

The Marketing Strategy of Economic Development in Kalahandi

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INTRODUCTION

Development may refer to various forms of growth and progress. However, when development is referred in the social context by large it is understood to economic development. Economic development is nothing but enhancing the living standard in a nation's population with sustained growth from a simple low income economy to a modern high income economy. This is mainly important for any society as quality of life increases with increase in economic development. Developed nations are considered as economically advanced nation. Although India's economy is among the 11 largest, it is considered as one of the poor nations in the world. Many international organizations put 1 in every 3 people in India as poor; this figure comes to 1 in every 2 among Odisha people and 3 in every 4 among Kalahandi people. This means Kalahandi is an economically poor region in the nation.

India followed socialist inspired policies for its economic development immediately after independence. Many sectors included state ownership, extensive regulation and red tape which isolated India from rest of the world economy for which Indian economy grew only by 1% growth rate for next three decades after independence. This could be one of the many

reasons for which India remain a poor nation even after 60 years of independence. In 1980s, India slowly opened up but in 1990s fundamental reforms were brought through economic linearization. In 2000s India has progressed towards a free market economy and poverty in India is slowly declining.

The economic progress of India in post independence period was not uniform among various regions. Some of the states had seen much more economic development compared to other states. States that encouraged industrialization, commerce and human resource development along with agriculture performed better than those states which were largely dependent on agriculture only. Odisha is one of the poorest states in India as per economic development. The poverty in Odisha is even more than some of the African countries *such as Malawi*. The population of Odisha is largely dependent on agriculture where substantial number of Odisha's population is poor. Despite a long coastline and rich mineral resources, since decades Odisha was unable to explore its industrial activity except few cases like SAIL Rourkela, Paradeep Port, and HAL Sunabeda etc. Such industrial development largely helped to establish modern towns like Rourkela, Paradeep, Sunabeda, etc whereas growth of some of the oldest municipalities in Odisha such as

Bhawanipatna was sluggish due to lack of any industrial and/or major commercial activity in the region. Within the state of Odisha, again the economic development was not uniform. The development was largely confined to coastal districts such as Cuttack, Bhubaneswar, Berhampur, Balasore etc and Sambalpur, Rourkela and Angul region. Regions without any major industries and totally dependent on agriculture like undivided Kalahandi district remained as backward during this period, though in pre-independence period Kalahandi region used to be considered as a rich land.

IMAGE OF KALAHANDI

Presently Kalahandi is a well established name not only in Odisha but across the nation as most backward pocket in the country. During 1965-66, 1974-75 and 1980s Kalahandi name got national newspaper for repeated drought situation that broke the economic backbone of the cultivators. Kalahandi name stroke front page of the national newspaper for *starvation death, child selling and acute poverty* in 1980s. Since then Kalahandi name became associated with backwardness and ***Kalahandi Syndrome*** was defined by social scientists for “starvation in plenty”. Kalahandi name further got highlighted when late Prime Ministers Indira Gandhi and Rajiv Gandhi visited the region and gave few nationally popular quotes. Rajiv Gandhi’s popular quote “*when a rupee is sent from Delhi, people in Kalahandi receives only 10 paisa*” is still use to measure the corruption level in the nation. Similarly, very recent quote of Rahul Gandhi as the “*sipahi (or soldier) of Kalahandi at Delhi*” and comparison of Pururlia with Kalahandi received lots of media attention. There are many writers, philosophers, social workers, journalists, politicians, etc. at the national level still continuing to use the name of Kalahandi in literature, articles,

journalism and reviews to showcase backwardness and/or starvation death.

