports the development of the individual health of the mother and child as well.

In view of the above as well as in the context of high MMR in one hand and the existence of various maternity protection schemes for women workers in the formal and informal sector workers on the other, there is a need to investigate to what extent these schemes are meeting the maternity needs of women workers. In this context, it is of utmost importance to understand how women in the formal sectors are availing maternity protection through the two existing Acts, how effectively they are functioning

etc. Secondly, given that around 90 per cent of the female workforce is in the informal economy⁴, there is a need to understand the extent of coverage of these workers through other government maternity benefit/ assistance programmes, their provisions and efficacy.

Maternity protection is required for every pregnant woman under certain circumstances. In Indian Constitution Article 21; says about Protection of life and personal liberty, where no person shall be deprived of his life or personal liberty except according to procedure established by law. So on this ground protection of upcoming child is required at any cost. Maternity protection allows women and their partners to make decisions about their babies and the care of these babies without fear of discrimination or the loss of employment. Many women want to work and even more women have to work to support themselves and their families. Work assists women to maintain their economic independence. The work of women contributes significantly to economic growth in all of our societies. Protection that allows women to carry out their biological role of bearing and nursing children whilst maintaining their productive roles as workers benefiting everyone in society. On health ground that protecting women workers during pregnancy, after birth and whilst nursing enhances women's health and that of the baby. Maternity protection supports the development of the individual health of the mother and child.

Maternity protection is a significant intervention that recognizes women's reproductive rights whether they are in the formal or in the informal sector or 'non-workers'. Maternity protection for women working in any sector is essential to provide. In the welfare state like India the facilities for the working women as well as others should be ensured by the government. In India, a scheme for maternity benefits has already been developed by the central government,

irrespective of any discrimination all pregnant women having institutional delivery can avail maternity benefits in terms of few cash assistance. According to the second report of the National Labour Commission, "only 0.25% of women avail maternity benefits in a situation though 94% are entitled to it." In other way it acts as key instrument in promoting equal opportunity for women.

Item	Odisha	India
Total Population (Census 2011) (In Crore)	4.19	121.01
Decadal Growth (%) (Census 2011)	13.97	17.64
Crude Birth Rate (SRS 2013)	19.6	21.4
Crude Death Rate (SRS 2013)	8.4	7
Natural Growth Rate (SRS 2013)	11.3	14.4
Infant Mortality Rate (SRS 2013)	51	40
Maternal Mortality Rate (SRS 2010-12)	235	178
Total Fertility Rate (SRS 2012)	2.1	2.4
Sex Ratio (Census 2011)	978	940
Child Sex Ratio (Census 2011)	934	914
Total Literacy Rate (%) (Census 2011)	73.45	74.04
Male Literacy Rate (%) (Census 2011)	82.40	82.14
Female Literacy Rate (%) (Census 2011)	64.36	65.46

Source: National Health Mission, Department of Health and Family Welfare, Government of Odisha

In literacy perspectives, somehow the status of women is comparatively better than national average which would have presumed to perform in the relevant areas like health, economic and social aspects. In fact, rural area scenario in terms of accessing adequate nutritional facilities during pregnancy and lactating period is not so much good where women needs to special care and attention. However; the Govt. of Odisha has launched state specific maternity protection

scheme for pregnant and lactating women having the age group of above 19 years for two first live births and it also excludes central, state and PSUs employees from such conditional cash transfer services.

Considering the present situation; maternity benefits which have been provided by the govt. is not enough for pregnant women. It should increase in some extent like in the case of leave it should not be less than 14 weeks and 6 weeks postnatal compulsory leave at least. Apart from the above facilities other benefits should be provided like cash benefits, health protection, employment protection and breaks for breastfeeding. Broadly maternity protection model in Odisha operates in three ways like; Maternity Benefit Act -1961 covers all organized sector, Employees' State Insurance Corporation (ESIC) is exclusively meant for informal sector (welfare boards- Beedi, construction etc) which follows contributory social security approach and under public safety model covers all unreached groups of above two models which clearly targeting to the rest of beneficiaries through launching of schemes such as Janani Suraksha Yojana (JSY), Integrated Child Development Schemes (ICDS) and Rastriya Swasthya Bima Yojana (RSBY). In addition to this; there are certain labour laws enacted by the state government to provide maternity benefits to the working women. In Odisha Maternity benefits under JSY has extensively provided by the govt. to every pregnant women for institutional delivery. The latest conditional maternity benefit scheme named as MAMATA has been launched in Odisha on October 2011, which is unique maternity programme across the country. Under this scheme, excluding govt. and corporate service holder, all the rest pregnant and lactating women would get sum of Rs.5000/- in four installments

through bank transfer to the concern beneficiary account only.

Provision For Women Workers

Both central and state government has separate provisions through act, rules, circulars and notifications about women workers. Out of other benefits; there are some laws like Factories Act 1948, Contract Labour Act 1971, Maternity Benefits Act 1971, Beedi & Cigar Act, 1966, ESIC Act etc and many more says about maternity benefits to the women working in organized and unorganized sectors. Here; for maternity protection the central govt. has enacted the laws, which will be implemented under the supervision of state government. Apart from that some Beedi Workers Boards have been constituted by the state govt. for the welfare of the women workers working in unorganized sector. In Odisha there are 11 boards formed by the Govt. which covers different categories of unorganized labour force.

Apart from the specific provision, there are only two women specific schemes; firstly; Janani Suraksha Yojana (JSY) generated by the central govt. to provide protection to all women for institutional delivery. Under this scheme the rural area women are entitled to get Rs.1400/- and in case of urban area only Rs.1200/- cash assistance for institutional delivery. Secondly; state specific conditional cash transfer schemes named as MAMATA promotes accessing nutritional benefits during pregnancy and lactating stage. Under this scheme only women beneficiary would get sum of Rs.5000/- in four installments through bank transfer only. The total amount will be transferred to the concern beneficiary accounts after fulfilling conditions of each stage; first installment Rs.1500/- will be released after six months of pregnancy, second installment Rs.1500/- after three months of delivery, third

installment Rs.1000/- after six months of child and fourth installment will be released during nine months of the child. Meanwhile; both child till six years of age and mother for six months of pregnancy will be covered under ICDS scheme. They are entitled to get nutritional food grains and egg as per the provisions.

Unorganized Workers and Maternity Benefits in Odisha

The term 'unorganized labour' has been defined as those workers who have not been able to organise themselves in pursuit of their common interests due to certain constraints like casual nature of employment, ignorance and illiteracy, small and scattered size of establishments. Basically in the unorganized sector the workers suffer in various cyclic problem like excessive seasonality of employment, unequal employment opportunities, no formal employer employee relationship, lack of social security protection and in effective implementation of several legislations like the Workmen's Compensation Act, 1923; the Minimum Wages Act, 1948; and the Maternity Benefit Act, 1961; the Contract Labour (Abolition and Prohibition) Act, 1970, the Building and Other Construction Workers Welfare Cess Act, 1996 etc. are directly or indirectly applicable to the workers in the unorganized sector also.

Cost Benefit Analysis of Maternity Protection Services

In the year 2001, National Maternity Benefits Scheme was introduced with the initiatives of central government to provide nutrition supports to the pregnant women. In this scheme the pregnant women belongs to BPL category are given onetime payment of Rs.500/- prior to delivery. After four years of implementation the government has launched a new scheme named as Janani Suraksha Yojana under the

National Rural Health Mission (NRHM) to provide cash assistance for women to have an institutional delivery. The fundamental reason behind it was to ensure safe delivery and protect maternal mortality rate. In the remote and inaccessible area the pregnant women are not getting such facilities due to lack of awareness. Basically, *beedi* workers are mostly belonging to poorer section, therefore the amount given under the JSY was not sufficient for them to reach to hospital because the vehicle owner's charge is not feasible to pay. In present scenario free ambulance services provided by the govt. for promoting institutional delivery brings happiness among the women beneficiaries and also helps institutional delivery. Apart from the above, there is also the provision to give Rs.1000/- to beedi workers up to two live birth in any Govt. recognized institution and these amount also provided after delivery. Hence, the workers are not getting cash assistance before delivery which is very essential to provide during this period. In overall scenario; they are accessing maternity benefits after delivery mainly from two different sources and that has not been utilized in the said purpose. Though women lose work for the period of three to four months, so the maternity benefits against loss of working days has to be provided from the Manufacture Company or welfare & Cess commission.

Conclusion

It can be inferred from the above discussion and analysis that, there is huge gap in capacity to provide maternal benefits to women workers of different section. The trend of gap between the factory growth and coverage growth indicates that factories are not enlisting all possible eligible cases for coverage and insurance. This could vitiate the letter and spirit of Maternal Benefit programmes in India in a wholesome way. There

are few recommendation based on the study are as mentioned below for further course of action in this regards to enhance its scope and better implementation of the act and scheme as well.

- Solutions of maternity schemes need to be shorted out at faster rate and also ensure to women to receive maternity benefits in time.
- Legal provisions should be applicable to all unorganized sector workers irrespective of any sector specific discrimination, like as, extension services to construction workers, household servants, hotel industry workers working on daily basis etc.
- Conditions of entitlements to receive benefits needs to be simplifier so that the benefits will go to all paid and unpaid workers.
- Maternity protection coverage should include health coverage and wage payment.
- Provisions of uniformity maternity protection laws for all unorganized sector workers in India need to be made at earliest.

However; provide maternity protection is one of the important concerns for the society as a whole. Still the women have been neglected to fulfill maternity rights all together. In this regards; extensive supports both in policy formulation and implementation part from all associated sectors like, government, corporate, private entrepreneurs and NGOs role would make vibrant environment where women can get their justice.

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Empowering Women through Tourism Development

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Introduction:

On women empowerment, Honourable President of India Mr. Pranab Mukherjee on his recent visit to Odisha cited the example of freedom fighter Maa Ramadevi's three 'Es' (Education, Emancipation and Empowerment) for development of women of the country.

The empowerment is a much debated issue in present scenario in all walks of human life. In most developing countries, gender inequality and discrimination is a major impediment for development. In order to achieve the millennium development goals in 2015 one of the most important aspects will be, to try to abolish the gap between women and men in terms of capacities, access to resources and opportunities, and vulnerability to violence and conflict. One of the aspects in which gender (inequalities) issues can play an important role is tourism development (UNWTO, 2006). Regarding the fact that many tourism studies has a crucial link between tourism, community development and women empowerment, thus UN has committed to create an important political agenda to research and work on issues in this area. That is why the UNWTO presented an Action Plan related to women empowerment through tourism in the last ITB in Berlin. The Action Plan focuses

on poverty reduction and the enhancement of women's dignity and role in the work place (UNWTO, 2006)

The empowerment is a broader dimension which entails the critical aspect of gender equality in society where men and women avail the same opportunities, outcomes, rights, and obligations in every spheres of their daily chores. In this cut throat era of globalisation, though the world is changing and making improvement rapidly, but still the concerns arose for the rural women as they are leading a life of dependency which leads the poor socio economic status disabling them for the future upliftment. One of the genuine aspects of women empowerment is the gender equality with a focus on identifying and monitoring the power and basic elementary right affording women more autonomy to manage their lives in daily basis. Empowering women is a national issue which could be sorted out by many means and ways in government level, bureaucratic level and societal level, but a new emerging concept which has long been discussed for empowerment of women is tourism. As tourism is linked to the sustainable development and realization of human rights, the best interest of women empowerment can be achieved by tourism. Tourism is one of the broader sectors where the involvement of women through community participation can fetch

many positive impacts in terms of socio economic cultural and sustainable development of the locals and enhances the control of power in particular destination or region. The active involvement of women from rural and urban areas in tourism makes them able to stand on their own feet and strengthen their economy and education.

Tourism in local, regional and international level in each and every country has come forwarded collaborately with the lives of poor and destitute women in order to enhance their economic prospect and to increase their self esteem. The govt of different countries through the tourism action plan has initiated and implemented many tourism projects to support women empowerment through skill development programme to make them employable and survivable for future generation. Not much research work has been carried on women empowerment through tourism, but there are some distinct forms of tourism like rural tourism, ethnic tourism tribal and eco tourism where women empowerment can be achieved successfully. The women empowerment ultimately restores the local tradition and culture, brings into the limelight the old and pristine handicrafts, the cuisine and also saves the forest and balances the eco system of the mother earth. For an example **Gupta & Shah's (1999)** present a case, where women in Himachal Pradesh, India took advantage of the tourism industry's reliance on beautiful stable mountainsides, to mobilize resistance against deforestation. The women's courage to innovatively earn from tourism is testimony to how tourism creates spaces for psychological and social women empowerment. This example reveals how women, if given chance, are able to make decisions, own processes but also contribute to environmental management while obtaining incomes, which in other terms represent sustainable development. **Wearing and**

Larsen (1996: 119) are positive about the potential of ecotourism to promote community development, stating that ecotourism can empower local communities by giving them a sense of pride and awareness of the importance of their natural resources and control over their own development. In many cases women have a close connection with the physical environment of their community. Maasai women, for example, have special knowledge of walking routes, craft production and useful plants, all of which can be related to the development of tourism products and services (**van der Cammen, 1997**). In such context it would seem logical that these women will get involved in managing tourism projects. **Ghodsee (2003)** argues that assisting economic sectors like tourism employing large percentage of women at comparatively high wages will help improve the relative economic well-being of women. In other cases however, in terms of formal employment, local women are often overlooked when lodges and other tourist sites are developed. **According to the UNWTO**, women make up the majority of the tourism workforce, but that they tend to be in the lowest paid, sometimes even un-paid, and lowest status jobs. In order to promote gender equality, support opportunities for women and end violence against women, it is important to empower women as a first step. The tourism industry can contribute to this effort by creating opportunities for women and spread awareness of gender issues. Having economic opportunities and education is one of the most important ways for women to empower themselves to seek a better quality of life for themselves, their families and their communities. After analyzing the academic literature on women empowerment in tourism, it is also useful to look at the more practical implications of it. During a conference in Berlin in March 2008 the United Nations World Travel Organization (**UNWTO**)

implemented an Action Plan to Empower Women through Tourism (**Travel Daily News, 2008**). The objectives of the plan are derived from the United Nations Millennium Development Goals, which aims at benefitting poor (also through tourism), protect the environment and empower women. Tourism is an important part of world's GDP (more than 10%) and creates around 8% of world's employment. Of all people employed in the tourism sector 60-70% are women (**UNWTO, 2008**). It offers many opportunities to both developed and developing countries in rural, urban, regional or cultural areas. Tourism development can be a great incentive for development and thus for the empowerment of women, which makes the plan of the WTO a reasonable motivation to empower women through this sector. Despite many international agreements that were organized to evaluate and improve the rights of women **UNFPA (United Nations Population Fund)** claims 'they are still much more likely than men to be poor, malnourished and illiterate. They usually have less access than men to medical care, property ownership, credit, training and employment. They are far less likely than men to be politically active and far more likely to be victims of domestic violence' (**UNFPA, 2008**). The empowerment of women could therefore significantly contribute to reaching gender equality. The UN defines empowerment as a critical aspect of gender equality, and defines both concepts as following (**UNFPA, 2008**): 'Gender equality implies a society in which women and men enjoy the same opportunities, outcomes, rights and obligations in all spheres of life. Equality between men and women exists when both sexes are able to share equally in the distribution of power and influence; have equal opportunities for financial independence through work or through setting up businesses; enjoy equal access to education and

the opportunity to develop personal ambitions. A critical aspect of promoting gender equality is the empowerment of women, with a focus on identifying and redressing power imbalances and giving women more autonomy to manage their own lives. Women's empowerment is vital to sustainable development and the realization of human rights for all. Tourism is seen as one of many tools that can contribute to the achievement of the women empowerment. The strength of tourism is that it can help to improve livelihoods by alleviating poverty, ensure or improve environmental sustainability, and promote gender equality and empower women. Though the world has developed drastically but still woman has not yet levelled their shoulder with male counterpart in terms of legal, social and economical rights. This gender gap influences control of resources, political voice, in economic opportunities, and power relations. Ultimately, the cost of these inequalities creates many social obligations.

