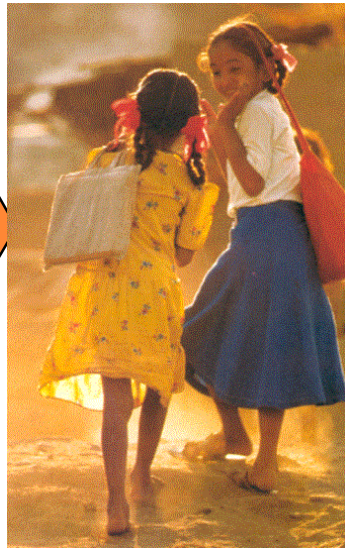


ORISSA VISION-2020

Towards Building A New And Modern Orissa



2005



2010



2020

Editor
Sachidananda Satapathy

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About the Editor

Another Orissa is Possible

Contributors

Article Contributors-

1. **Amit Kumar Mishra-** is a Research Fellow, Institute of Deigital Communication, University of Edinburgh, United Kingdom (UK).
2. **Digambara Patra-** Humboldt Research Fellow, Institute For Biological Information Processing-1, Forschungszentrum, Wolfshovener strasse 102, D-52428, Juelich, Germany.
3. **Devinder Sharma** is a distinguished food policy analyst based in New Delhi. Widely traveled, he has addressed parliamentary briefings at six parliaments in Europe on issues related to international trade, food security and hunger.
4. **Keerti Bhusan Pradhan, MHA (TISS) -** is a Faculty at LAICO, Aravind Eye Care System, 1-Anna Nagar, Madurai- 625020.
5. **Subhas C. Mohapatra-** is a Senior Researcher (Retired), Biological & Agricultural Engineering, North Carolina State University, Raleigh, NC, USA. President, Science & Technology Application Systems, Inc. (STAS), Warrenton, NC, USA.
6. **Sachidananda Satapathy-** is a youth right activist based at ISEC, Bangalore and Editor Orissa Vision-2020.
7. **Pradeep Kumar Mohanty, IAS-** is an IAS Officer and presently Secretary, Personnel and Administrative Reforms- Departments, Secretariat, Government of Kerala, Trivendrum-695001.
8. **Ranjan K. Panda-** is a Sociologist, keeps freelancing for various national and international organisations including media houses, and is associated with an NGO called MASS in Sambalpur, Orissa.
9. **Clem Tisdell-** is a Professor of Economics, University of Queens land, Brisbane, Australia-4072.
10. **Bikram Keshari Mishra & Bimal Chandra Nanda-** are Doctoral scholars at the centre for the Study of Social Systems, School of Social Sciences, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi – 110067.
11. **Gora Mohanty** is a Gamma-ray Astronomer by Profession having PhD from Iowa State University, USA and also associated with his postgraduate work at Ecolo- Polytechnique, France.

12. **Naresh Chandra Sahu**- is a Research Fellow, Economics, HSS Department, Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Kanpur.
13. **Dr Swami Arupananda (PhD, D.Sc)** - is a National Awardee for his work towards Secularism and founder Director of Arupa Mission Research Foundation, Orissa, a Charitable Organization.
14. **Sushanta Kumar Mahapatra**- is a Research Fellow, Madras Institute of Development Studies (M.I.D.S.) No-79, Second Main Road, Gandhi Nagar Adyar Chennai-600020 (T.N.).
15. **Dr Amiya Nayak, PhD, MBA**- a biotechnology scientist, consultant, entrepreneur and manager with broad interests in corporate business development and social development, and their linkages.
16. **Dr Sarangadhara Samal**- is Director, National Youth Service Action and Social Development Research Institute, Bhubaneswar.
17. **Saumendra Swain**. is an E-Learning, Software Developer. , Digital Media Om Sagar Building, MUMBAI –400706.
18. **Mr. Nihar Ranjan Samal**- Research Scientist, School of water resources engineering, Jadavpur University, kolkata-700032.
19. **Gp. Capt. B.P. Patnaik (Retd.)** - was part of two wars with Pakistan and Chinese Operation and received Air force Arjuna Award for his service at the time of War.
20. **A.K.Mishra**- is a Doctoral Fellow, Department of Sociology, University of Hyderabad, Hyderabad-500 046.
21. **Professor Bibhuti Bhusan Mohanty**- is an International Consultant in Education and Communication and founder Resident Director of IIMC, Dhenkanal and Executive President of Bajirout Chhatravas, A Gandhian Institute of Repute, Angul, Orissa.
22. **Manoj Mohapatra**- is Scientific Officer, Radio Chemistry division, BARC, Trombay, Mumbai-400085.