The image of Kalahandi is such that people think twice before making their judgment. For example, once the author was asked by Professor in a reputed cancer institute in Chennai that “*how do people like you survive when there is no water in Kalahandi*”. Even one time the author astonished when an army commander commented that “*he was not looking like a person coming from Kalahandi rather from Delhi*”. The media impact on image of Kalahandi among general mass is so bad that common people relate Kalahandi very often with the image they have seen in newspaper or TV channel. The backward part of Kalahandi has been so much exploited in the media that the rich and positive part of Kalahandi is put aside. Life of middle class people in Kalahandi is hardly understood in the national level. On the other hand many awards have been conferred to various people who have done literary work, journalism and movie taking into account of backward and starvation image of Kalahandi. In 2000s, Kalahandi name also got associated with controversial project by Vedanta Aluminum Limited (VAL) in Lanjigarh for breaking forest law, tribal right and environment. Despite different opinions VAL project have been going through rough weathers. However, the positive and rich aspects of Kalahandi in terms of agriculture, forest resources, culture, music & dance, history etc were rarely received media attention at the national level.

LOCAL INVOLVEMENT IN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Just like Roman built Rome, Kalahandi could ONLY be economically developed by people of Kalahandi. No foreigner comes to build

the nation except its citizens, so the expectations of local people of Kalahandi should be clear that the region will never prosper without the participation and vision of local people. This has been proved in many occasions. All the major projects such as Indravati Irrigation Project, Lanjigarh road – Junagarh railway lines, NH 201 & 217 passing through Kalahandi, Government College of Engineering, Kalahandi and Agriculture College at Bhawanipatna etc. at the local level were possible only by local initiatives, participation and strong public demands at the local level. In a democratic structure of Governance, participation of people plays the most important part. Perhaps lack of general awareness among local people cost negatively towards economic development of any region. Though backward image of Kalahandi was fruitful to get some special benefit on poverty eradication at the Government level, private investors were largely discouraged and skeptical on Kalahandi due to the same.

In today's world marketing and business environment is highly desirable for the economic development of any region. Different nations in the world and various states in India are trying their best to attract private investment by making their respective regions business - friendly. In the past few decades developing countries like China, Egypt, Vietnam, Russia, etc have revised their policies to attract investment and make a good investment atmosphere in their respective countries and found to be successful. Although India has adopted the same trick lately, due to democratic and social structure of the nation the progress has been relatively slow in comparison to country like China, but the nation has still achieved a higher growth in 2000s which is helping India to build its infrastructure and reduce the poverty. Though growth rate of poor states like Bihar, Odisha etc in last couple of years has been good, it is the states like Gujarat, Karnataka, etc

who are much ahead than states like Odisha, West Bengal etc in generating investment atmosphere and business climate in the country during past decades, thus poverty level in these states are much less compared to Odisha and Bihar. Despite adopting mining, metal and service based policy recently, Odisha is facing stream opposition due to lack of understanding business climate among local people because of it's poor education and poverty, thus making reform and open market policy hard to implement time to time.

In this respect Kalahandi do suffer as there are only 1-2 major companies who have really shown interest to invest in Kalahandi, out of which VAL's investment in the region has been a controversial project in the nation and progress has been slow. The company is losing instead of making profit which put a question mark on industrialization of Kalahandi. Indeed there are justified issues among local people against VAL project but at the same time the project brought many national and international headlines spoiling the image of Kalahandi for private investors as per many business analysts in the country. In one side the environmental, forest law and tribal right associated with the project is understood, on the other side it has already given a negative business climate for outside potential investors to invest in Kalahandi when Kalahandi is still in need to overcome its backward image to attract private investors. Private companies are always excited by positive atmosphere rather than negative & backward image. Most of the private business houses in India are concerned that if they will invest in a backward place like Kalahandi they may not get their money back. Such concern is not true, especially in Kalahandi having rich resources; however, backward image of Kalahandi makes everyone outside the region feel that the whole region has nothing to offer except drought and poverty. The image of Kalahandi is

though beneficial for implementing Governmental poverty eradication program, it is simultaneously discouraging private investor to come here when the local investors are usually limited to establishing rice mill. This is the greatest challenge Kalahandi has been facing since 1970s while attracting industrialization and conducting business and commerce.