Increasing power and control over natural resources:

Women from the very old age are usually in charge of keeping water, food and fuel and overseeing the household chores and family health and nutrition. For this reason, they tend to put in practice whatever they have learned about preserving the environment and natural resources. Tourism development could be a tool to introduce environmental conscious practices within livelihoods by stressing the importance of conservation and sustainable practices within the environment, so that it can function as any kind of tourism supply and thus as a new income generator. Further, by learning and improving techniques of crop planting and other types of production, women can become suppliers within the value chain production for the tourism market.

Economic empowerment:

More women than men live in poverty (UNFPA, 2008). After toiling hard the woman gets lower priority and sometimes remain unpaid. So those women face the discrimination in the economic sphere every day, and sometimes struggle for some economic independence. The tourism initiates to narrow down the gap between men and women in the economic sphere, for instance through empowerment by micro-credit programmes, woman Self Help Group(SHG) could greatly contribute to improving gender equality. Tourism can function as an instrument for economic empowerment by opening up new markets for small and medium enterprises by proper skill development programme.

Educational empowerment:

About two thirds of the illiterate adults in the world are females (UN, 2008). The level of education is unreachable to the women in different regions which cause the infant mortality and malnourishment. Also the lack of education hinders the growth and development for their offspring. Tourism can be used as a sector where women from all hierarchies in society, with all types of educational background, can be trained and educated for certain skills within the tourism industry. Women can be engaged in different forms of creative entrepreneurship which gives women a whole range of skills like speaking different languages, hospitality skills, guiding tourists, managing project and so on for employment opportunities.

Political empowerment:

Still there is a wide gap between men and women in many social and legal institutions, where the voices raised by the women are neglected. This badly influences the quality and

implementation of their basic human rights, the access and control over land, in employment and earnings, and in participation in decision making processes in general. But tourism affords a wide spectrum of opportunities by including women in the planning and organizational process, with the aim of giving them a voice in the process.

Conclusion

Tourism industry is one of the important sources for empowering women. In India, tourism industry is contributing much in the women's empowerment. Women in most hi-tech and underdeveloped states, both skilled and unskilled, are actively involved in the tourism sector and its decision making. The economic empowerment of women through tourism can be well judged by the percentage share of women workforce in tourism sectors of India. The total percentage share of women employees in tourism sector is 34, which is higher than the total percentage of women workforce than any other sector. Apart from direct employment through tourism, women are also indirectly engaged in tourism related activities like hotels, restaurants, cafeterias, small and medium enterprises (SMEs), various household businesses, tea stalls, travels, handlooms and handicrafts etc. They are employed and have occupied a noticeable position in different regions of country.

India is gifted with natural beauty and resources, therefore, there is a further potential in the tourism industry. With the increasing inflows of more tourists the employment opportunity will also increase. Hence, there are more possibilities for empowerment of women and that too at a very low investment in tourism industry. Tourism is a service oriented, labor intensive and multi-dimensional sector which is linked with many other sectors of the economy like transportation, hotels,

restaurants, travels and tour businesses, seasonal home, etc. and provide a larger opportunity for employment. Therefore, there is wide scope for women's empowerment in both formal and informal sectors of tourism industry.

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Brain Storming Deliberations of Biju Patnaik

(I)

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

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

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

emergence of imbalances in various spheres. It has also led to a slowing down of employment opportunities, sickness in industry with consequential loss of jobs as well as increasing disparities among various sections of the people and regions of the country. Widespread dissatisfaction among the people has resulted in a change of the Government through the democratic process. It is, therefore, in the fitness of things that the Approach Paper for the Eighth Plan has identified generation of employment alongwith integrated Rural Development with active involvement of the rural people and Panchayat Raj institutions and Voluntary Organisations as the prime thrust areas. We welcome this change.



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Thank you.

Sources : *Orissa Review*, August, 1990.

(II)

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

Mr. Home Minister and Friends,

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

(King Lear, Act 4. Scene 6).

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

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

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

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

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

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

Sources : *Orissa Review*, October, 1992.

(III)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Sources : *Orissa Review*, December, 1992.

(IV)

Orissa of My Dreams :

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

(V)

Soft State, Hard Decisions

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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Need of Creative Environment for Development of Tribal Children

Dr. Purbasha Kar

Abstract

In this paper, the author discusses the importance of creativity, encouraging creative activity in tribal children through better education and providing facilities in schools for stimulating and enrichment of creative talents. Healthy pupil-teacher relationship and rich and creative-educational programmes, curricular methods of teaching, promotions and rewards should be remodeled according to the needs of the tribal children.

Introduction:

Creativity has become a hot topic in educational Psychology. From President Barack Obama to Amazon's Jeff Bezos to Newsweek magazine, business leaders, major media outlets, government officials and education policy makers are increasingly advocating including student creativity in the curriculum. The Kothari Education Commission, (1964-66) laid stress on creative activities in the school curriculum. Creative development is a vital component of the whole child and the holistic model for early childhood education. More importantly, there has been a strong connection linked between creativity, happiness and one's emotional health and well-being. So the curriculum should enable pupils to think creatively and critically, to solve problems and to make a difference for the better. It should give them the opportunity to become creative, innovative, enterprising and capable of leadership

to equip them for their future lives as workers and citizens.

To foster the development of the whole child, in all developmental domains, creative skills are fundamental to successful learning and future academic success. Creative talents is nothing but the divergent thinking process of the children that is the presence of some creative components like fluency, flexibility, originality, inquisitiveness, seeing problems, persistency in thought. Being creative enables children to make connections between one area of learning and another and so extends their understanding. This area includes art, music, dance, role-play and imaginative play. Torrance, (1962) regards that, "the future of our civilization depends upon the quality of the creative imagination of our next generation. Perhaps our need is not so much for more Scientists and Engineers, but for creative Scientists and creative Engineers."

Creativity of tribal children:

Creativity of the tribal constitutes a significant dimension in the educational scheme today. It is a common notion that tribal children are inferior in creative performance as compared to the normal counterparts. It is true that we cannot turn each tribal child into a creative person, but it is also true that each tribal child during the period of his growth and development can be trained to think in a creative manner. A creative environment of a school is successful when,

- A tribal child speaks and understands mother tongue, since the child sees his world in his language.
- Experience of the child is reflected in the learning and teaching.
- Learning is interesting and meaningful.
- Tribal children have the freedom to speak and interact without fear and hesitation.
- Space for children's creativity through learning activities. So help the tribal children turn their unformed ideas into reality by giving encouragement and suggestions and by asking helpful questions.

Creativity is an important aspect of the human personality. According to Baquen Mehdi, (1977): An important thing about creativity which as educators we would be interested in, is that creative thinking abilities can be developed to varying degrees among different individuals through a systematically organized programme of instruction. Early identification and environmental stimulation should be properly undertaken by teachers, researchers for tribal students' development in creativity. Factors like negative parental attitude to education, less parents support

in school work, low levels of motivation, poor family income and poor self-concept of children, deprivation characteristics of home and neighbourhood are mainly responsible for poor performance of tribal children in their various creative fields.

Maslow, (1962) points out that we tend to think of creativity in terms of products, and that we also judge creativity (as we do achievement) in terms of stereotypes. Stereotyped teaching in the classroom makes the tribal children bored. Asking them to memorise theories, facts and illustrations, kills the interest in the tribal children. Most of the tribal schools are single teacher schools and the pupil-teacher ratio is very high. Since tribal children go out to collect food, fuel or supplement family income, they do not attend school during school hours. Schools lack a systematized and suitable curriculum, which can be relevant to their life style. The curriculum followed in non-tribal areas is also followed here. Due to poverty and ignorance parents also have little faith in education. Our teachers lack proper training to influence the tribals and by temperament they are not competent enough to deal with the tribal children. Hence the responsibility falls on the shoulders of educationists, teachers, planners, administrators and parents.

The aims of education, curriculum, methods of teaching, promotions and rewards should be remoulded according to the needs of tribal children. Suitable remedial programmes have to be designed that would encourage the development of creativity among tribal children. Schools must be marked by the values of equality, social justice and respect for diversity as well as of the dignity and rights of children. A creative environment is one where tribal children clarify their doubts and ask questions. If instead of ignoring children's comments or sealing their

tongues with strict rules of silence and restrictions on the language to be used, teachers encourage tribal children to talk, they would find that the classroom is more lively place and that teaching is not predictable and boring but rather an adventure of interacting mind. Such an environment will facilitate the divergent thinking, self-confidence and self-esteem of learners of all ages. Yet not enough attention is paid to the importance of creative environment for learning. Often classroom are overcrowded, with no alternative space to learn, nor are they attractive, inviting or sensitive towards children's needs.

When children are asked about the kind of spaces they like, very often they want to be in a place that is colourful, friendly and peaceful with lots of open space offering with small hooks and corners, animals, plants, flowers, trees and toys. In order to attract and retain children, the creative environment must have all these elements in and around them. Tribal children are given more opportunities to participate in the classroom situation.

The creative teacher's focus must be on learner by developing problem solving approach to curriculum, promoting and valuing creative thinking and diversity of opinion, mixing a blend of high support and high expectations that students can solve their own problems. Teachers should create favourable environments, select suitable strategies and propose appropriate content and assessment. Classroom interactions allow teachers to find out pupils' needs and to organize appropriate instructional activities accordingly.

As a teacher in tribal areas he should know

- Does the state curriculum and text book responsive to the educational needs of tribal children?

- Is his classroom suitable to meet the need of tribal children effective and responsive?
- Why the tribal children are non-responsive in spite of his efforts.

The teacher should believe in the creative ability of all tribal students; encourage empathy in student; value creative expression in learners, teach in ways that facilitate it, adopt the curriculum to meet student's individual needs.

Promoting Creativity by Teachers:

- The teachers should plan the creative objectives for the curriculum. They should look for the opportunities to promote creativity in his existing scheme of work and lesson plans.
- Also they should plan for a range of teaching and learning styles so that as many pupils as possible have the opportunities to show their creativity.
- Role-play can increase pupil's imaginative engagement and give them freedom to explore ideas. Hands-on experimentation, problem solving, discussion, and collaborative work will all provide excellent opportunities for creative thinking and behaviour.
- Creating opportunities where pupils are encouraged to actively do the work and question what is going on.
- Actively encouraging tribal pupil to question, make connections, envisaging what might be possible and exploring ideas.
- Joining in with activities and modeling creative thinking and behaviour.
- Making effective use of encouragement, praise and positive language.

- Meet the basic needs of the children. Inside the classroom the teacher creates an atmosphere where children are safe, feel emotionally secure and have sense of belonging.
- Structure the environment and activities based on the children's cognitive development varying complexity and level of choices etc. help children learn what they can manage. Teachers give children many opportunities to work with concrete objects and encourage them to interact with others and learn about other perspectives.
- Establishment a community where learning takes place enough positive relationships. Children are taught the skills they need for making friends, solving problems and sharing.
- Integrate outdoor games as well as board and card games, thus allowing children to make up their own rules.
- Teachers should adopt modern teaching strategies and methods and use them in and outside the classroom.
- Modern media and materials should be utilized by teachers in teaching various subjects creatively.
- Projects like observance of School day, National festivals, Talent day etc. may be undertaken.
- In various subjects, teachers should provide adequate scope for open-end questioning, free activities, dramatization, quizzes and enrichment programmes.
- The creative environment should be democratic, free from all sorts of authoritarianism and teacher's domination.
- Research studies show that creativity can be identified and nourished in the child through our curricular programmes.
- The curriculum should be flexible, the instructional materials should be of great variety and enrichment, the method of teaching should be scientific, dynamic, school organization and administration should be democratic. Different co-curricular programmes like debates, writing, art and painting competitions, scientific and recreational hobbies, magazines and dramas, cultural activities, excursion and field trips should be taken up. For teaching, the heuristic approach, problem-solving and project method and scientific enquiry techniques should be adopted keeping in view the individual differences in specific creative talents.

Conclusion:

A special care and personalised support system is therefore, imperative to nourish the creative potential of tribal children. Creativity can be fostered and developed and published through a range of recommendation for action. A host of well-known educational thinkers and practitioners such as Froebal, Motessori, Steiner, Dewey, Piaget and Bouner have strongly emphasized the importance of creativity in education over the past hundred years. A teacher's role is an ongoing cycle of guiding student learning and assessing student progress. Teachers learn the most effective method for utilizing various interest areas and the schedule as well as using a variety of strategies to motivate students' learning and increase students' skills, understanding and knowledge. To develop real creativity, students need the freedom to pursue question that concern them. 'Creativity Killers' are in flexible time tables,

intense competition and compartmentalized subject teaching and imposed curriculum assessment practices.

The entire atmosphere of the school should be conducive to free, original and creative activities without any kind of inhibitions and restrictions. Teachers, in fact, should act as a creative classroom manager, a creative mentor, a creative administrator and a creative disciplinary master. Teachers have to abandon the uni-directional (hierarchical) role, as a transmitter of knowledge. They have to adopt a multifaceted framework that allows them to adopt more than one role.