Contributors to Discussion Group-

1. **Dr S C DASH**- a Reader, Chemistry, Salipur College, Salipur, Orissa.
2. **Satish Mahapatra**, a Researcher (Project Base), Koeln, Germany.
3. **Mahesh Mahadarshi**, is a Student at Central University, Hyderabad.

4. **Anil K. Panigrahi, PhD**, is at Huntsman Cancer Institute, Univ Utah, School of Medicine, Salt Lake, UT-84112.
5. **Pradeepta Mallick**-is Associated with Man Power Bureau, BBSR, Orissa.
6. **Pankaj Lochan Khilar**, is an Engineer-SD (Electrical), Institute for Plasma Research, Near Indira Bridge Bhat, Gandhinagar-382428.
7. **Bikash Chandra Dash**- is working with his doctoral Thesis on Power Sector Reform In Orissa at ISEC, Bangalore-72

Experts Speak-

1. **Dr Motilal Sharma**, retired from the Asian Development Bank as Principal Education Specialist in the year 2002.
2. **Prof Muchkund Dubey**, (President), COUNCIL FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT, New Delhi, formerly served as Indian Foreign Secretary and as a Professor in International Relations at Jawaharlal Nehru University, Delhi.
3. **Nilanjan Hajra**, Information Specialist, US Consulate General, Calcutta.
4. **Jayanthi Iyengar**, Former Chief of Bureau, Economic Times.
5. **Prof Binayak Rath**, Professor of Economics, Member of Board of Governors, Indian Institutes of Technology, Kanpur.

Synopsis

Orissa is more known for many wrong reasons. Whether it is starvation death or selling of small kids or ugly political scene by our inefficient politicians, Orissa has become a needy state on the part of international organizations a laboratory state to experiment with poverty. Where are our Oriya intellectuals? Oriya intelligentsia's approach of grabbing opportunity and habit of shifting residence to other parts of India by totally forgetting their native state and people is a negative development so far Orissa is passing through. Orissa is also not expecting from them contributions financially all the time, rather what is required is will power, ideas and determination. I think, everybody will agree with me that we have lost everything in terms of self-respect. To make a difference, all of us have to take a new start by promoting Orissa in a big way and we have to review our own work and our contribution to Orissa. I do not think that we are short of talent but what we need is entrepreneurs to make use of those talents.

Have you seen any person, who has become successful without a vision and plan? Orissa is suffering from this chronic disease and moving without any long-term plan and vision so far. Let's start dreaming and you will find yourself in a vision, which will take you to a focal point, and unless we focus on action and implement it too, there will be no result. So, vision has a power to change anybody's fate. The people rise up, only when crisis compels. That is what is happening to our Oriya intellectuals? When there is a flood or drought, just collect some relief and send with some suggestions. Is this any way helping to solve this problem? As we have seen, Orissa is displaying all typical symptoms of a failed state and the culture of non-performance being the hallmark; we must start the initiatives outside the realm of government involvement. I am not advocating to ignore the government but should not wait for government to solve all our problems.