Kalahandi has plenty of resources which can be its strength for attracting investors to the region. It has rich history, culture, dance & music, and strong agriculture & forest resources. However, one has to accept the fact that only agriculture has never made any region prosper whereas small scale farming may help to make a starving person to be marginal poor. To overcome starvation and acute poverty Kalahandi needs directly agriculture & horticulture supported by animal husbandry and indirectly industries to make the region prosper in education, health, infrastructure and commerce that will boost employment opportunity for the poor and middle class people. For the development of Kalahandi the rich resources in the region can be marketed to get private investment whereas the weak poverty part can be sold to get Governmental aid.

MARKETING THE STRENGTH

1. Strength in Agriculture

Kalahandi is an example of disparity and contrasts which also exist in many part of developing/underdeveloped world. It is famous for famine and starvation deaths whereas the same district is rich with agriculture. Basically Kalahandi region is agriculture based society since centuries. In pre-independence period Kalahandi was substantially producing rice, pulses and food grains apart from forest resources. Rice, pulses, cotton, oilseeds, meat and forest products from Kalahandi

is historically well known in Odisha. Undivided Kalahandi was the second largest food surplus district in Odisha after independence of India. Dharamgarh sub-division was historically known for rice production in Odisha. During Bengal famine Kalahandi alone had sent 100,000 tons of rice. After implementation of Indravati Irrigation Project in 2000s, most part of Dharamgarh sub-division is witnessing rapid agricultural growth. The irrigation project not only boosted rice production in the region but also encouraged highest number of rice mills in Kalahandi among the districts in Odisha.

Presently the world and India faces various challenges in agriculture. The demand of food will increase as the population is ever increasing and the agricultural land is decreasing. In India population is ever increasing and cultivated area remains the same. Indeed, with ongoing industrialization the forest and cultivated area may further decrease. The demand of food grain will not only increase due to population growth but also pressure on yield grains from cultivated area would enhance. India's food grain production doubled from 1973 to 1999 more due to yield grains rather than expansion of cultivated area. Farmers in India need to produce more food grains from less cultivated area in future making farmers largely depending on proper irrigation, modern technology, instruments, fertilizers, pesticides, etc in addition to marketing, storage, food processing etc. The challenges are also in disaster management such as floods, droughts, cyclones, earthquakes etc. Increasing demand for large food and agriculture products arising due to high population and income growth requires agricultural intensification. This would not only boost yields but also the income of farmers but also increase the private investment in this sector. Agricultural intensification can be achieved by

giving better attention to (a) Intensive Irrigation, (b) Diversification of Agriculture and (c) modern Technology and Research.

In Kalahandi diversification of agriculture can be accomplished through cash oriented farming. Beside rice, cultivation of other agricultural products should be encouraged. Such agriculture products may include Cereals, Coarse grains, Sugarcane, Cotton, Pulses, Oilseeds for bio-fuel production, Soybean, Sunflower, Maize, Vegetables, Spices, Garden spices, Ginger, Garlic, Mustard etc. Horticulture may also provide alternative to agriculture. Fruits varieties having good commercial values could be encouraged for national and local markets. The suitable fruits varieties for Kalahandi climate are Mango, Guava, Banana, Lemon, Sweet lime, Pomegranate, etc. The climate of some part of mountainous region such as Thuamul Rampur, Lanjigarh etc could be suitable for Orange, Apple, Grapes, Strawberry, etc. In today's world flowers have great demand for export market and many developing countries are exporting flowers. This may bring cash to farmer. Beside that Kalahandi was known for high quality animal products, which has declined a bit recently. Odisha market has good demand for poultry as the state imports egg & chicken from Andhra Pradesh for daily consumption. This could be good opportunity for the farmers to develop local market. Though piggery is not popular in India, this market is internationally very attractive for export. Pack animals has good domestic demand. Livestock could be of local and domestic demand.