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Surendra Nath Dwibedy : A True Socialist of Odisha

Jugal Kishore Hota

Surendra Nath Dwibedy was not only an individual but also an institution himself. He was a veteran socialist, a true democrat, a dedicated freedom fighter and also a prolific writer. He was a rare personality who sacrificed his study career to join the national struggle only at the teen age of 17. He became a swaraj sainik and instead of going to school went to Satyagraha Ashram of Gopabandhu Choudhury.

Born on 11th February 1913¹ at Khandasahi village of undivided Cuttack district, he started his schooling in his native village. Then he proceeded to Asureswar M.E. School with the help of his maternal uncle. Every day he went to school with one paisa for snacks. One day happened an interesting incident. The paisa which he was given by his mother was counterfeit. So Dwibedy had to cheat the snack seller with that counterfeit coin and brought “mudhi”² to eat and boasted for his cheating and described the whole story before his mother. His mother heard everything and gave him a strong slap. The next day she gave an extra paisa to Dwibedy and advised him not to repeat such type of cheating in future. This small incident had an indelible influence on the future life of Surendra Nath Dwibedy³. In the course of his long political career, he faced difficult political problems; still

nobody could accuse him of cheating anybody or even indirectly making compromise.

Two days politics does not allow a straight and frank talk, for that Surendra Nath Dwibedy had faced lots of problems and embarrassment. When he discussed a problem with anybody he did not try to disguise his feelings or present the problem indirectly. That is why many people regarded him as an angry man, and sometimes he was misunderstood for that. Now a day’s political life has become shady. Politicians regard themselves successful if they are able to make money by dishonest ways and spread their influence. But the lesson he had got from his mother had been a lifelong asset for him.

It had taught him to lead a clean and careful life. Mahatma Gandhi had told everyone to write diary everyday and maintain daily accounts. The public fund must be accounted for to the last paisa. It is a crime to spend public fund for personal expenses or other purposes⁴. These ideas had saved Dwibedy from temptation and helped him to maintain a life of self-control.

After passing M.E. examination from Asureswar he was admitted to Ravenshaw Collegiate School. While he was reading in class 10th the Salt Satyagraha was launched by Gandhiji in 1930 and there was a great excitement

everywhere. Surendra Nath Dwibedy with his friends started protest demonstration at Cuttack. He started picketing at the school gate which was taken seriously by Sachi Ray the then headmaster of Ravenshaw Collegiate School. He rusticated ten numbers of students and Dwibedy was given warning. But this warning had little impact on him, who was determined to join the freedom struggle. He himself gave up his study and became a freedom fighter. He was first arrested in November 1930 while protesting the arrest of Jawaharlal Nehru. After five months he was released from jail but in spite of his uncle's pressure he did not go to school again but assured his uncle Akuli Mishra and father Maguni Dwibedy to study in jail. Accordingly he studied history, political science, economics and sociology in jail custody. He studied about revolutions of various countries because he had a special interest in socialism. He tried to know and understand the causes of poverty and caste-system.

CAREER AS A SOCIALIST

S.N. Dwibedy was a dedicated worker of the Socialist Party. He joined the freedom struggle being inspired by the clarion call of Mahatma Gandhi. During his imprisonment period from 1930-33 he got an opportunity to read the novel 'Mother' of Maxim Gorky. This book brought a radical change in the life and career of S.N. Dwibedy. He became a staunch supporter of socialism and said "Mother was an invaluable asset for me"⁵. Lenin an eminent revolutionary has written that Gorky's Mother "is a book of the utmost importance, many workers who have joined the revolutionary movement, without properly understanding why will begin to comprehend after reading "Mother".

In India the socialist movement emerged out of the freedom struggle. While S.N. Dwibedy was in Nasik central prison he got an opportunity

to meet Jyaprakash Narayan, who believed that the Indian freedom struggle can be strengthened with the idea and ideologies of socialism⁶. The *mantra* of Mahatma for selfless service and dedication was in the heart of S.N. Dwibedy so he gladly suffered imprisonment and torture of the British administration. Gandhiji had come to Odisha in 1934 on his *padayatra* for the upliftment of "Harijans". During that time S.N. Dwibedy had got an opportunity to work with him. Though he was interested to put some question to Gandhiji for clarification of doubts in regard to socialism and freedom struggle he could not be successful. The doubts were in his mind. But in the meantime Jawaharlal Nehru wrote three articles in which the doubt of S.N. Dwibedy was clarified to some extent. Dwibedy was always interested to read more books on socialism. While in jail he could read the banned books of Karl Marx and Lenin. Though during that time reading books concerning the Russian Revolution were considered as an anti-British activity yet Dwibedy had little care for it.

In Odisha S.N. Dwibedy accepted N.K. Choudhury as his leader. He tried his best to inject the socialistic ideas into the freedom struggle. He organised the exploited classes like the peasants, workers and down-trodden masses to fight against exploitation. N.K. Choudhury called a meeting in his farmhouse at Cuttack in 1933. This meeting was attended by Malati Choudhury, Gaur Chandra Das, Gaurang Charan Dash, Sudhir Chandra Ghosh, DR. Nripen Sen, Manmahan Choudhary and Surendra Nath Dwibedy. In this meeting a historic socialist organisation namely "UTKAL CONGRESS SAMYAVADI KARMISANGHA" was formed. This was the first socialist organisation in Odisha prior to the formation of the Congress Socialist Party in all India level (1934)⁸. The Socialists declared themselves as samyavadi and decried

religion and God. Following Karl Marx they declared “religion was the opium of the people” and took oath to fight against casteism and untouchability. They realized that in order to launch a socialist movement they have to identify themselves with the poor people of Odisha. This must be reflected in their own life style. In this context the members of the Karmi Sangha proclaimed that they would not own any private property. Under the leadership of Dwibedy they took a secret vow neither to accumulate property nor to depend on anybody’s mercy or donations⁹. This was indeed a hard pledge, but they adopted it as they were dedicated to work for a social revolution.

N.K. Choudhury donated his farm house to the ‘Karmi Sangha’. Malati Devi donated all her ornaments to the Sangha for its use¹⁰. N.K. Choudhury edited a magazine called “Sarathi” which was published on 1st May 1933. This magazine cherished a noble ambition for achieving a long term goal as it believed that the age of cultivators and daily labourers was approaching very near.¹¹ In the words of Gobinda Chandra Mohanty a prominent leader of Communist Party “Sarathi was published because it would run a new chariot not of the Congress but of Socialism and Socialistic ideology”. Dwibedy with other Socialists marched on the streets of Cuttack shouting slogans workers of the world unite to observe the May Day on 1st May 1933.

To avoid confusion among the people the Socialists decided to write Samajvadi Karmi Sangha instead of Samyavadi Karmi Sangha in Odia which was written in English as Socialist Workers League. In spite of severe opposition by conservative congress leaders like Dr. Harekrushna Mahatab and Biswanath Das the socialist movement gradually spread in Odisha.

A provincial conference was convened at Cuttack in 1934 and the office bearers were elected. N.K Choudhury took the leadership as the General Secretary and Malati Devi as the treasurer. S.N. Dwibedy with others became the members of the executive body. In 1940 Jayaprakash Narayan came to Odisha on a three day tour and during that time S.N. Dwibedy was given the entire responsibility to strengthen the Socialist Party in Odisha.

S.N. Dwibedy tried his best to expand the socialist movement in Odisha by various means. A magazine namely “Krushaka” was published to spread the aims and objectives of the movement. In the meantime Prajamandal movement started in different parts of Odisha. The poor and downtrodden masses were inspired by the inspiring writings of S.N. Dwibedy. He wrote fearlessly against the oppression of the so called zamindars and the Garjat rulers of Odisha. When the Prajamandal Movement in Denkanal and Talcher was in full-swing the hypocrisy made by Dr. H.K. Mahatab was intolerable for a socialist like S.N. Dwibedy. As the then Prime Minister of Odisha Mahatab tried his best to suppress the socialist movement in Odisha. He set up a parallel organisation called Rashtriya Sevak Samiti to counter S.N. Dwibedy. In protest Dwibedy resigned from the post of Secretary of the Pradesh Congress Committee and requested Jayaprakash not to accept any post by any socialist in the Congress organisation. The proposal of Dwibedy was passed unanimously in the Bombay conference of the Socialist Party in 1946.

Then the Odisha Branch of the Socialist Party was formally set up on 28th October 1946. Dwibedy became the General Secretary of the party, Rabindra Mohan Das the Acting General Secretary. Only 25 persons joined the Party as members. Dwibedy singlehandedly tried his best

to propagate the socialist ideas. In 1947 he went to Kanpur to attend the annual conference of the party. Under the chairmanship of Rammanohar Lohia a resolution was passed to form the socialist party independently cutting all sort of relationship with the Congress. The Socialists also decided not to join the Constituent Assembly which was a blunder of the part of the Socialists. The exit of the Socialists from the Congress ushered a new era in Odisha in particular and India in general. Dwibedy made an extensive tour to nook and corner of Odisha to unite the farmers, workers, artists and youth masses. He vehemently criticised the then Congress Government by writing an article entitled "Is this independence? in his magazine '*krushaka*', saying that the joy and enthusiasm of the people were faded away just after one year of the independence". The oppression of the feudal lords had increased in the villages and in the cities the millionaires continued to exploit the blood of the poor.

In 1949 Dwibedy requested Jayaprakesh to fix a programme in Odisha. Accordingly Jayprakash's tour was finalised during October and November of 1949. His extensive tour for long 15 days created more enthusiasm among the youth masses of Odisha. The tour of Jayprakash had a deep impact on the social revolution of our state. The party gained more support from the poor and neglected sections of the society. S.N. Dwibedy strongly

opposed the Congress inside and outside the legislature. In 1952 the Odisha unit of the Party contested Assembly and Lok Sabha Elections for the first time only to spread the message of socialism. Out of 89 seats the party contested they could only win 10 seats and out of 5 Lok Sabha seats only one seat which was won by Sarangdhar Das. S.N. Dwibedy was defeated from Salepur-Tangi assembly segment but later won the Rajyasabha election from Odisha in 1952. He also won the Kendrapara Lok Sabha segment for three consecutive terms i.e 1957, 1962 and 1967. In the conclusion it can be said that S.N. Dwibedy was not only a veteran socialist but also a great statesman and a true friend of the poor. From his childhood he had to fight against poverty and hunger what he himself experienced. The book '*Mother*' of Maxim Gorky really made him a socialist and he dedicated his entire life for the upliftment of the poor and downtrodden masses. For his dedication, self sacrifice, determination and truthfulness he will be remembered by the people of Odisha as a leader of the masses for all time to come.

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Nrusimhanath : A Heritage Site

Sujata Behera

Nrusimhanath, a place of religious importance is situated at the foot of Gandhamardan hill of western Odisha. It is enumerated as “*Dham*” meaning, a religious centre of prominence and significance. The place is attracting pilgrims on a religious tour, nature’s lovers on an eco and nature tour, adventurous people for climbing on hill, research scholars for study and alike. The rare medicinal plants available on the hill are also another attraction. The main temple at Nrusimhanath standing amidst the verdant beauty of the hill has a place of its own, because of its art, architecture and sculptures, which attract historians and research scholars from India and abroad. Historians like- Beglar, Charls Fabri, Dr.G..R. Bhandarkar, Dr. N.K. Sahu etc. have spent lots of time in doing deep research here. If hidden potentials of this place is brought to the light, in proper forum and kept in proper perspective, may be one day it would deserve to secure a place in the tourist map of India as well in the world map.

Location: Nrusimhanath is situated at the foot of Gandhamardan hill on its northern flank, in the

part covering district of Bargarh, under Padampur sub-division forming a part of Paikmal Block. It is situated about 32 kms south-west of Padampur, and 3 kms from Paikmal. The district headquarters is about 110 km away from Nrusimhanath temple.



How to arrive: It is convenient for tourists to arrive at Bargarh which is well connected with national highway and state road and even with railway track from which Nrusimhanath is approachable. Padampur and Paikmal are frequented with regular bus services connecting Bargarh. So, one can reach Nrusimhanath temple complex by buses, taxis, auto rickshaws etc.

Nrusimhanath Temple: The present temple of Nrusimhanath with a height of 40 feet faces the east. The main temple consists of a *vimana* and a *jagamohana*. The *vimana* has the components like *bada*, *gandi*, and *mastaka*, of which the *panchanga bada* contains *pabhaga*, *talajangha*, *bandhana*, *uparajangha* and *baranda*. The five mouldings of the *pabhaga* area

are *khura*, *kumbha*, *pata*, *kani* and *basanta*. The *bandhana* has three mouldings whereas the *baranda* is provided with seven mouldings. The *vimana* is representing the *pancharatha* plan and having a square shape. The *raha paga* of the *tala jangha* section contains niches where in the *parsvadevatas* (Varaha in the south, Trivikrama in the north and Nrusimha in the west) are housed. There is an image of Laxmi Narayana in a temporary niche. A number of other sculptures are carved on the rock. The *paga* recesses are filled with the *virals* and *alaskanyas*. A number of *pidhamundis* can be seen in the upper *jangha*. The *gandi* is also decorated with *angasikharas* and the *rahas* are having miniature spires. But the east *raha* is adorned with a large *sikhara*. The *kanika pagas* are divided horizontally into a number of *bhumis* marked by *bhumi amalakas*. The *vajramastaka* or bho-type motifs surmounted by *gajasimha* are placed on the lower *raha* of other sides. The *mastaka* of the *vimana* contains all the usual elements like *vedika* (*bisama*), *beki*, *amalaka*, *sila*, *khapuri*, *kalasa*, *ayudha* and *dhvaja*.

Modifications can be clearly seen in the *mukhasala* or *jagamohana* of the temple except the four pillars in the centre and a number of pilasters on the inner side walls.¹ The pillars within the *jagamohana* can be ascribed to the 9th century while the terrazzo-work around the base of the pillars and the tiled floor are modern.² Originally it was a square structure having four entrances, three on three sides i.e. east, north and south. The fourth one is on the west connecting the sanctum. Now there is a recess on the southern doorway which is probably closed or on the southern wall where wooden images of Lord Jagannath, Lord Balabhadra and Goddess Subhadra are placed. Main attraction of the *jagamohana* is the style of the pillars and the beautiful door-frames. In addition to the four

interior pillars carved in the style of the Panduvamsis and datable to the 9th century, there are two door frames incorporated into the *jagamohana* which are stylistically related to the doorframes of Khiching and datable to the late 10th century A.D.³ The pillars are square in cross section and identical in appearance. The pillars are heavily decorated with different motives.