When we look the data sets for Orissa, any body will be shocked. Orissa has the highest infant mortality in the country. Our two-third of the rural population is living in abject poverty and health facility is pretty bad, as we have lowest number of doctors per capita in the world. Most surprising thing is that we have less than 5% of the population having access to subsidied food aimed at poverty alleviation. State's economy has incurred huge losses to the extent of Rs 13,230 crore due to natural calamities from 1998-2003. More

than 90% of the state plan outlay is being financed from borrowings. Orissa has the highest proportion of population living below poverty line. Around 47.13% (all India average is 26.1%) in Orissa lives below poverty line. You will be astonished seeing the average of BPL in Jammu and Kashmir, which is less than 3.5%. And there are wide disparities between coastal and southern regions. It is because of high concentration of Scheduled Tribe population in the southern region. Scheduled Tribe population in coastal area is 7.2% as against 39.7% in the southern region. So, poverty ratio in coastal region is 64.0% as against 85.5% in the southern region. If we see the overall trend, we find that 80% of the rural families are leading a painful life in the state. And we lost many investment opportunities due to non-availability of basic infrastructure in our capital city of Orissa. Bhubaneswar is a dead city for outsiders and it is the real worry for investors to start something new in Orissa. Observing all these mess, I thought of collecting the ideas of our intellectuals and make them involve in sharing the suffering process of Orissa.

Where is the slogan of “One thousand industries in one thousand days” of government of Orissa gone? Starvation death and child sale is making sensational headlines. The poor of Orissa ravaged by cyclone, flood, drought and famine has become the bread and butter of numerous voluntary agencies. Our local media has adopted a style of negative reporting, largely controlled by politicians with their own agenda. The culture of cynicism has grown rapidly infecting the psyche of the entire population of Orissa. The young people are struggling for maintaining themselves, as there is no job for anybody in the state. Our past leaders thought of to make Orissa prosperous through mega projects sponsored by central government. But general mass have benefited very little. If instead, they have thought of establishing technological institutions to educate talented Orissan, then, we have not in this situation. Building of an educational atmosphere is most important for any kind of development. This is one such attempt by the contributors of this volume to highlights the problem from their long time involvement in the particular field.

The whole document is divided into four major sections. The first section is having more than twenty-thoughtful articles, second part deals with three discussion papers on the topic of power sector reform, education system in Orissa and Pachima Orissa Vikash

Parishad and the idea of introducing a section like this is to respect divergent views expressed by several scholars on a specific topic. Then the third section is having a few short comments by a few eminent scholars on the aspect of underdevelopment and poverty. The fourth section is having a database on Orissa with all-important human development indicators. Apart from these regular sections, the book also has a thoughtful preface and current introduction section and finally, a section called another Orissa is possible, where the editor tries to argue certain trends, which Orissa requires immediate steps to take Orissa to a comfortable position. Here, I will try to bring the synopsis of all the articles in an integrated manner rather than conventional way of describing all articles separately.

The authors have expressed their concern in the following ways with some concrete suggestions-like one paper talks about uncontrolled increase in population and poor management of the ecosystem has lead us to an Orissa where urgent actions are needed in all fronts to restore the lost natural resources. It is disheartening to notice that about 80% of the saplings/plants planted die because of lack of water. However, a relatively new technology called “Gel hydroponics” will make the plantation endeavour amazingly simple and successful. Gel hydroponics, by making plants drought tolerant, increases the survival potential of the saplings/plants. Effectiveness of drought tolerance through gel hydroponics is a direct function of gel quality, which is reflected by its water holding capacity and durability in the soil.

One of the papers highlights how badly natural calamities affected the State’s economy in 1999 due to heavy cyclone in the coastal belt. Similarly, the insufficiency of rainfall in the 2000-01-crop season resulted in crop failure and drought situation in large parts of Western Orissa. The recent flood during 2002 affected the state’s economy severely. The overall poverty ratio, taking both rural and urban areas together, was also the highest for Orissa among 25 States during 1987-88. During 1993-94, the position improved marginally and Orissa occupied a position above Bihar in respect of poverty ratio for rural areas as well as for the overall poverty ratio. So in this sense, water projects can bring about affirmative changes in the lives of the poor people by overcoming poverty,

improving health and well being, and by enabling individuals and groups to act to develop their lives.