Private party can be encouraged to come forward and invest in Kalahandi to develop agriculture and food processing industries. Private investment is also in need to establish fish seed farm for fisheries, develop fisheries cooperative

society and train local farmers. Similarly silk farming or sericulture has also good potential for development in the region which can be done by encouraging farmers and developing the market through private investment. India has great potential for dairy products. In coming years, package dairy products will be of great demand in domestic market as the market has just started growing. Kalahandi region needs to introduce best breed for better milk production and support dairy farming through cooperatives whereas private investment is required for setting up processing and packaging industries for Yogurt, Butter, Cheese, Packaged Milk etc.

2. Opportunities in Food Processing Industries

Large crop and material base in Kalahandi region offers a vast potential for agro processing activities. Setting up of food parks for providing added incentive to develop Greenfield projects in large part of the district is possible which will increase the income levels and change consumption patterns by favorable helping demographic profile and changing lifestyles. Kalahandi is an agriculture land and has enormous potential in agriculture and food processing. Completing upper Indravati and other irrigation projects will put Kalahandi in agriculture map of state as well as in the nation. Kalahandi is among the top three rice producing districts in Odisha. Kalahandi tops in Cotton production in Odisha. It also tops in a varieties of pulses. It is rich in forest resources and fruits. Local enterprises should be encouraged for small scale industrial growth such as pickle, can packaging, sealed packaging etc whereas the region has also potential to attract large scale investment from outsiders such as:

2.1 Agriculture Park: Dharamgarh sub-division is emerging as major rice and pulses producer in the region. An agriculture park should be established in Dharamgarh sub-division.

2.2 Sugar Factory: Reviving Sugar Factory in Junagarh block and Bhawanipatna.

2.3 Pulse Processing Industry: Soil of Kalahandi is good for pulses which can be explored in industrial scale. A pulse processing industry could be set up in the region.

2.4 Cotton Processing Industry: Kalahandi, Balangir and Rayagada are top cotton producers in Odisha. As Kalahandi is located in the central place of above three districts, it could be an attractive place to establish cotton processing industry.

2.5 Oil Processing Plant: Sunflower oil has great potential in the domestic and international market. With increase in growing sunflower in KBK region, private party may be encouraged to establish such plant.

2.6 Corn Processing Industry: Recently there is an increase in corn production in the region. Corn is second largest produced crop in the world and has a great market.

2.7 Bio-fuel Industry: *Mahua, Jatropha and other oil rich seeds in Kalahandi* can be used for bio-fuel or bio-diesel production. Such industry can be possible if farmers would go for cash oriented farming for bio-fuel.

2.8 Textile Park: Kalahandi is one of the major producers of good quality cotton, a Textile park for cotton processing may be established in Kalahandi.

2.9 Storage & Market: Many of the agriculture products can be made sealed and/or

can package during cold storage and could be sent for export or national market to give local farmer maximum benefits in the national market. This will generate an export oriented market for local farmers like happening in Punjab such as processing and packaging should be done by establishing local enterprises for national and international market. These package products might include Can Corn, Rice Noodles, Basmati Rice, Sunflower Oil, Mustard Paste, Turmeric Powder, Chili Powder, Garlic packet, Tomato Puree, Tomato Catchup, Frozen products such as cabbage, green peas, Rice and pulse packets, Fruits Juice Packets, Vegetable Juice etc.

2.10 Central Processing Centre: Kalahandi tops in the state of Odisha in producing cotton and pulses. It is among the major three rice producing districts in Odisha. However, due to unavailability of proper storage facilities and marketing, the poor farmers bear a huge loss every year. A Central Processing Centre with need based common infrastructure required for integrated cold chain, value assessed center, processing and packaging center, environmental protection systems, quality control labs, trade facilitation centres, etc are required in Kalahandi through Ministry of Rural Development, Govt. of India.