The doorframe on the north side consists of three bands of scroll work. Gaja-Laxmi appears on the lintel with Laxmi seated in *lalitasana*. The *dvarapalas* Mahakala and Nandi appear at the base of the jambs housed in a plain niche and are accompanied by the river Goddesses Ganga and Yamuna mounted on their respective vehicles i.e. crocodile and tortoise. The four-armed *dvarapalas* are flanked by diminutive *ganas* in the lower corners of the niche. The doorframe on the east side is similar in design though *dvarapalas* are treated differently and they are accompanied by female *chauri* bearer. There is a figure of Abhiseka Laxmi seated in *lalitasana* is on the north door. A *navagraha* slab is placed on the Gaja Laxmi panel. Besides these, an independent standing figure with moustache is found in *namaskara mudra*. It appears to be a royal figure, which is identified with the builder king Vajjala Deva by N. K. Sahu.⁴ According to Dr. P.K. Nayak, the Chauhan king Vajjala Deva, probably catering to the spiritual and religious sentiment of the populace, built the main temple and completely renovated the present *mukhasala*. There is a life size image of Lord Nrusimha made out of red stone still survives the indifferent care and callous attitude of the temple servants and administration. This rare image has a face of roaring lion, a human body and human legs with high boots, a characteristic feature of Sun God. That is why Prof. K. K. Dasgupta takes it as a composite image of Surya Narasimha.⁵ It can be

believed that this image might be the presiding deity of the old temple.

The image of the presiding deity Vidala-Nrusimha is unique from its iconographical point of view. The image is made of black stone and its face is like a cat and the body portion is like a lion. The image is the only one of its kind not only in Odisha or India but in the whole world. It is one of the forms of Lord Vishnu. The image is placed inside the sanctum and is thickly swathed in clothes and has brass nose, eyes and mouth.

The present temple in architectural features and design is nearer to the style of the temples of Bhubaneswar and coastal area belonging to the late Ganga or Early Suryavamsi Gajapati period.⁶ During the digging of the plinth of the boundary wall of Nrusimhanath temple, in 1983, some sculptures were discovered from underneath.⁷ These sculptures as well as the antiquities of the four pillars now fitted to the *jagamohana* make us believe that from the time of queen Vasata, mother of the great Panduvamsi king Mahasivagupta Balarjuna of Sirpur. Queen Vasata, who was a devout worshipper of Lord Purusottama Nrusimha, might have built the first temple at Nrusimhanath in the 8th century.⁸

On the basis of the inscription attached to the *mukhasala*, the date of the Nrusimhanath temple can be ascribed to 15th century. But the architectural fragments of the temple suggest it to be as earlier as 10th century A.D. It is believed by historians that very likely there was an old temple which was completely destroyed. But the place did not lose its religious importance for which king Vaijala Deva, probably built the temple again.

The Temple Inscription: There is an inscription in proto-Odia script and in Odia language on a slab of black stone in the temple. The date of this

inscription is 17th March 1413.⁹ The inscription is assigned to Vaijala Deva, the Chauhan Raja of Patna.

Legends: A good number of interesting legends prevail among the people which are related to the construction of the temple, the Vidala-Nrusimha incarnation of Lord Vishnu as well as related to some spots on the hill of Gandhamardan. The famous one is related to Lord Vishnu and his Marjara-Keshari form which is described in the “Nrusimha Mahatmya”. A sage named Udanga was residing with his daughter Malati on the banks of the Godavari. Ravan, the demon king, once came there and strongly attracted with Malati’s beauty. He ravished her, and there upon the sage cursed her and left the place. She became sad and was thrown in this condition into the river by Ravan. But Godavari protected her. Then she began to search her father which was fruitless and she started weeping. Her weeping sound was heard by Musika (mouse), the vehicle of Ganapati, who came to help her to reach her father on condition of enjoying intercourse with her. Then from Ravan and Musika, Malati gave birth to Musikadaitya who ate her mother soon after his birth. He then pleased Lord Siva by worship and got the boon, that no one can harm him other than Lord Nrusimha. The demon then started troubling the Gods who prayed to Lord Ram for help. Lord Ram then took the form of Nrusimha to kill the demon. The demon fled in fear and was pursued by Nrusimha. The demon then took refuge near mountain Gandhagiri (modern Gandhamardan). In the form of a mouse the demon entered into a hole of the hill and hence Nrusimha in the form of a cat followed him. But Gandhagiri requested Nrusimha to establish Himself there in that feline form and wait for Musikadaitya. There after Lord Nrusimha installed Himself at the foot of the mountain, keeping eye on Musikadaitya to come out from the hole of

the hill, so that He can kill the demon. People believe that the Musikadaitya is inside the mountain hole and Lord Vidala-Nrusimha is still waiting for the demon to kill whenever he will come out.

Another legend is about the discovery of the image of the Lord by the Kondh couple named Hari and Yamuna. Yamuna was digging the earth on the hill in search of some root which was her daily work. At the meantime her spade struck on a stone and it started bleeding. Out of fear she immediately returned to home. The next night she saw Lord Marjara-Keshari in her dream who ordered her to bring him from the place where the stone started bleeding and to worship, which was ultimately done by Yamuna and Hari. Vaijala Deva the Chauhan Raja of Patna also knew the happening in his dream and met Kondh couple which was followed by the construction of a temple at the same place of the hill and installed the Lord there. Hari and Yamuna were the first priests to be appointed by Vaijala Deva to worship the God. *Baisakha Chaturdasi* is celebrated as the birthday of Lord Vidala-Nrusimha as Yamuna had found the image on that day. To the south of main temple there is a small temple in which Yamuna is being worshipped by the devotees. Though the worship of Nrusimhanath temple was shifted from Kondh priests to Brahmins in the course of time, still today the predecessors of Hari and Yamuna are being honoured by the people and they have the special right to fix the *dhvaja* of the main temple on the occasion of *Baisakha Chaturdasi*.

According to another legend people believe the mountain as a part of mountain Himalaya and dedicate to the time of epic *Ramayan*. It was Hanuman who was ordered to bring a special herb from Himalaya which was to be used to cure Laxman, who was injured severely by Indrajit in the war between Ram and Ravan. But being unable to identify the herb

Hanuman brought the whole of the Himalaya on his palm to Lanka. It is believed that on the way to Lanka a portion of the mountain Himalaya slipped and formed the mountain of 'Gandhamardan'. The belief is strengthened by the existence of rare medicinal plants and herbs available on the hill counting more than 5000 varieties that are found in the Himalayan range.

According to the local belief Pandavs along with Draupadi were residing in this hill during their exile. One among the place of the hill that has some images on the rock is known as Panchu Pandav Ghat. But as per historians the images are of Siva, Parvati, Garuda, Brahma, Saivacharya, Ganesa etc. Many other spots are there which are linked to *Mahabharata* by legendary accounts.

Fair and Festivals of Nrusimhanath Temple:

Nrusimhanath Dham is a meeting place of various religious cults like- *Vaishnava, Saiva, Sakta, Ganapata, Buddhism* etc. So a good deal of fair and festivals are celebrated in the temple compound as well as in the Gandhamardan hill area round the year. Devotees and tourists from far and near pay visit to this place throughout the year. The festivals are Nrusimha Birthday or *Nrusimha Chaturdasi* and *Akshaya Tritiya* in the month of *Baisakha*; *Visuva Sankranti, Savitri Amavasya* and *Devsnan Purnima* in the month of *Jyestha*; *Netrotsav, Ratha Yatra* and *Bahuda Yatra* in the month of *Asadha*; *Raksha Purnima (Raksha Bandhan)* in the month of *Sravan*; *Janmastami, Saptapuri Amavasya* and *Nuakhai or Navanna Bhakshan* in the month of *Bhadrav*; *Durga Astami* and *Kumar Purnima* in the month of *Aswin (Dussehra)*; *Dipavali, Jagadhatri Puja* and *Kartik or Ras Purnima* in the month of *Kartik*; *Laxmi Puja* in the month of *Margasira*; *Makara Samkranti* and *Pusyabhisheka* in the month of *Pausa*; *Papharan Snan* in the month of *Magha*;

Mahashivratri and Dola Yatra or Holi in the month of *Phalguna*; *Sri Ram Navami* and *Chaitra Puja* in the month of *Chaitra* etc. Besides these the Tuesday worship in the month of *Chaitra* and *Aswina* is celebrated here with lots of devotion.

Nrusimha Chaturdasi or Baisakh Mela: The *Nrusimha Chaturdasi* celebration starts from the 11th day of the bright fortnight in the month of *Baisakha* and lasts up to the full moon day with a joyful atmosphere. The main rituals of the festival are the *Vishwa Shanti Mahayajna*, *Bijamantra Japa*, Birthday celebration of Lord Nrusimha and *Dhvaja Bandhana*. Gathering of saints and devotees of numerous sects can be seen during this time. A large number of visitors come from nearby state of Chhattisgarh. The Papaharini fountain is called as “Papaharini Ganga” or “Chhattisgarh Ganga”.¹¹

The main attraction of the *Baisakh Mela* is the Ayurvedic medicinal herbs exhibition by the Ayurvedic experts. The *Mela* has also a commercial value as the local people say it as “*Baisakha Bazaar*”. The ground becomes a trade centre for more than 5 days with hundreds of shops covering an area of one kilometre. The shops include household article, textile, toys, photos, fancy item, cosmetics, local handicrafts, fast food, regional cuisine etc. On this occasion devotees cross the forest hilly track of Gandhamardan and pay visit to both *Dham* i.e. Nrusimhanath Dham and Harishankar Dham which is considered sacred on the occasion of *Nrusimha Chaturdasi*. Harishankar is situated at foothill, on the opposite side of Nrusimhanath temple, as a part of the Gandhamardan hill and belongs to Bolangir district, but both are connected through the hilly terrain. While people from Harishankar cross the hill and reach at Nrusimhanath, people from Nrusimhanath walk through the hill to reach Harishankar.

Daily Worship System of the Temple:

The temple has its own routine of worship for everyday. It opens at 5.00 AM in the morning and the First *Bhog* (first offering) to the Lord is offered at 5.30 AM which is followed by the *Khichdi Bhog* at 6.00 AM, *Raj Bhog* at 11.00 AM, *Bal Bhog* at 4.00 PM and *Yamini Bhog* from 7.30 PM to 8.00 PM. The temple remains closed from 12 O'clock to 2 O'clock in the afternoon and from 8.00 PM to 5.00 AM.

Some Important Places: Papaharini the main perennial flow of Gandhamardan, literally meaning the ‘Destroyer of sin’ is flowing out of the confluence of seven fountains, called Saptadhar. Nearly, 21 fountains in continuity, forming the Gandhamardan hill chain, and quenching the thirst of flora and fauna in the area. The Satyamba Sthal is a mango tree said to have been converted from a rock to satisfy the hunger of Bhim.¹² Bhim Madua is a natural cave having a grand size of half circular shape, serves as the rest shed for more than 1000 tourists and devotees crossing the hill from any of the sides of Gandhamardan hill. Many of the historians believe it to be used as Buddhist *Vihar* in the 2nd century A.D. Saptadhar is a meeting place of 7 small fountains which form the 12 feet wide fountain. It flows down and creates a waterfall of 35 feet high which is called as Kapildhar named after legendary Kapil *Rishi*. The Kapildhar flow down and reaches a rocky bed where Panchupandav *Ghat* is situated, on the other side of which is the *Tridev Ghat* with 3 images of Brahma, Vishnu and Mahesvara. Above the Panchu Pandav Ghat is the *Pitrupinda ghat* used for rituals of funeral ceremony. The *Kak Kund* tank is located in front of *Pitrupinda ghat*. There is a tunnel at this place where, the collected cremation ash of human body after death is scattered around so as to flow with flowing water with considered feeling as if it is



floating in the sacred river Ganga. *Sita Kund* is a pool believed that Sita of great epic *Ramayana* was taking bath in it. Bhimdhar is a tank where the water of the fountain is falling from a height of 20 feet is legendarily believed to be created by Bhim by the strike of his *gada*. Little below the Bhimdhar the Chaldhar is a 10 feet high waterfall serving the pleasure bathing purpose for the tourists. The Ganapati Ghat with an image of Ganesa is situated below the Chaldhar. In front of Ganapati Ghat on the hill, is a *Shivling* of black stone called Pahadi Shivling. The Gokund tank is situated near the main temple. It is called Papahari Gokund. People believe that they can be free of all sins by taking bath in this tank even from *Gohatya* (killing of cow) sin. A temple is there for Goddess Samalesvari, situated near *Gokund Ghat*. To the last part is situated the Binjhar Ghat near which there is a temple for Goddess Vindhya Vasini a form of Goddess Durga. In the compound of the temple office there is a museum where sculptures and images are preserved, which are found around the temple and nearby places. A beautiful garden is there near the main entrance of the temple named after Vaijaladeva as “Vaijaladeva Udyan”. There is a large image of Lord Hanuman in standing position inside the garden. A medicinal park has been made near the main temple by the Forest Department which has varieties of medicinal plants and herbs.

Nrusimhanath as a Buddhist site: The Chinese pilgrim Hiuen-Tsang has given a valuable historical account on *Po-Lo-Mo-Lo-Ki-Li* where Goutamiputra Satakarni constructed a magnificent *vihara* for his philosopher friend Nagarjuna, the Buddhist Priest and teacher. The *Po-Lo-Mo-Lo-Ki-Li* or Parimalagiri has been identified with the Gandhamardan located on the boarder of Bargarh and Balangir districts of modern Odisha. The Chinese traveller is said to have seen the double storied monasteries of Nagarjuna in this place, which was decorated with some golden Buddhist images.¹³ It is believed that there was an ancient university on the plateau of Gandhamardan hill. Nagarjuna was the Acharya of this holy centre and Aryadev, the disciple of Nagarjuna became the principal of Parimalagiri *vihara* after the death of his teacher.¹⁴ The Chinese pilgrim Xuanzang visited “*Po-Lo-Mo-Lo-Ki-Li*” monastery at modern Paikmal in the 7th century A.D. It was then having cloisters and lofty halls and those halls were arranged in five tiers each with four courts with temples containing life-size gold images of Buddha.¹⁵

Accommodation: Tourists from outside can spend night at Nrusimhanath. There is a Panthanivas of Odisha Tourism at Nrusimhanath. It has 4 rooms (double bedded) and a dormitory. Room charge is Rs. 100 only. Paikmal is about 3 kms away from Nrusimhanath. Accommodation can be avail here at private Dharmasala. In addition to the above, private hotels with different tariff are available at Padampur which is at a distance of only 32 kms from Nrusimhanath. Good restaurants are also available at Padampur.