One of the author has analysed the recent development in agriculture and explained the advantages arising from, the National Agricultural Technology Project (henceforth NATP), sponsored by World Bank, which has come up with a mega technological package for the development and dissemination of agro-based technologies. Operationalizing its determined objectives, NATP follows a multi-agential approach by establishing a network between the public and private agencies along with the involvement of 'Third Sector' and also the farmers'/women farmers' organizations. The current policy framework in the field of agricultural research and extension through the NATP makes an effort to accomplishing the decentralizing decision-making process; public-private interface; skill up-gradation; farmers'/women farmers' empowerment; mainstreaming of gender; and emphasises on information technology.

Orissa is blessed with five important resources says another author like, Natural Resources, Mineral Resources, Agricultural Resources, Biological Resources and Human Resources. However, Orissa has gaps in entrepreneurial developmental congruence between people, ideas, government and financial systems. According to the paper, Orissa needs a visionary development campaign, developmental networks, linkages between public-private systems, and more importantly effective management of its resources and then it can rise to the challenges and opportunities in many sectors.

Few papers campaign for setting up of industries in sectors like aluminium, sponge iron, granite cutting and polishing, telecom cable, steel, petrochemicals, fertilizer power, sugar, chemical and pharmaceuticals, telecom etc. For this, private initiate and private investment need to be encouraged.

Mere construction of *panthasalas yatriniwases*, *panthikas*, *aranya niwas*, *panthaniwases* does not in itself carry the potential to attract tourists says one of the papers. For tourism to excel as a revenue-generating industry, Orissa must re-design, renovate, and beautify

our places of tourist and religious importance to a great extent says one of the authors. Adding an artificial, aesthetic as well as a post-modern appeal to our existing sports having tourism potential is needed argues one of the papers. There is a need to rescue the temple from the domination and *ghettoization* of the *Pandas*.

Mono-departmental approach should be replaced by a *multi-departmental approach*. That is, line-departments such as Horticulture, Animal Husbandry, Fishery and Soil Conservation should be made to work collectively for a holistic intervention, which is lacking in the state. The threats like siltation, loss of salinity, extensive weed growth and depletion of fishery resources ought to be tackled sternly. Prawn culture in the lake be regulated without jeopardizing the concerns of the traditional fishing communities. There is a need to rescue Chilika and differentiate between the monopoly of the alien mafia dons and the livelihood needs of the locals.

To get out of the mess from the present educational system, one paper argues that the “autonomous” status accorded randomly to colleges should be withdrawn urgently so that the monopoly of teachers and the subsequent corrupt practices can be checked and most vitally, the quality of teaching can be maintained. Every college should not be given the power to function as mini-university in every town. A mobile squad team can be created to pay surprise visit in order to inspect classes/teaching and the college functioning. Posting to the capital city or other well-equipped mega cities should not be a monopoly of select academicians (referred to as *chamchas* of politicians/bureaucrats), rather no person should be allowed to continue for more than five years in a particular city.

The State Government should enact a *Gender Equality Act* to offer a special concession to women in work sphere. Under this, women should be entitled to take a day’s holiday every month during their menstrual period; those who suffer miscarriages can take seven days to four weeks off.

Few of the articles reflect upon the coastal-western divide and its long-term impact upon the development of the latter. One author terms it unfortunate the coastal-biasness of the

administrators in the setting up of developmental milestones. The recent decision to found an AIIMS pattern hospital in Bhubaneswar is a case in point. Instead of choosing a poorly health-cared area, the government has unfortunately selected Bhubaneswar, which is already having abundant as well as high-tech health care facilities.

Poverty, regular natural calamities and lack of infrastructure have been a general issue of concern for *Orissa's backwardness* in modern industrialization mentioned in one of the articles. In contradiction, *Orissa* has advantages of mineral rich reserves, large coastlines, great tourism potential, and low cost skilled and unskilled work force. Therefore a clear vision of what can be achieved and how best to achieve it, is required for the state. But, *Orissa* has a shortage of high-qualified human resource. *Orissa* is still one of the lower graduate producing states compared to other Indian industrialized states like *Maharashtra, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal* and *Andhra Pradesh*. A modern approach for infrastructure development in basic science and technology is still required for the state. Foundation for a strong higher and technical education as well as research must be built inside the state, during next five years. Few more new universities, research centers and technical colleges should be established in the state. Importance should be given to the backward regions for higher infrastructure development.