2.11 Mega Food Park Schemes: As Kalahandi is major agriculture producing district in KBK and is the central district among all KBK districts, a Mega Food Park Scheme should be allotted to Kalahandi for KBK region in the line of North Eastern state and hilly region. KBK region is considered at par with hilly states and north eastern states in irrigation. Therefore, Kalahandi region should also be considered at par with North Eastern states and Hilly regions in the country while implementing various schemes under Ministry of Rural Development.

3. Strength in Forestry

Though investment is for long term which small farmers may not be able to afford, plantation of forest wood for industrial purpose may give a handsome return to long time investors in this sector. Forest based products like Mahua, Kendu leaf, wood, timber and bamboos are also contributing local economy largely. Kalahandi supplies substantial raw materials to paper mills in neighboring Rayagada and Jeypore. KBK and Kandhamal region is famous for forest and forest products. Bhawanipatna is situated centrally among KBK-Kandhamal districts and it may afford forest and wood based industries in the region.

3.1 Wine or Food Processing Industry:

Mahul flower is often used to prepare local liquor. Since liquor brings social troubles at the local level, producing local liquor should be stopped and a food processing or wine industry should be established in Kalahandi for export market which will give employment and better price for those poor people who collect *Mahul* flower from the forest. Since selling in local market will not be allowed, it will not affect society negatively rather those poor tribal people who collect *Mahul* flower would be benefited so are the youth for employment. Experts believe wine produced from *Mahua* could give a better taste and appeal international market.

4. Opportunity in Gemstone

Kalahandi has rich gemstone deposit which includes cat's eye, sapphire, ruby, garnet, crystal, topaz, moonstone, diamond, tourmaline, aquamarine, beryl and alexandrite etc. The distribution and occurrence of precious and semi-precious gemstones and other commercial commodities of the region have found place in

accounts of Panini (5th century BC), Kautilya (3rd century BC), Ptolemy (2nd century AD), Wang Chuang (7th century AD) and Travenier (19th century AD). Till recently Kalahandi along with Balangir supply gem stone for handicraft work that can be found in Delhi Haat. Jiligndara in Kalahandi has one of the largest ruby deposits of Asia as per Geological Survey of India. This can be exploited for handicraft and to set up private and government Gemstone polishing center and Jewelry industry in the region.

5. Strength in Industrial Potential

Bhawanipatna as potential business hub in KBK

KBK region has been in news for last four decades for all round underdevelopment in India. Kalahandi, Nuapada, Balangir, Subarnapur, Koraput, Malkangiri, Rayagada and Nawarangpur Districts of Odisha is officially known as KBK districts, however, recently it is found that the adjacent districts to KBK region like Kandhamal, Boudh, Gajapati and Bargarh (Padampur sub-division only) districts are also equally underdeveloped. Since the whole cluster is a multi-facet backward region, both central and state government have been trying to improve the region for last four decades, but the region still lagging behind the mainstream. Since years our social scientists have been debating it, but it's the fact that only agriculture would never solve all these social problems and both industrialization and agriculture are required for KBK region to come out from this black hole. State government has offered special tax benefits for industrialists to establish industries in KBK. However, it is not enough to bring investment to a backward region like this.

Odisha was ignorant about business opportunity by/from common man's commercial

activities. Visakhapatnam provides health care and education facilities not only for eastern Andhra Pradesh but for the whole Southern and South Western Odisha. Majority of the revenues generated in Visakhapatnam in health comes from Odisha fuelling growth in medication and hospitality sectors in the local community, thus it expands the VAT and other revenues for the concern state government and increase employment opportunity for the local community there. Similarly Raipur is the common man's commercial center in textiles, home, agricultural appliances and machineries for the whole KBK and part of western Odisha regions. Money earned in Odisha is finally spent in neighbouring states for medication, education, textiles, home and agricultural appliances and machineries making Odisha a big loser.