Medical Facilities: With regards to health care or the medical facility, there is an Ayurvedic College cum Hospital at Nrusimhanath. There is also a Community Health Centre at Paikmal, at a distance of 3 kms from Nrusimhanath, and the Sub-divisional Headquarters Hospital is situated

at Padampur. A good number of private medical clinics and diagnostic centres are available at Padampur.

Nrusimhanath is one of the jewels in western Odisha tourist map. One can feel and realise the existence of beauty and peaceful environment, only after visiting the place. The local people are very friendly and hospitable to the tourists. The local handicraft is so unique that tourists take these as the token of their visit to this place. The site has all the aspect that can make it a popular tourist centre. But still there are some factors which should be given special attention by the Govt. as well as people. Tourists are facing problem to stay at the site due to inadequate availability of accommodations. The only mode of accommodation is the Panthanivas and a temple Dharmasala. Though tourists want to spend more time at the spot, they are not able to do so because of paucity of proper accommodation availability. Construction of more hotels or Govt. owned rest houses are of necessity, a step needed for action as thousands of visitors are coming everyday to the place and compelled to leave the place same day before onset of evening, due to scarcity of accommodation and catering facilities there. Establishing comfortable accommodation and different types of restaurants with varied catering facilities, satisfying the need of the tourists food habits of different region of India and abroad, will attract more tourists and promote for long stay. All these steps will enhance the growth of tourism and research work at Nrusimhanath, which will ultimately result in development of the local area, and earn reputation to western Odisha.

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From A Child to A Mother : Let us Give A Path for Her

Peoples initiative in a Gram Panchayat –A case study in Karnataka

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NIRD&PR faculty members have taken up action research projects across the country, the present narrative is one such live incidents and efforts to tide over. The team feels that a ray of hope exists at the end of the tunnel but it needs to be collective and a constant vigil till the time community needs to understand and appreciate that

“The hand that rocks the cradle, the procreator, the mother of tomorrow; a woman shapes the destiny of civilization. Such is the tragic irony of fate, that a beautiful creation such as the girl child is today one of the gravest concerns facing humanity.”

A news item hit the local daily that a girl child in a remote Lambadi Thanda(Hamlet) in Vanti Chinta village, under Venkatapuram Gram panchayat in Chincholi Taluk of Gulbarga district, was being sold. A young tribal woman had given birth to a girl child in a row and internal discussions among family members was as only one son was blessed with all the three Girl children, who would carry the family name and reach eternity after death and most important was the generation ends. Internal bickering, family pressure was building up within due to poverty, as most of them were migrant labourers eking out their living as construction workers in metropolitan cities.

An Anganwadi teacher in the gram panchayat often reminded the mothers to complete the vaccination regimen for newly born children. The tribal mother took the girl child to the health centre for immunizing the child. Discussions in the public health care centre across several mothers regarding the birth of the girl child in a row was considered as divine gift, some pitied and some also came up with a solution to sell. Suddenly, mother too felt probably it is a better bet rather being cursed as the child may have enough milk to drink and food to eat and surroundings which accepts her and a promise to let her live. As news was being circulated in different quarters, gradually she became the object of discussion in the hospital and then in the village and soon the story spread to police station and finally the newspapers.

The Vanti Chinta Thanda woke up with a jolt one morning with a beeline of cameramen and correspondents from electronic media .The family was not in a position to face the ire of the press and uncharitable comments made by residents within the Gram panchayat for hitting the headlines for wrong reasons. Initial positive reaction was from the lady District Chief Executive Officer and considering the pathetic state of the family the government of Karnataka came forward to construct a small house in the name of the child-GAYATRI (on the family’s land) and released

Rs.25,000/- for the same. Initial enthusiasm died down very soon and the construction got delayed. The team members of the action research project, upon enquiry it was reported that the previous Panchayat Secretary has initiated the construction work which was built till the basement and later abandoned. It is learnt that the chairman has not submitted the expenditure statement and as a result, the works could not be continued subsequently and in the meantime the Gram Panchayat secretary's term of office was over and he laid down his office and left. The team discussed the issue in detail and requested the Gram Panchayat to make an assessment of the construction that has been completed as on date and provide financial statement on it while seeking approval of the pending installment of Rs.25,000/- to resume the construction. It almost took more than a year to complete and make it livable.

A brief profile of the Venkatapuram Gram Panchayat enables one to understand the actual deliverables and capacity to extend last mile service delivery. Three villages and ten Thandas together constitute the Venkatapuram Gram Panchayat. The Gram Panchayat meets once in a month and there are 12 members (Women 5 and 7 Men) in the Gram Panchayat. Usually Gram Panchayat solves the problems related to housing, water and road access etc.

NIRD&PR has selected one Thanda i.e. Vantichinta. The gram panchayat has a total population of 1,800-2,000 with 800-850 voters. The major castes are Lambanis (SCs in Karnataka) and Buduga Jangamas- Dasaris (SCs) with total households of 150 in which Lambanis Households are 110 and Buduga Jangamas are 40.

Infrastructure in the Vantichinta Thanda

The Vantaichinta Thanda has a school with Class 1-8, and total students enrolled are

137, with Girls Students 69 and Boys Students 68 and Teachers 5. Currently it has one regular, Headmaster and two guest teachers, from the village, paid Rs.4,000/- in a month (Paid once in four months). It has an Aashram School in a dilapidated condition with no occupants. It has an Anganwadi, equally in a dingy building with non functional toilets and 60 children. It has PHC, 10km from the village and sub centre is not working. A PDS shop exists with a total number of 190 BPL ration cards. Each card holder gets monthly, rice 28 kgs, (Rs.1 per kg), Wheat 5-8 kgs, Sugar 1 kg, Palm Oil 1 packet and Kerosene 5 ltrs. The nearest market is Zaheerabad (Medak district, Telengana) 35 Km away from the Thanda. Krishna Gramin Bank is the lead bank and police station is at Kunchvaram, which is 12 kms away.

Livelihood

The Thanda is totally dependent on rain fed irrigation with one crop annually and non functional borewells. The main crops are tur daal and jowar hybrid. From among them 15 families have no land and the rest have 1 - 2 acres land (Per household). There is forest land: 60-70 acres. The local people collect *adda* leaves and herbs. The wage rate for men is Rs200-280 and for women Rs.100-125. In a year (6-8 months) family members both men and women migrate to Mumbai and Pune and Hydrabad for house construction. The villagers go for cotton plucking and sugarcane harvesting to Telengana as agricultural labourers. The average family size: 8-12.

The hamlet (Thanda) has 10 graduates (One Women), Intermediate passed 15, 10 standard 15 and ITI 6. Physically challenged persons are 9 (Blind 5, Dwarfs 2 and Polio 2). It has 6 SHG's (Per group 15-20 member) and not very active.

Health

The hamlet has no good source of drinking water, hence they suffer from Cholera due to poor sanitation and lack of drinking water facilities. Other related ailments are Chikungunya, Malaria, and viral fever. They suffer very often due to digestive disorders. Villagers approach local quacks, faith healers, unregistered (RMPs), Ayurvedic, homeopathy doctors, private allopathic doctors and govt. doctors in Kunchavaram village.

Assets available with the households

The BPL survey and visit of the Team members ascertained the assets of the villagers. The villagers have Television sets: 50-60, Mobiles: 100-120, Motor cycles : 8-10, LPG: 8. Electricity connection in 100 Households (most of it is through a rod linked to the main line- tapping). There are 30-40 buffaloes, 200 Cows, 2 individual sanitary latrines,. Two of the Lambani households have solar electrified power supply.

The alternative livelihoods are Leaf plate making, Papad training, Solar lamps training, Vermicompost and Ethnic jewellery (Lambadi women are familiar with such works) improving their skills.

Taxes collected

The Villagers pay House tax Rs.100-280 (Per year), Water tax: 120 (Per year), Electricity: Rs.100 (Per year).

In the given backdrop, the action research team felt that the Vantichinta hamlet of Venkatapuram Gram panchayat has potential, as it addressed and handled girl child social issue. The team felt that the personal assets owned by the villagers proved that somewhere down the line an attitudinal problem needs to be handled regarding construction and usage of individual latrines. Another glaring issue which came to our

observation was selling of girl has child been stopped but male babies are considered as a premium to the family. This became more evident that after three girls, the tribal lady delivered a boy and promised to undergo tubectomy.

Potential for economic activities in the village

There are 130 job cards available in the village under MGNREGA and works like construction of drains, check dams, and side drains are taken up under the programme. The Gram Panchayat has finalized the works for this year and budgeted around Rs.95 lakhs for the same. However the villagers claimed that they were never given any works ever since the year 2009. A perusal of the passbook revealed that the villagers got work for only four months in the year 2009 after which till this date no such works were accorded to them. A larger understanding in the villagers goes that the Job cards are taken away from the villagers and the Panchayat undertakes the works by utilizing machines and there is an understanding between the villagers and the Panchayat wherein the villagers receive 10% of the money for no work done and the rest gets into the hands of the Panchayat members. An interface between the villagers and the panchayat raised the following issues :

1. Most of the people in the village had no Job Cards with them.
2. There is dissatisfaction among the villagers that they were never given any work.
3. The Panchayat claims that MGNREGA works are publicized in the villages despite that there is non participation coming forth from the villagers.
4. Non-renewal of the job cards and non-registration of the bank accounts by the villagers has been the hindrance in implementing MGNREGA works and subsequent remuneration to the villagers.

NIRD& PR action research team has intervened in the interface and requested the Panchayat members to renew the MGNREGA Pass books and also open the accounts so as to enable the workers to take up MGNREGA works in the lean season. In MGNREGA the workers earn a sum of Rs.125/- per day and the wage payments are same for men and women.

Road Map drawn by the villagers

- To clean overhead tank near the school, village.
- To repair school gate.
- Improve sanitation condition near Aaganwadi and village.
- Clearing solid waste and improve drinking water.
- Accessing Ettipotha water source (2 kms away) from the village, as it will improve both livelihood and drinking water.

- To improve anganwadi surroundings, through Swatch Bharat Yojana.
- Training at NIRD&PR Rurla Technology Park(RTP) on certain select skills.
- Installing solar lamps(identified locations, mapping done-15 required), training need to be initiated, with a 20 percent contribution from the villagers.

The team sign of with a note that several villagers need handholding with a dedicated team often convincing that people's participation in the developmental efforts enhances both quality in service delivery and prioritization of needs.

Dr. K.Jayalakshmi, Professor and Dr. G. Valentine, NIRD & PR, Hyderabad.

The Age of Tumult

Jitendra Nath Misra

Odisha's tumult of the last two centuries has found a distinctive voice in this unusual bestseller. Since there is nothing like this book on Odisha, at least in English, the novelty of the project continues to interest readers. But more important, the work is a reference point for a people finding their voice amid rapid transformation. The stellar translation remains faithful to the book's artistic merits, but primarily this is a work of reportage that anoints the history of the period with sharp observations. Characters line up to enter the stage and disappear off it, blurring the line between fact and fiction. In a criss-crossing structure a multitude of stories spring to life. Saying too many things about too many people might suggest that the work lacks a coherent idea. But this is not the case.

The theme that holds the book loftily up is the cycle of decay and regeneration, the defining story of humankind's transition into the modern age. Odisha's story becomes part of a larger national project, when the old order crumbled, and the encounter with Britain triggered a regeneration of the Indian Nation. As the saga of Odisha unfolds in this work the voice of the colonized is clear and consistent. History is usually the victor's narrative, and much of the British historiography on India is the story of the British in India, with the Indians as bystanders, accomplices or subjects. But in this book the

colonized are not the passive spectators. It interrogates the victim, not the victor. But it treats the British with grace, avoiding the triumphalism that has given post-colonial India many false starts.

The novel has an unconventional structure, without a central plot or character. In a poignant start in the year 1866, the king Birkishore Deva is dying, leaving a fallen legacy. The successor, Dibyasingha Deva, is an out-of-control child prince whom we revisit as a murderer. This is a particular low for the age. The lesser lows in this "Old Order" narrative are the acts of flattery to please the British. As ruler after ruler makes his peace with the invader, school children in Balasore sing for Commissioner John Beames, "the lord of life". But why blame children when the failure was at the very core? Odias had lost the capacity to even manage their religious affairs. We learn that the colonial administration had to intervene to find a successor to Bir Kishore Deb as Superintendent of the Jagannath Temple. The tussle between the Raja of Puri and the servitors over the shifting of the deities during the repair of the temple had to be resolved by J. S. Armstrong, the Collector of Puri.

But it is not only the Indians who lacked the moral and intellectual resources to usher change. The British were also complicit in an equal failure. A dubious character is Lieutenant Governor

Cecil Beadon, who called the famine of 1866 a “visitation of Providence,” and set off on a vacation to Darjeeling. Who can claim that Indians alone were fatalistic? We learn that Commissioner T.E. Ravenshaw’s flawed assessment of the availability of rice contributed to the famine, in which a third of the population perished, 167,356 of 401,501 in Puri alone. Yet Ravenshaw is even now remembered as a champion of Odia aspirations. The heart-breaking appraisal of the famine reminds us of what happens when your fate is determined by someone else. We have descriptions of bodies piled up and buried in river beds, of mass funeral pyres, cholera and cannibalism. Would this have happened in a democratic framework? Amartya Sen has famously argued that famines don’t occur when information about the victims is widely shared.

But we know that a murderer king or a callous Lieutenant Governor will not shape the state’s future. The real excitement of the book begins in the second half, with the coming of Odisha’s new age, as characters spring to life, giving the work its multiple voices. Figures like Radhanath Ray, Fakir Mohan Senapati and Gourishankar Ray became agents of change. Utkal Dipika and Utkal Putra, and the Kolkata-based Hindu Patriot were the torch bearers of an emerging civil society that dealt squarely with the ills of the colonial project. This contributed to the formation of the Famine Commission, which put the blame for the famine squarely on the colonial administration. Such was the influence of Utkal Dipika that Beames sought out its reports on him. We are in thrall of the Odia figures of the day. These leaders unfold plans for Odisha’s transformation, through exemplary action. But change is always painful. Pyari Mohan Acharya’s “The History of Orissa”, which stirred the public imagination, also led to charges that he had defamed Hinduism, a charge he refuted. Yet the

book was withdrawn, even after Acharya had won a government award. Radhanath Ray’s financial problems forced him to compose poems in praise of the Rajas of Mayurbhanj and Bamunda, to no avail. These modernists were always walking on quicksand, dealing with a dispossessed people who had not only lost control over their physical space and productive capacity but also their ability to make choices. How do you interrogate their fate? Little wonder that some like Fakir Mohan took solace in alcohol, while others like Pandit Harihar Das became insane.