There is a consensus among the writers regarding the importance of English education in Orissa. As English is very important for globalization, good education in English and Oriya languages along with special emphasis in spoken English should be given importance at the basic level.

Construction of four line highways is necessary for most of the busy roads in the state, *for example: one along the coastlines, one in the western border line, and one in the heart line of Orissa have been suggested in the paper.* Simultaneously, government should give special attention to build new railway infrastructure in the state.

Echoes of the philosophy of self-reliance can be found in the growth of the open-source software (OSS) movement, which probably had its genesis with the GNU project in 1948

in the United States of America. Many, including President Abdul Kalam, have described the technical and social benefits of OSS say one author. He told that the original metaphor that we started with, besides the *khadi* that the *charkha* produces, the Mahatma also promoted it as a symbol of self-reliance; and the daily act of spinning yarn as a tool to focus one's mind. Therefore, in that spirit, It offers you a discipline for the electronic *charkha* to spend at least half-an-hour each day.

One paper argues that CPR area as percentage of total geographical area of the state has significantly decreased from 20.39 per cent during 1970-71 to 15.54 per cent during the period 2000-01. The major factors responsible for the decline of CPR area are: legal privatization undertaken by the government under the scheme 'land to poor'; illegal encroachments due to higher growth of population and poverty. So vision document argues that the NGOs should develop a new and different partnership with the policy makers and government agencies in concert with progressive thinking on natural resource management. It is observed that the irrigation projects need to be revitalized and maintained properly so that water requirement of the agricultural of the state can easily be met. Besides, the Government of Orissa should revive the tank irrigation system in the KBK districts to resolve the problem of water scarcity for the agricultural use as these districts which very often face scarcity of water even in the rainy seasons and experience regular droughts. There are four critical issues, which need to be looked at for the success of the community based watershed management project. These are community participation, sustainability, and management of community conflict and, most importantly, creation of the regional and local linkages.

One paper, highlighting the situation of unemployment in the state offers two models to solve the problem in the context of Orissa. One author says that we can club young people with similar minds and link-up for a particular type of work, add up their individual funds and the collective amount should find some way out for solving the problem. Small-scale set-ups like mixture factory, selling different products in distant villages around a small town, setting up tuition and coaching centers etc are viable options. There is no need for huge funds for these activities. Rather, if people come-

together these will be boosting employment opportunities. Presently collective approach is the best option to solve this universal problem. Youth should make things in-groups and think about themselves collectively. Youth can start with small investments in the form of co-operatives and then build a resource centre on their own. People prefer government jobs because of the stability factor. In case, we are able to maintain stability for the product youth are supposed to produce (or nearly stable) then, one can certainly depend on the same, even collecting the garbage can provide a stable income to many youth.

He also proposes to establish a national level vocational training campaign which can be started with people who are well established in different business and professions nationwide, become members and readily train the youth registered with us in their organizations. The salaried members can also co-operate by taking some time out in giving services in training the youth. For e.g., a person employed in a software firm can very well take classes on software for people who wish to learn computer and which will help them get a job or to start a small firm.

One of the papers taking Orissa as a case explains how e-learning can help the state. Learning promises to provide a single experience that accommodates the three distinct learning styles of auditory learners, visual learners, and kinesthetic learners. Other unique opportunities created by the advent and development of e-learning are more efficient training of a globally dispersed audience; and reduction in publishing and distribution costs as Web-based training becomes a standard. E-learning also offers individualized instruction, which print media cannot provide, and instructor-led courses allow clumsily and at great cost. In conjunction with assessing needs, e-learning can target specific needs. And by using learning style tests, e-learning can locate and target individual learning preferences. The author argues for e-learning system for Orissa.