The amount of business done by Odisha people in these two neighbouring cities may relatively look a small portion compared to the whole state, however, when counted in total common Odisha people in the bordering districts of Andhra Pradesh and Chhattisgarh do spend a large sum directly or indirectly in Visakhapatnam or Raipur for above reasons. Raipur and Visakhapatnam could establish themselves as commercial centres for common man in last two decades largely by fulfilling the requirements of people living in the bordering districts of Southern and Western districts of Odisha. Its also true that major bordering towns of Odisha like Berhampur, Sambalpur, and Rourkela could make a mark but it was only up to the district level without impacting largely on the inter district or inter state commercial success. In fact in health sector Visakhapatnam became so popular among Odisha people that popularity of Sambalpur and Berhampur medical college hospitals among common man degraded in last decades. This was

further helped by poor health services in these medical colleges during this period.

The main reason of the failure of Odisha towns to be commercial centres was due to poor infrastructure as there is no direct and proper railway and road connectivity to the state capital from the KBK and other bordering regions and secondly failure of service centres and downstream industries in Odisha. In a positive development recently state government has taken initiatives to establish many private engineering & medical colleges and universities in Odisha, revive the SSI sector of Odisha, promote ancillary and downstream industries in the metal as well as non-metal sectors, and propose various clusters like engineering, pharmaceutical, rice, cashew, kewda, textile etc in Odisha. Beside all these initiatives it would be wise and visionary to establish a commercial business hub at Bhawanipatna, a central location on South Western Odisha comprising KBK and Kandhamal districts, keeping common man's commercial requirements in health, education, textiles, home appliances and machineries, agricultural machineries, construction hardware, etc in KBK-Kandhamal region and connecting it directly by road and railway with the major commercial business centres at Cuttack-Bhubaneswar, Raipur and Visakhapatnam having direct access to International Airport and Port.

5.1 Mining and Metal: KBK has abundant bauxites, graphite, manganese, limestone, quartz, etc., but these resources are limited and not in the scale of Odisha's North-Western region that has huge deposits of coal, chromites, iron ores, and other minerals. Coal is the basic need for most of the mineral and mining based industries as well as for common man's use, for which India is in great need of coal. Therefore, most of the proposals coming to Odisha in mining and mineral

based industries are either in the coal rich North-Western region or in the costal region which is proxy to port for export market. KBK which has neither coal deposits nor proxy to any port in Odisha have unimpressive industrial proposals in mining and mineral based industries. The government has enough proposals for steel for a state like Odisha, so now onwards it should focus on their proper implementation and make a new rule that any new proposal in steel industry will be considered only if it would be located in KBK-Kandhamal region. For downstream industries NALCO, Vedanta Alumina Ltd, and Utkal Alumina Ltd should be encouraged to establish industrial park in the region. Vedanta Alumina Limited (VAL) has made major investments by establishing an ONE MTPA Alumina Refinery and 75 MW Captive Power Plant at Lanjigarh. Though this project has received criticism from environmentalists and Union Ministry of Forest and Environment (MoFE) in August 2010 rejected earlier clearances granted to a joint venture led by the Vedanta Group company for mining bauxite from Niyamgiri hills, the company's proposal for expansion of the refinery to 6 MTPA, which would have made it one of the largest refinery in the world, was lately being again positively discussed by MoFE. The issue is presently in the court. In such case VAL could be encouraged for establishing downstream and manufacturing industries in Kalahandi region. Other possible industries could be Ferro Silicon Industry, Steel Plant, Granite and Graphite plant and Thermal Plant. Many industrial houses are interested to establish thermal plant in Odisha, especially when Angul, Jharsuguda and Dhenkanal regions are already saturated with such industries. The focus is now on Sonapur, Balangir, Boudh, Naygarh, Kendrapada, Bhadrak, Cuttack etc. Kalahandi has free land, available water and railway link for such project such as around Junagarh,

Dharamgarh, Karlapada, Kesinga etc. A barrage on Tel River near Dharamgarh region may help to establish a large thermal plant in Dharamgarh in the line of proposed thermal plants in Titilagarh/Sonepur region.