Odisha was a late starter in the British imperial project. Even in 1803, when India’s encounter with Britain had already produced hybrid results, there remained naysayers like Odisha. The late contact with the colonial power led to cultural misunderstanding. The book illustrates hilarious examples. The Raja of Parikuda thought the British had faces like pigs and drooping ears to wrap themselves in at night. But the cultural conflict was also the result of resentment of the invading power. At the Durbar in Cuttack in 1866, the boy king of Puri, Divyasingh, called Beadon a “red-faced monkey”. But this cultural misunderstanding has been going on since antiquity, from flawed historical projects. We may remember that Greek historians had provided strange descriptions of Indians in Alexander’s time.

This book is a depiction of a chain of events that were to usher the modern age. But this is work in progress. Odisha’s transformation has been so gradual for so long that many of the descriptions seem like events that occurred a few decades ago. Even while Odisha has now set on rapid transformation the old order continues to prevail in many walks of life, within the framework of the notion that Odisha is the holy land of the Hindus. But are Odias more spiritual or fatalistic

than others? This may not necessarily be true. After the devastation of the famine of 1866, even the Famine Commission debunked the argument put forward by British officials that Odias would prefer to die of starvation rather than seeking work. Women made the barefoot journey to Puri to overcome the monotony of their lives, not for an uncertain piety. I recall my childhood, when families from our village travelled by bullock carts to the Jagannath Temple in Puri for festivals. The temple continues to be a place for conviviality and eating, not just prayer. Do the poor have the lifestyle choices of the rich?

This work portrays another wave of Odisha's globalization. Only, the British were the trigger that created a modern sensibility. The change coming from a new encounter was not unique. There were new forces, so powerful, that Odias had to make their peace as accomplices or through diplomacy. This took its toll, leading to a loss of historical memory. Odias had once been artistic and adventurous, obeying the command of maritime travel deep into Asia. While book presents ideas on how intellectual and moral depletion can break the back of a people, we need further research to understand why it happened in Odisha at that particular juncture in

history. Today it seems shocking that Abul Fazal called Odias effeminate. In his majestic "Konarks" Krupasindhu Misra narrates how Odias could not believe that the temple was a marvel of Odia engineering.

Even while the author's focus is on the colonized we have a tantalizing peek into the British community of Cuttack, which had a race track, a band and a choice of clubs, giving the British an escape into a gated social life. There is the story of how Armstrong boasts his prowess in Odia by calling himself Bhujbal, or how Beames becomes a kind of guardian angel. As India moves on from the colonial legacy perhaps the time has come for Indians to engage the human stories behind the imperial halo, for a deeper cultural understanding between India and Britain.

(The writer has reviewed the book "A Time Elsewhere" by J.P. Das and translated by Jatindra K. Nayak.)

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Agenda for Improving the Role of Panchayats in Social Sector Governance

Saroj Kumar Dash

The 1990s represented the reform decade for the Indian Economy. The 8th and 9th Five Year Plan have made attempts to reduce poverty and unemployment. Poverty eradication and unemployment reduction require growth, although the composition of growth is also important. Growth is a necessary condition though it may not be sufficient. Further growth requires efficiency and efficiency requires effective service delivery through governance. Let us introspect the objectives of stepping up growth during the few plan periods. Till the Fifth Plan, the Indian Economy chugged along at real annual rates of growth of no more than 3.5%. The Eighth Plan brought 6.8%. More importantly the Ninth Plan brought us down to earth with an average of 5.35%. The Tenth Plan still talks of 8%, so to make this magic growth rate of 8% to be possible and the size of posts to be reduced significantly, we need core reform agenda to be implemented, especially in rural sector.

This brings us to social infrastructure, physical infrastructure and law and order which form the core elements of governance. Add to that, the government has a role to protect the disadvantages and the deprived.

In the above backdrop the most significant experiment in reforming governance in India from a participatory democratic

decentralization point of view has been the introduction of Panchayati Raj system through 73rd Constitutional Amendment. It was expected that newly created Panchayati Raj system, would emerge as effective tool of local self governance and would strongly promote the primary objectives of economic growth and social justice.

Now let us examine the role of Panchayat in social sector. Though there is no precise definition available for “social sector”, traditional welfare activities aimed at helping the poor and disadvantaged and in general enhancing human development are called “social sector”. The social sector is the concern of all tiers of the government – from the centre at the national level to the Gram Panchayat. When we examine the role of Panchayat in social sector, the following areas broadly constitute social sector –

- (a) Education, Sports & Youth affairs.
- (b) Health & Family welfare
- (c) Water supply, sanitation and housing
- (d) Welfare of SC/STs and OBCs
- (e) Labour, Employment and Labour Welfare
- (f) Social welfare and Nutrition
- (g) Rural Development – Wage Employment & Self Employment programmes for sustainable rural livelihood

- (h) Basic minimum services
- (i) Pradhanmantri Gramodaya Yojana & Pradhanmantri Gram Sadak Yojana.

Article 243G of the Constitution, which now governs the entrustment of above functions to the PRIs makes it clear that the primary role of the Panchayats will be in the area of development. Planning and implementation of the programmes of economic development and social justice ought to be focal points of their activities. The passage of the 73rd Constitutional Amendment over a decade has created a space and opportunity for decentralized participatory local development efforts with inbuilt pressures for accountability. The PRIs have legislative power to control Rural Development and Social sector programmes. However, above programmes in India are often conceived and implemented as part of a National Development strategy.

Further the national goals like “Health for all by 2010”, “House for Houseless by 2020”, “Education for all by 2015” and healthy rural community based on sound Physical Quality of Life index (PQLI) can be a reality if the cordial and effective interface are developed among the PRIs, respective administrative deptts. and people at large. In this endeavour, the role of government at Union and State level is laudable. The concerned ministries have started empowering Panchayats at the appropriate level to plan, implement, monitor and supervise their programmes. The various line departments have started reposing trust on the PRIs and devolved funds, functions and functionaries. Further, the 11th Finance Commission have rightly assessed the needs of the poor living at rural areas and given suitable awards to the GPs for taking up of amenities like providing basic services for primary education, primary health, safe drinking water, street lighting and other services of public conveniences. The 12th Finance Commission

awards in these regards will be also more encouraging for PRIs in strengthening their role in the field of social sector governance.

Recently launched National Food for Work Programme, National Rural Health Mission, Sarva Siksha Abhiyan, Rajiv Gandhi National Drinking Water Mission, National Rural Electrification Mission and proposed Bharat Nirman Project aimed at building rural infrastructure which will change the face of rural India under the leadership of the Panchayati Raj Institutions.

PRIs have the overall responsibility for social and economic development within their jurisdiction. So a well equipped Panchayat with purse and manpower can play a very proactive role in bridging the gaps between rich and poor and urban and rural equally. Further bringing women into powers through Panchayati Raj Governance is not only a matter of equality, but also correction of an unjust and unrepresentative system.

Thus now the Panchayat in social sector governance sees entrepreneurship and participation of people as a strategic developmental intervention that could accelerate the rural and social development process. All stakeholders of Rural India like local government institutions, civil society, private sector etc. seem to agree on the urgent need to empower Panchayats with effective devolution of 3Fs – Functions, Functionaries and Funds – to correct the status quo pattern of social governance. Panchayat should be encouraged to act as “institution of self government” instead of an arm of “extended agency of government” in realizing the Union and State Govt.s’ plans and programmes.

Saroj Kumar Dash, Deputy Director, SIRD, Bhubaneswar-751003.

Livelihood in Farm Sector and Role of Panchayati Raj Institution

Amita Patra

Rural India is the real face of our Country. Sixty nine percent of our population, 833 million people live in rural area. The growth rate of this rural population has declined substantially to just 1.2 percent during 2001-11 from 1.7 percent per year during 1991-2001. Urban population growth, in contrast was about 2.8 percent per year during both period (Census 1991, 2001, 2011). The lower rural growth rate is largely due to limited options for taking up economic activities. Agriculture and allied sectors, which directly support the livelihood of half of the country's population contribute even less than 15 percent to the GDP. By 2010-11, roughly 67 percent of land holders were marginal farmers and another 18 percent of land held by small farmers. Thus 85 percent of all farmers are small and marginal cultivating 44 percent of land. Small holder farms tend to rely on family labour and cannot afford outside labour, except perhaps during the peak harvesting season. Small farms are more efficient, especially in cultivating labour intensive crops or tending livestock, but landholdings are too small to generate sufficient household income. Due to their low holding of land, power and poor access to modern supply chains, they are very often compelled to sell their products to local traders at low price. The major challenge faced in farm sector are lack of adequate access to formal

credit, extension, seed, fertilizer, insurance, market and other infrastructures. Farmers are also exposed to a wide range of risks that include the choice of crop, price control, quality of inputs, the weather and availability of irrigation, harvest and post harvesting storage and marketing. Climate change is another added risk which stands in the way of productivity and ensuring livelihood opportunity. Today agricultural growth faces a serious challenge in terms of sustainability.

Over the decades Government has intervened in different ways to address the challenges of agriculture sector. The major schemes which have been implemented by Central Government to boost the agricultural growth in rural areas are National Mission for sustainable Agriculture (NMSA), Rastriya Krushi Vikas Yojana (RKVY), National Horticulture Mission (NHM), National Mission for Oilseed and Oil Palm (NMOOP), Micro Management of Agriculture (MMA) scheme. As Agriculture is a State subject so State Government has also initiated different schemes. To revitalize the farm based livelihood following issues need to be emphasized.

- Focus on Collective or Cooperative farming to access credit, Subsidized seeds, manures, training, extension services and support for marketing.

- Increase of productivity by adopting appropriate agronomic practices such as use of bio-resources, organic farming, soil conservation.
- Improvement of water management, particularly in rain fed zone through micro irrigation such as drip cultivation, sprinkler system.
- Encouragement for intercropping and cultivation of crops like millet, pulses in dry land, horticulture, adoption of SRI.
- Diversifying their output through livestock.
- Convergence with other flagship programmes such as MGNREGA, NRLM.

Role of PRIs

With the introduction of 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act, 1993, under 243G of Constitution in 11th schedule of part IX, 29 subjects have been devolved to Panchayati Raj Institutions. Out of 29 subjects, the following subjects are directly or indirectly relate to farm sector.

1. Agriculture and extension services
2. Land development
3. Minor irrigation, water supply and watershed development
4. Animal husbandry
5. Fisheries
6. Social Forestry and Farm Forestry
7. Minor Forest
8. Fuel and Fodder
9. Poverty Alleviation Programme

PRIs are entrusted with the responsibility to prepare plans and implement schemes in these

sectors for socio-economic development of their locality. The elected representatives of PRIs are required to play a vital role in enabling the rural poor to identify and utilize the opportunities and access the services meant for their benefits through different Govt. programmes/schemes. Further it is the responsibility of PRIs to develop risk mitigating strategies because Gram Panchayat is the only institution statutorily obliged to be accountable to the community at large through Gram Sabha/ Palli Sabha.

Today the main problem in the agriculture pertains to sustainability of natural resource use and indiscriminate use of chemical fertilizers and pesticides. These problems can be addressed by increasing awareness on better agricultural practices which are safe to environment, human beings. Gram Sabha should be used as a forum to disseminate information on better agricultural practices such as organic farming, use of Bio-pesticides, Bio-fertilizers and Bio-technological tools with higher potentiality. Awareness should also be created on the adverse effects of chemical pesticides among the villagers.

Water is a critical input for agricultural growth in future. PRIs have potentially big role to play in water conservation through integrated watershed management. Rain water harvesting is another component to increase water availability and recharge our ground water source. Panchayats are the prime planner of MGNREGS. Under the permissible work of this scheme Panchayat can take large number of water conservation and water harvesting structures, diversion weir, check dam, soak pit, low land tanks, boulder check, trenching, plugging etc. It can also take micro and minor irrigation works and land development projects. The waste and fallow land of the community can be used for fodder cultivation and horticulture purpose.

Almost all the guidelines recognize the role of Panchayats in planning and implementation of the schemes and recommend their involvement. Convergence of various interventions within an area can be ensured by the Panchayats only. For example, the provision of seeds and fertilizers can be provided to a farmers whose land has been improved under individual beneficiary schemes of MGNREGS and micro irrigation facilities can be extended to his land using the fund available under RKVY for horticulture plantation. Such projects can be identified by Gram Panchayat, discussed in Gram Sabha located in project area and included in the annual shelf of works of GP. MGNREGA component of work taken under convergence should be implemented by Gram Panchayat or other implementing agency as prescribed in the Act.

Risk mitigation will require coordinating and convergences of many activities at local levels. Panchayat at local level can create infrastructures for storage of crops during post harvesting period, upgradation of village haat, establishment of common services centers for dissemination of real time price information from different schemes like PMGSY, BRGF and MGNREGS.

PRI can take initiative to cover small and marginal farmers family under different social security schemes and insurance benefits. Further elected representatives should motivate the

farmers to adopt livestock husbandry along with cultivation to augment their income. Livestock assumes the role of a financial institution – a living bank with off spring as interest and is an insurance against income shocks. PRIs should mediate with financial institutions, Banks, cooperatives on behalf of the marginalized farmers for accessing formal credit.

Last but not the least is the role of Standing Committee dealing with agriculture and allied activities at three tiers of Panchayatiraj Institutions. The Standing Committee should be functional and co-opt subject matter specialist who can provide technical support for the better implementation of the programmes. The line dept officials of that particular level must attend the meeting of PRIs as well as Gram Sabha to discuss about different schemes and clarify the doubts of villagers. The work of the functionaries associated with farm and allied sectors along with the progress of implementation process should be monitored regularly by the elected PRI members.

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A Holistic Empowerment to Women : Views from the Field

Dr. Bidyut Mohanty

Some of basic objectives of the 73rd Constitution Amendment Act 1992/3 are to bring transparent, accountable clean and participatory democracy at the grassroot level, secondly to facilitate so far excluded groups from the growth and decision making process to be inclusive. Those groups are women not only from general categories but more so from that of ST and SC groups. So the Act -93 not only reinvented the local government system at the grassroot level but also reserved not-less than one-third seats for women in all three-tiers of Panchayats. Odisha among eight other states have raised the limit of seat reservation from 33 per cent to fifty percent recently. The first election was held in 1994 and now we have crossed twenty-one years. The number of elected women in Odisha alone has increased from 30,000 to 53,000 in 2012 which is quite impressive indeed. In the process of election campaign, candidate selection etc. around 212,000 women have become aware of the grassroot democracy in various degrees. Here the presumption is that for one post at least three women contest besides the winning candidate. In the meantime a number of rights based schemes meant for livelihood, health, food security etc. along with low cost shelter, pension have been routed through the Panchayats at least in the identification of beneficiaries and monitoring stages, though not at the payment level. In other

words, Panchayats are becoming more visible than before. However, these institutions suffer from serious structural constraints such as lack of synergies among different similar departments, still top down schemes, lack of utilization of own resources, and lack of proper decision making power. In addition, over-burdened elected women representatives having less knowledge in politics try to perform their role in the Panchayats and get ignored by the male ward members or by undemocratic attitude of husbands or other family members and government officials.