It is found that the poverty in Orissa is more concentrated in the tribal belt. Few of the write-ups stress on the development of tribal people in a sustainable ways. One paper argues that the failure on the part of scheduled tribe to cope with socio-economic growth and technological advancement can be attributed largely towards poor literacy rate

among this marginalised group of people, which directly affects their health, hygiene, overall family structure which hinders social upliftment. Ignorance, lack of interest and lack of knowledge regarding the benefits of being educated and how far in life it carries a person is one of the reasons for parents not allowing children to go to school or inculcating the values of education in a child. Lack of Tribal Oriya bi lingual teaching aids and books to bridge the gap of knowledge is another cause. Lack of teacher training institutes is another limiting factor. A part of the tribal child education task force should be involved in developing user-friendly i.e. tribal child friendly learning material. This should be followed by a group of the taskforce being trained to teach and another group trained to implement the project. They should also be suitably remunerated.

The point is that we have to build a network of roads so that these places can be put on the tourist map of India. The construction of roads will not only help to improve the sick tourism industry but it will also help to provide employment to the local people.

Touching the transport problem, one paper points out that the number of trains connecting main cities of Orissa are too less. For example, there is only one daily train from Mumbai to Bhubaneswar although the train is always packed to its capacity even in off seasons. This particular train takes about 39 hours to reach Bhubaneswar as it goes through most parts of AP. So, if a person wants to go for vacation why he will come to Orissa.

One paper also touches the KBK region in depth. In Kalahandi, with 87 per cent of the population somehow surviving below the poverty line, the struggle to eke out a living is an onerous task, according to the author. More so, considering that the abundant resources, including land and forests, are owned by the “gauntiya”, the feudal landlords. For the poor, human bondage and surviving on the charities of the moneylenders, is perhaps an inescapable route. The innocent, simple and illiterate tribals end up borrowing money at the time of distress only to find themselves slipping deeper and deeper into debt. Although the moneylenders vehemently deny, the annual rate of interest comes to about 460 per cent. He argues to take note of the above things while preparing any policy

for this area. If development assistance is the lone measure of economic growth, Kalahandi has failed miserably. Not even 10 paise out of a rupee of development aid has percolated down to the people who needed it most. The real beneficiaries are the government officials, who more often than not bribe their way to stay put somewhere in the four districts of western Orissa. At the same time, Kalahandi region has perhaps the highest concentration of NGOs and yet the poor continue to go to bed hungry.

One author feels that each of us can play an effective role if we can adopt the philosophy of "Pay It Forward", the film in which the young child favours three persons on the condition that they pass it forward to three persons each. In our respective fields, be it in Govt. service, business line, scholarship/fellowship, or in some other area, if we can help three Oriyas every year with a similar condition, it will work wonders. The paper argues that there are instances, how the NRIs of Kerala help other Malayalees to go to Gulf countries and the Punjabis help other Punjabis to go to UK or Canada. The Tamilians help other Tamilians to go to Malaysia and Far East.

Studies consistently found that the poor households pay a significant part of their income for health care, even when the government theoretically providing free or nearly free services, says one paper. Many patients have to bankrupt their family to pay for the expensive services or forgo the treatment.

One of the papers explains why there are numerous canals getting clogged each year. This Victorian method of unclogging canals each year should be abandoned, the author argues. In fact the whole network of irrigation budget needs a strict and urgent review. The same paper also highlights that another bigger task at the grassroots level is the education of parents (!), in child caring. Why is it that, on asking, most of my friends remain dumb over Odisha history? First of all, we must realise the fact that giving grants, building a school here and a hospital there can solve the problem at micro level for a micro amount of time-scale. But grants and aids will only make us perennial beggars. And more importantly, we can make a micro change in a macro scale (in time and effect and spread) or a macro change in micro scale. And, the real vision should be for the former one.

In a state like Orissa, where poverty level is very high and a large section of the people in the rural areas still depend a lot on forest resources, bamboo can prove to be a successful window to poverty alleviation, explains one paper. For this, one needs to go beyond the traditional planning domain and look into new and newer uses of bamboo.

Apart from that the concept of NGO village, talent hub, one hour internet connection, a regulation for MLA to be in the constituency rather than in the city are some of the suggestions found in the section another Orissa is possible segment. Hope, this document will act as a torchbearer in Orissa's progress by 2020.

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