5.2 Knowledge Based Industries: Higher Education is primary requirement for developing knowledge based industries. The possibility for establishing higher educational institutions in Kalahandi has been already discussed earlier^[1]. The state and central government could establish at least IT park in Bhawanipatna for the whole KBK region for IT, BPO and KPO.

5.3 Biotechnology Park: Integration of development in contemporary technologies such as electronics, material science, bio-technology etc. offer vast scope for rapid improvement and progress. As such for biotechnology KBK region has great potential. Government and private parties should be encouraged to set up industries based on forest (plant) and agriculture biotechnology in this region. KBK region could be a very good source of ethanol from its forest product, for example, Mahul (a local name forest flower) from which wine is cooked locally could be a source to make wine and beer in brand for export market. This also can be a source for ethanol for bio-diesel application.

5.4 Manufacturing Industries: As Odisha and Chhattisgarh are metal and mineral rich state, downstream industries for machinery parts could be possible when Kalahandi is close to Raipur region and Gopalpur port. Auto parts industry, Auto and Car manufacturing industries, Chemical industries, and Pharmaceutical industries, Polymer industries and Fertilizer industries are few possibilities.

5.5 Paper industry: The straw after harvesting paddy could be used as raw materials for paper industries instead of traditional forest

based raw materials. JK Paper mill or any other concern, which are already depending on Kalahandi region for raw materials, may be invited to establish paper industry.

6. Exploring Tourism Potential through Rich History, Tribal Culture & Beautiful Nature

A well civilized, urbanized and cultured people inhabited Kalahandi region around 2000 years ago^[2-3]. In Kalahandi World's largest celt of Stone Age and largest cemetery of megalithic age have been discovered. The pre-historic site and painting of Gudahandi^[4] is well known in the state and national level. This proves the region had cradle of civilization since the pre-historic era. Asurgarh in Kalahandi was one of the oldest metropolises^[2] whereas other one was Sisupalgarh. Sisupalgarh located near to Bhubaneswar is being well marketed by the local people there and State Government to attract many tourists, but Asurgarh rarely received any such special attention. Kalahandi is also boosted with other historical forts and urban town such as Budhigarh (ancient period), Amthagarh (ancient period), Belkhandi (ancient to medieval period) and Dadpur-Jajjaldeypur (medieval period). This region has contributed greatly towards the Indian culture and temple architecture. Temple of Goddess Stambeswari at Asurgarh, built during 500 AD, is a perfect example where the first brick Temple in Eastern India was built. Sanskritization in Odisha was first started from Kalahandi-Koraput region. Earliest flat-roofed stone temple of Odisha was built at Mohangiri in Kalahandi during 600 AD. Temple architecture achieved perfection at Belkhandi in Kalahandi and then traversed to Ekamra, present Bhubaneswar, along with the political expansion of the Somavamsis during the 1000–1100 AD. These famous historical sites in Kalahandi could be renovated and rebuilt to attract tourists like being done in

developed countries. The rich tribal culture, Ghumura, local dance and music along with natural beauty in Kalahandi would add the ingredients for tourism industries.

MAKING WEAKNESS AS ADVANTAGE

The negative side of backward image of Kalahandi is that it may kill its tourism potential and discourage private investment; however, the positive side it has is to get sympathy from Government initiated developmental projects, NGOs and activists work.

1. Developing Irrigation Infrastructure and Hydroelectricity Project

Lack of proper irrigation and natural calamity like drought in 1980s and subsequent period made this region infamous for starvation death, child selling etc in and outside the nation. Kalahandi and Nuapada have 101,448 hectare and 21,455 hectare irrigated area respectively. Both the regions have much less irrigated area in percentage wise compared to coastal Odisha districts such as Bhadrak, Balasore, Cuttack, Jajpur, Khordha, Puri and Ganjam districts. At the same time Upper Indravati Irrigation project was visualized much earlier in late 1930s (before the Hirakud dam) but could not be implemented due to political apathy towards this region. If Upper Indravati Irrigation project would have been implemented in 1950s then nobody would have known Kalahandi for starvation death as this region already had a strong agriculture based economy. This should be argued to get benefit from other Governmental irrigation project. For example now only 40% upper Indravati irrigation is completed. This should get prior importance to be completed by 2015. Similarly Koksara lift irrigation project should be expedited to be completed by 2014. A joint construction of new