We at the Institute of Social Sciences, New Delhi took up an evaluation study on behalf of VSO and Delhi based organization to find out as to how are the elected women representatives are engaged in their role after twenty-one years since 1994 to 2015. We reproduce some of the best practices which we have collected from the field after identifying and conducting intensive interviews with them.

Our over-all conclusions are the following. First of all three women have received block level training and know about the PESA. Secondly all of them are involved in monitoring the beneficiaries of MGNREGS, food security, NRHM and take active part in Gaun Kalyan meeting. They are also aware of other welfare schemes. In all the cases they take the help of

male family members who tolerate their visibility in the public but allow them to function as well. All of them have some vision that is to raise the productivity of land or give higher education etc.

But the question remains if they have achieved holistic empowerment socially, economically and politically? It is not that simple to answer that question. First of all, there is hardly any synergy between members of self help groups and women in Panchayats. Even the Women and Child Development Department does not visualize that. Secondly, the tribal women have a very high social standing but politically they are still taking the help of the male family members. Women have the user rights over the minor forest produce, yet nobody has yet thought of the value added products except of course turmeric. Most of the products have to be sold at the farm level in order to minimize the exploitation of tribals. The women leaders should learn about the utilization of minor forest produce in a more significant way. The Self Help Groups formed by SC women particularly in Kurli Panchayat, Rayagada are also engaged in collecting electric bills and sanitation bills but the self help groups are not at all working well. In other words, women in Panchayats have learnt about the various welfare schemes and monitoring those effectively but not fully empowered since they are yet to plan their own natural resources through Panchayats to raise the standard of living. By monitoring the welfare schemes, nobody can come out of the poverty. So in order to achieve the holistic empowerment they have miles to go.

Dinjha Jakasika, Kurli GP, Bissam Cuttack Block, Rayagada District

Towards mainstreaming the Dongaria Kondh Tribe

Kurli GP of Bissam Cuttack block is one of the remote GPs of the district and has a distinct geographical and ethnic identity. One of the

primitive tribes of Odisha, (*primitive tribe has been defined as that tribe who is most backward in terms of access to basic services*) the Dongaria Kondhs, inhabit this Panchayat area. The area is rich in natural resources. The Dongaria Kondh tribe of this place have been in the news for a long time because of their protest against mining of their sacred hill, Niyamgiri, by a British Company, Vedanta. They worship all aspects of the natural environment and cannot imagine their life and livelihood without nature. Kurli is situated in the Niyamagiri mountain range. The GP has 11 wards with 700 households. People of this GP area are highly dependent on non-timber forest products (NTFP) but they rarely go for hunting for their household consumption. The NTFP has been defined as the products other than timber extracted from forest for the consumption of human beings and animals. Those range from herbs, roots, small millets, to oilseeds like nigers, etc., Odisha possesses at least 120 species of minor forest products. Tribals mostly depend on those for their daily existence. The Panchayat or local government in the tribal areas has the right to collect and sell those products which are grown on the government land or the reserve forest. At the same time the tribals also have the user rights to use those lands to have mixed cropping of paddy based turmeric and ginger together using the shifting cultivation. Local people also depend on livestock rearing to support their family subsistence livelihood. Earlier days tribals also depended on hunting but now a days the forest area is dwindling and there are fewer animals. Besides the forest department has put restrictions on the killing of animals and further their consumption practices have changed due to the introduction of the rice, and wheat through public distribution system instead of smaller millets which are grown locally in abundance. But still they go for hunting to observe certain rituals. After catching some small animals, they kill it and

distribute equally among all villagers including single woman.

Dinjha Jakasika is the first woman Sarpanch who belongs to the Dongaria Kondh community. She won the election after a healthy competition and is now making history by creating her own space in local self governance. When asked as to what does she think of getting elected to the Panchayat ? She said “ I am indeed happy since I have brought pride to my community. But I am afraid because I am not aware of many rules and regulations and I may not be able to fulfill the expectations of my community.” Her supporters consisting of Anganwadi worker, members of self help groups, health worker said, “In the beginning Dinjha’s parents particularly her father was so upset that he started scolding her mother. He was afraid that she would go astray. Later on he was happy that his daughter is doing some good work for the community. However, her mother was very supportive of her.” In answering the question as to what does she mean by ‘healthy competition ?’ She said that “the selection of candidate was unanimous in six wards and people from other five wards supported the former Sarpanch. My family is poor so I could not afford to spend on election campaigning. Incidentally her village consists of two wards and both Scheduled Caste (SC) community as well as Scheduled Tribe (ST) live happily together. Villagers collected rupees 34,000 to give a feast after the result was out. A woman from another tribe called Munda and from another district of Odisha but married to a local Kandh fought against me. In the recent election (2012) people chose me because I was working as a peon in a school eventhough I don’t have any formal education. I was outgoing and was a member of a self help group.” The Anganwadi worker and the health worker were present when she spoke. They said ‘we were happy that Dinjha has been elected. Initially she was very apprehensive about taking the responsibility of the

Panchayat work but we kept on prodding her to contest and finally she relented’. Both of them belong to the SC group. It is encouraging to note that in this locality both SC and ST are living happily. But in other places, the inter group conflicts have been occurring quite frequently. It is so because traditionally SC members are relatively more affluent compared to the ST community and that has created problems in many places. Dinjha is unmarried with no formal education. She had never been to school, can only sign her name. During her childhood, children *particularly girl children* were not allowed to attend schools. People believed that the village Goddess would be angry and curse them with unknown diseases, crop failure and natural disasters, etc., if they did so. Her cousin brother Jitendra who is presently studying outside the state with support from a missionary father, supports her in her GP work when he comes home for his holidays. Noticing the phenomenon of dependence on male family members a word has been coined in the literature that women have become proxy and everything has been done by the men folk, hence the women’s decision making process is a misnomer. I would argue in the following way. There are two types of situations. In one type the women become completely invisible and men take over from the beginning. In this case I would describe as women becoming proxy. But there are other cases in which the men folks help the women but make them visible in public places. In the process even though there is handholding, the women learn about the a b c of the politics and gain confidence to take over the charges gradually, though men continue to play an advisory role particularly in the financial matters. In a highly patriarchal society like India, the second type of being proxy is still a welcome phenomenon. Sometimes, the civil society members or independent women’s groups take up that role. Still the women leaders have to take

the positive consent of the family if they want to work in the local politics. Of course, in this regard, unmarried women leaders area shed better but they also have to depend on the above groups in some form or other. If not husband, then father, or elder brother support her.

Working the Panchayat

Dinjha by herself is in continuous touch with different government officials including the Collector(the highest officer in the district). She is well aware of the different schemes introduced for the people. Her biggest achievements in her two years' tenure are adding 200 pensions for old age beneficiaries, 30 more widow pensions, and 260 IAY houses with 400 more in the pipeline. She has done a very good job in MGNREGS, providing adequate work opportunities for 200 job card holders in her GP.

Dinjha feels education is the main weapon to mainstream the Dongaria Kondh tribe and it is the main target of her life to bring her community out from their age old blind beliefs and illiteracy. Eventhough there are adequate primary schools in her GP, still children are struggling a lot to get higher education. For secondary education, children have to travel downhill around five kilometres to reach the panchyat high school. Dinjha has a dream of making a high school for the girls of her GP area. Asked why does she think that education is important for girls, she enthusiastically told us" If girls are educated they will help me in reading and communicating to me regarding the government letters which I am unable to do now and has to depend on my brother." It is encouraging to note that the government has set up a primary residential school for the children of the Dongria Kondh. She herself goes from family to family and coaxes them to send the children to the school. It is encouraging to note that at present 200 children are staying in the residential schools.

Dinjha said that it takes a lot of effort to pursue activities at the government level and most of her energies are used in contacting and mobilizing government officials. She needs more support in strengthening the Pallisabha (Pallisabha or ward sabha is the lowest unit of the Panchayat. All the adult members of the ward are members of the Pallisabha. A Panchayat consists of many wards. A ward may consist of many revenue villages if the population is small. In Kurli Panchayat for example Kurli village itself has 1081 persons. So it has been divided into two wards. So the minimum number of population of a ward has to be at least 500 people or more.) When her brother comes to his village he takes Dinjha to meet the Collector and line department officials to discuss village issues. She has attended the special gram sabha (Gram Sabha or village assembly consists of adult members of the Panchayat. A gram sabha has many wards) to ascertain villagers' views on the mining of Niyamgiri hill. She is proud to have been part of the movement to protect Niyamgiri and the natural habitat that supports her fellow Kondhs.

Hurdles

Since the Niyamgiri hill and its surrounding villages is a 'disturbed area'(Naxals are quite active in this part of the world and some of the Naxal groups try to prevent the implementation of welfare schemes meant for the villagers. The Naxals try to mobilize the local people on the ground of economic backwardness of the tribals), government officials dealing with the Kondh villages are a bit more attentive to the people here than in other areas. But Dinjha's greatest hurdle is lack of formal education which is required to prepare plans for the Panchayat, and to learn about various special schemes which are meant for the backward regions. For this she has to depend on her brother. There are about 21 special schemes to improve the economic and social conditions of the tribals. Those schemes come

under the Integrated Tribal Development Agency. Recently yet another welfare scheme meant only for Dongaria Kondh called Dongaria Kondh Welfare Scheme (DKDA) has been introduced.

Way Forward

Dinjha confided that 'our group is not doing well because both men and women drink a lot and spend all the income in buying country liquor. But fortunately for us a group of young people are trying to persuade them not to drink. I am also trying my best to persuade my villager not to drink.'

The Niyamgiri region is very rich in natural resources. Besides being rich in alumina, it is a biodiversity hotspot and has numerous medicinal plants and wild fruits and tubers including turmeric in the hills. The Panchayat could take this opportunity to lease out land for cultivating organic turmeric and processing it through SHGs. Dinjha has the ability to raise the standard of her villagers through the Panchayat's development work in NTFP gathering and fair trade marketing. But she lacks the educational qualification or awareness to develop a broader vision among her people.

Lakshmi Priya Nayak, Bhagabanapur GP, Kuliana Block, Mayurbhanj District.

A Journey from SHG leader to GP leader

Bhagabanapur Panchayat is not far away from national highway but to reach the GP one needs to cross a small forest through a narrow pucca road that becomes inaccessible during the rainy season. The Panchayat has 11 wards spread across six revenue villages. Villagers depend on local forest products (NTFP) for their livelihood and go for seasonal migration to other districts and states. It is relatively a poorer Panchayat.

Lakshmi Priya Nayak, the Sarpanch, had to fight a tough election and won it by defeating five other contestants. (Asked as to what is meant by tough election she replied that I contested the

election for the first time and I was really afraid of talking to people and give speech initially. I started trembling when I approached the stage. But the women's group gave me a lot of encouragement to gain confidence. Later on I did gain confidence and could speak in public forum.) Lakshmi has completed her Matriculation and could not continue her study further due to the early marriage. After marriage, she used to support her household income by managing a grocery shop in her village. She has two children. Her husband Harekrushna Nayak is engaged in petty business. Lakshmi Priya after her marriage decided to organize women of her hamlet to form a self help group (SHG). Her intention was to organize them to do some entrepreneurial activities along with the savings to support their family incomes. She was the leader of Mahavir SHG and had mobilized financial support from NABARD for it.

In the last election, with a reservation for Scheduled Tribes (ST) women, her SHG members proposed her name as candidate for the post of Sarpanch in the GP. Initially, she was reluctant to take on such a huge responsibility. Her husband and in-laws along with her parents all encouraged her to stand in the elections. She feels that her active involvement in her SHG helped her to win the election. Even after getting elected to Panchayat, Lakshmi is still involved in the self help groups. The members go to attend the Pallisabha or ward sabha and gram sabha in large number. But in turn she has not utilized her power as a Sarpanch to start other value added products and storage as well as market facilities.

Panchayat work with the help of SHG federation

In her two years of tenure, she has undertaken a number of infrastructural activities like construction of roads, ponds, etc., using MGNREGS. Around 1213 families in her GP

have their job cards. The number of people getting job cards has increased because she along with her husband created awareness about the availability of work. There are many types of work such as increasing the productivity of land by digging ponds, regeneration of forest cover etc. could be started now. Of course all the activities under the MGNREGS work has been suspended because of harvesting season. She also helped three hundred people to avail the benefits of pension schemes. 30 more IAY houses are being granted with her recommendations. 30 people of disadvantaged communities have also been able to get land title of forest waste land with Lakshmi's support. Her SHG federation gives her full support in her GP works. They help her in creating awareness about various schemes among the villagers. She also ensures the supply of sabai grass to the women to make ropes out of that. After her involvement in village level democracy more and more women members are coming and participating in Gramsabha and Pallisabhas. Lakshmi encourages all the women to avail of the government health facilities for their family members.

Lakshmi is still struggling to construct her GP office as her team struggles a lot to keep their documents safe and to hold meetings. Previously, the partially constructed GP office was built on disputed land due to which the office building is not operational. Laxmi has constructed a small shed near her house of her own land which is being used as GP office. But since it is a bamboo and thatched shed, it remains a temporary solution. The records and equipment like computers are being kept with different staff members, ultimately creating a lot of difficulties in carrying out the GP's official work. Asked about the disputed land, she clarified that the headquarters of the Panchayat is Bhagwanpur. Ideally the Panchayat office should be located in that village. But people of another village called Nuagaun are adamant about

locating the office in their village even though the Sarpanch belongs to Souri village. She said that the conflict is going on from 1997 onwards without any settlement. The government officials have not cared to settle the dispute amicably.

The fact that there is no Panchayat office even after twenty years of the passing of the 73rd amendment shows the apathetic attitude of government officials towards the grassroot institutions.

Way Forward

Lakshmi is keen to resolve the office building issue and to connect each household with piped water supply in her GP.

Tapaswini Nayak, Bhagbat Chandrapur GP, Baripada Block, Mayurbhanj District.

When there is a will there is a way

Gram Panchayat Bhagbat Chandrapur is not very far from Baripada Town, Mayurbhanj district and is located on an all-weather road. More than 80 percent of its population is tribal. It has 12 wards spread over five revenue villages. The GP is surrounded by a huge teak forest planted by the forest department. Most of the households derive their livelihood from this forest along with daily wage labour. People seasonally depend upon gathering NTFP products and selling them in nearby markets. However, most of the women members of the GP are also engaged in making ropes from the locally available wild Sabai grass which has high value in construction and village furniture industries. Besides the leaves of the teak trees are used as leaf plates and are sold at a high price to the big hotels in the big cities, though the primary producers don't get much profit. Similarly the seeds of the teak tree are used as oilseeds. The secretion from the tree is used as the traditional agarbati. So the local people try to use as many as products possible available in the forest to earn their livelihood.

Tapaswini Nayak, a 28 year old tribal woman, lives in a joint family in Bhagabat Chandrapur village with her husband, mother-in-law, 7 year old son and brother-in-law and his family. She won the recent Panchayat election with a record margin of 480 votes. This was the highest margin in the Panchayat. Asked as to how did she get so many votes, one villager present there said 'she is one of the most popular leaders in the Panchayat since she tries to help others. So it was no wonder that she could get elected with largest margin in the Panchayat.' Tapaswini also proudly said that she "could convert her husband's defeat in the last elections to a victory by winning in this round of elections". (Her husband had contested in 2007 elections but lost by just 9 votes.) Asked about the secret of her success in the election she confided that 'unlike my husband I tried to mobilize the women's group by going from door to door. Since I am also involved in a SHG, women were convinced that I could be a good Sarpanch'. 'Do you think women should come to the Panchayat through quota' I asked. To that she replied: "Women have to avail quota to get elected. It has both positive and negative sides. Positive because women get opportunities to know about the prospects and problems of the development. After getting elected they also come to know various government officers, like BDO, Junior Engineer, Rojgar Sahayak, etc and get chance to interact with them. Once they taste power, they would not like to go back to the four walls of house. It is working negatively because the government has reserved seats for women to get them empowered but has also set up many liquor shops and women are beaten up by the drunkard husbands. In what way they can get empowered even if they are elected. So I suggest that all the liquor shops may be closed immediately."

Tapaswini was a brilliant student of her village and was able to complete her Twelfth

standard. Education for her was of high importance and she struggled a lot to attend school regularly despite a discouraging environment. Soon after her passing out 12th standard, her mother, her only source of support died, putting a full stop on her education. After that she supported her brothers and father in household work as well as in making Sabai grass ropes to generate some income. She got married at relatively at an early age and her dream of continuing her studies to get into government service was buried in the burden of her roles as wife, mother, daughter-in-law and bread earner. While explaining about the difficult circumstances she noted "My parents have five siblings: three brothers and two sisters. My father always felt that spending on daughter's education was wastage of money. My elder sister didn't study at all and got married very early. My brothers also did not study much since they didn't have much interest. Only I was determined to study come what may. So my father backed by my mother allowed me to continue with my study. Sometime after my mother's death my brothers got married and started living separately. Thus I could not continue with higher study."

Her husband, who is a grassroot level political worker, had always sensed Tapaswini's indomitable desire to contribute to the community's welfare. In the last Panchayat election when there was a reservation for the women candidates in his Panchayat, he encouraged his wife to contest, to bring out her hidden talents and capabilities. In the Indian contest being supported by the husband, father-in-law, brother-in-law or father, and brother is not unusual because of many factors. First of all women get elected due to seat reservation and generally not out of their own choice at least as first timers. Secondly they are not very well versed with the ropes of politics unlike the men folks because of their different kind of preoccupation. Even if

women come from professional background, most of them don't show much interest in politics because of lack of awareness. Thirdly it is well known fact that traditional tribal society is relatively egalitarian and women have an independent say in terms of family expenses because they earn by selling the minor forest products in the market. Still in certain respect, tribal community is as segregated as the non-tribal ones. This attitude became clear when the traditional head of the village committee was asked in Kurli Panchayat. He interestingly belongs to SC community. He said: "The village committee has nine members. But all of them are males." Being probed further, he commented that "women are not allowed to attend the meetings of village committee!" To that the Anganwadi worker said "We knew that had there not been seat reservation, women would not have been elected to Panchayat." So it is a welcome sign that the male family members show interest in getting their women elected. But the quota will prove futile if elected women don't get visibility in the public place at all and men taking over the control of Panchayats. Fortunately we notice both type of phenomenon. In some cases men take over the responsibilities just after the election. In other cases they play an advisory role by giving space to women to learn. Women whom we have chosen belong to the second categories. Women Sarpanches knew the role and responsibilities of the Sarpanch though their husbands accompany them to the different line departments as well as to the Block office. They also come to the Panchayat office but allow the women to take their legal seats to conduct the meetings. Interestingly because of the presence of the husband all other male Panchayat members don't take the woman Sarpanch lightly. Similarly they also accompany women to the Gram Sabha which is very tough to conduct because of the presence of all the elders of the Panchayat. Eventhough the

Sarpanch and the EO conduct the Gram Sabha the sheer presence of the husband in people don't hackle the women.

One may ask that as to what extent it would strengthen the decision making role of women which is the end goal of quota. If one analyses the performance of these women who have been coming to the Panchayat for last twenty-one years, one would see that compared to the first generation women who came during the first election namely 1997 to 2001 in case of Odisha these women are much better off in terms of awareness and roles and responsibilities of the Sarpanch. The degree of handholding has also undergone considerable change. Earlier the husbands did not allow the women to talk to any outsiders. We ourselves had faced many such difficulties. This time we could directly talk to the women themselves without the help of their husbands. This is a sea change. Given the stratified nature of our society it is indeed a step forward, though a small step without rapturing the social fabric of the existing society. I hope that in the process the women would meet the practical needs and would try to assert their authority in the families as well.

Working as a Panchayat Leader

Tapaswini in her two years of tenure has facilitated many developmental activities for her Panchayat. At present, 570 people are getting old age pensions in her GP. Under her leadership she could include 200 more pensions to that list. Through the MGNREGS, 800 families are getting continuous work throughout the year. Under MGNREGS, she was able to construct adequate village roads and water bodies in all the villages of her GP. In the year 2013-2014 MGNREGS financial target for her GP was 5.8 million rupees. Due to her will power and leadership quality she was able to mobilize 1817 workdays in one year. This was much higher than the previously

achieved workdays. Asked about the performance under the scheme, she said “Ours is a performing Panchayat. This year because of our Panchayat and a couple of other Panchayats, our District has been selected as the best District in terms of fulfilling the MGNREGS target”. The Executive Officer also reported that “last year, we got an incentive award of two hundred thousand rupees under the above scheme and we constructed a fishery pond using that money. She has always tried her best to mobilize benefits for the vulnerable families like those of single woman, differently abled people, etc. In two years, she delivered 36 IAY for BPL families and 6 Mo Kudia (low cost shelter for BPL families) for vulnerable families who are not included in the BPL list due to some failure in the system in identifying the poorest of the poor.

Tapaswini does not confine herself to dealing with the Panchayati Raj Department alone but has also done remarkable work through convergence with other departmental works. 100 households have built their individual toilets with material cost from the Rural Water Supply and Sanitation (RWSS) Department and labour from MGNREGS. Piped water supply to each household is complete for one village and work is in progress for another village. Besides these, 100 goat sheds are being constructed, fruit orchards have been developed for the farmers having extra land with support from Horticulture Department.

With all the above mentioned activities to develop infrastructure under different schemes, Tapaswini never ignored the other important schemes like Integrated Child Development Service (ICDS), education and health aspects of her GP. She is regularly conducting Management Information System (MIS) meeting at her GP level to monitor and support health, and non-formal

education for women and older persons in her GP.

With her effort the number of women members attending the Gram Sabha and Panchayats has increased, but according to her, the participation of women in decision making is not so remarkable. She said it will take another two years to ensure participation of women in the decision making process.

Challenges

Given her potential she faces some systemic hurdles since the PESA act is not yet fully applicable in Odisha. Otherwise, she could have chalked out plans to utilize the minor forest produce to augment the income of her villagers.

Way Forward

For the future, she has a well elaborated road map. She plans to cover all the households with piped water supply and electricity supply. She is also keen to send all girls to school and to ensure that each of these girls complete their higher education. Answering the question about the higher education of girls she pointed out that “For the girls to get higher education is indeed a challenge because the parents don’t want their daughters to go for higher studies. Eventhough the government is giving a number of incentives for the girls, they are unable to go for higher studies. She herself had faced a lot of difficulties. So as a chief of the Panchayat she wants to help them out.

She could be a real leader of the district if other women come forward to join her in her effort to improve the condition of poor villagers.

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ODISHA UPDATE

CHIEF MINISTER UNVEILS THE BOOKLET ON 30 ADARSH VIDYALAYAS (MODEL SCHOOLS) TO BE CONSTRUCTED BY TATA STEEL IN ODISHA

Shri Naveen Patnaik, Hon'ble Chief Minister of Odisha, today unveiled the booklet on 30 Adarsh Vidyalayas (model schools) to be constructed by Tata Steel in Odisha in presence of Shri Debi Prasad Mishra, Hon'ble Minister, Industries, School & Mass Education and Mr. Prafulla Kumar Mallik, Hon'ble Minister, Steel & Mines, Labour & Employees' State Insurance, Government of Odisha.

These 30 Adarsh Vidyalayas will be built in 30 different blocks of 7 districts of the state at a cost of around Rs.135 crore, thereby bringing quality education infrastructure to students in far flung areas.

The booklet contains details of the infrastructure, layout of the building, facilities to be provided in the model schools, etc. Out of the 30 schools, 9 will be in Jajpur, 3 in Keonjhar, 5 in Ganjam, 3 in Sundergarh, 1 in Dhenkanal, 8 in Cuttack and 1 will be located in Nayagarh district. Foundation stone for such Adarsh Vidyalayas in Kamakshanagar block of Dhenkanal district and Ghasipura and Hatadihi blocks of Keonjhar district have already been laid.

A two storey school building of 25,000 square feet built up area will be constructed for each school. Along with the building, Tata Steel will also provide the required furniture for each school. After completion of the construction, the schools will be handed over to the State Government. Jamshedpur Utilities and Services Company (JUSCO), a Tata Steel subsidiary company, will be constructing the schools. This initiative of the steel major is part of the grand plan of Government of Odisha for setting up such Adarsh Vidyalayas in each Block of the State.

Sukanta Kumar Panda, Information Officer

ODISHA MAKES EXEMPLARY PERFORMANCE IN COMPENSATORY AFFORESTATION

e- Green watch gathers momentum in the State- Monitoring of CAMPA Projects made online Chief Secretary directs to Involve JFM and VSS in Compensatory Afforestation activities.

Odisha has made exemplary performance in compensatory afforestation projects. CAG has remarked that around 95% of the compensatory afforestation of the country has been done in Odisha alone; and the State has exceeded the target of afforestation. This has been discussed in the State Level Steering Committee of State CAMPA held under Chairmanship of Chief Secretary Shri Gokul Chandra Pati in secretariat conference hall. The Principal Chief Conservator of Forests Shri J. D Sharma while outlining issues for discussion relating to compensatory afforestation and implementation of APO (Annual Action Plan) 2014-15 apprised the committee about the remarks of Comptroller Accounts General of

India. Reviewing the implementation of Annual Action Plans, Chief Secretary Shri Pati has directed to involve JFM (Joint Forest Management) committees and VSSs (Vana Suraksha Samities) in ANR (assisted natural regeneration) and compensatory afforestation activities.

Replying to media query CCF Shri Subash Chandra Swain said that Compensatory Afforestation has been done over 42,910 hect up to 31st March, 2014. This has exceeded the target by 183 hect of afforestation. The requirement of afforestation against forest diversion for various projects was around 42,727 hect. In addition to this, afforestation has also been done over 5,540 hect during 2014-15. The target has been set to have afforestation over another 5428 hect during 2015-16. PCCF Shri A.K. Mohapatra present in the meeting presented the updated status of e-Green Watch in Odisha.

Discussion reveals that e-Green Watch has gathered momentum in the State. FSI Dehradun has opined that during April, 2015 Forest department of Odisha has uploaded polygon of 11,433 worksites on e-Green watch portal. As of now, 12,500 geo-coordinate data have been uploaded. The uploading of the actual condition of the worksites taken up during 2009-10, 2010-11, 2011-12 and 2012-13 has been completed. Uploading of the worksites of subsequent years is in progress. It may be pertinent to mention here that e-Green Watch portal presents the space time visual scene of the worksites and the works undertaken which ensures its transparency. Online system has also been developed for monitoring of CAMPA activities. Chief Secretary Shri Pati has advised the department to follow OFSDC model for online and mobile monitoring of the CAMPA projects.

The operation of APO 2014-15 was discussed in the meeting. The financial outlay for 2014-15 APO has been kept at Rs.527.67 cr. The types of activities outlined in the APO includes Compensatory Afforestation, Assisted Natural Regeneration, Conservation, Regeneration and Management of natural forests, forest protection, control and prevention of forest fire, pillar posting and maintenance of forest boundaries, strengthening of range offices, wild life management, capacity building, monitoring and evaluation, research activities and other infrastructural development.

Provision has also been made for subsidiary silvicultural operation in ongoing working plans. It is expected that this will address to the silvicultural requirement of the SWC coupes. In addition to 32 forest protection squads engaged for protection of natural forests, 3 new squads have been engaged for vulnerable divisions namely Rourkela, Baripada and Ghumsur North. Provision has also been made for installation of CCTV surveillance in forest check gates.

Installation of solar power units for external electrification in 7 forest divisions has been included in the APO.

U.K.Mohapatra, Information Officer

DIABETES SCREENING IN 10 DISTRICTS SOON

In a significant move towards prevention and early detection of communicable diseases, the State Government has decided to screen all persons of 30 years and above for diabetes. The community screening exercise will go underway in 10 districts from this year, covering nearly 46 lakh people. Cuttack, Puri, Ganjam, Khurda, Sambalpur, Rayagada, Mayurbhanj, Kalahandi, Sundargarh and Angul districts are set to be included in the National Programme for Prevention and Control of Cancer, Diabetes, Hypertension, Cardiovascular Diseases and Stroke (NPCDCS) in the ensuing 2015-16. While striving to screen the entire population, focus would be on pregnant women, elderly persons, TB and HIV/AIDS patients and children. The exercise will provide a definitive information base on diabetes and pre-diabetes incidence in the State for evolving effective measures for combating the problem. Those detected with