dam in Tel river in Nabarangpur district by Odisha and Chhattisgarh Governments may also irrigate lands in Koksara blocks as well as parts of Chhattisgarh. Major Irrigation Projects in undivided Kalahandi that should be constructed are: Lower Indra Project, Ret Irrigation Project, Roul-Uttai Multi-purpose Project, Upper Udanti Dam Project (near Gorle in Sinapali block), Lower Udanti Barrage Project (near Sinapali), Barrage in Udanti near Kegaon, Upper Sandul Irrigation Project near Sirpur, Lower Sandul Irrigation Project near Duta, Upper Tel Barrage near Chandahandi, Lower Tel Barrage near Kesinga, Upper Jonk Irrigation Project, Sundar Irrigation Project, Saipala Irrigation Project, Kharkhara Irrigation Project, Biswanathpur Irrigation Project, Sahajat Irrigation Project etc. Kalahandi region has the high potential for generating electricity through hydroelectricity project and it needs construction of new dam. The state and central governments should encourage establishing dam for hydroelectricity and irrigation purposes through various schemes.

3. Benefiting from Government Aid for Poverty Eradication

Being a backward location various central and state Government programmes such as IAY (Indira Awas Yojana), MGNREGS (Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme), RGGVY (Rajiv Gandhi Grameen Vidyutikaran Yojana), IAP (Integrated Action Plan), Biju KBK Yojana, KBK Project etc should be properly implemented and initiated in the region. The schemes may also include World Bank and other private funding through NGOs.

4. Infrastructure Development

Infrastructure is key to economic development as it not only brings basic

development in the region but also provides huge number of employment and generates business in the local level. Special effort could be made to get maximum benefit of constructing new bridges, roads on PMGSY (Prime Minister Gramya Sadak Yojana), Railway link, and state and National Highways.

5. Educational Institutes

Education is basic fundamental thing in generating human resources development. Technological excellence and human resources development are the main *mantra* towards prosperity in modern days^[5]. Many of the local problems in health (doctors & hospital) and education (lecturer & teacher) are largely due to lack of human resource in the region. Solution to problems in Kalahandi is to establish more number of higher educational institutions in Kalahandi which will bring effectiveness to the local education, bring opportunities and make Kalahandi as a hub for the higher education in KBK and South-Western Odisha. Development of higher educational institutions will also help to boost service and knowledge based industries in the region, such as health and hospital industries, IT and ITES industries etc. The possibilities have already been discussed earlier^[1]. Emphasis could be given to establish University (state and/or central), Horticulture College, School of Animal Husbandry, School of Forestry, Central Agriculture University, Rural/Regional University, Indian Institute of Forest Management, branch of IIT/IIM, Cotton Research Centre in Bhawanipatna, Branch of Rice and Pulse Research Center, Apparel Training and Design Centre etc in Kalahandi. In higher and technical education Central Government sponsored Food and Craft Institute (which is being upgraded to a Hotel Management Institute) is established in undivided Balangir district and Central University in

undivided Koraput district, whereas nothing has been established in Kalahandi so far.

6. Health & Hospital

Similar efforts should be made to set up Medical College & Super-Speciality Hospital, Pharmacy College, Nursing College etc through various Government initiatives.

7. Public Sector Establishments

Due to industrial and infrastructure growth, many small places emerged as urban city centers in past decades in Odisha such as Bargarh, Jharsuguda, Brajarajnagar, Rayagada, Barbil, Rourkela, Jeypore, Sunabeda, Paradeep, Bhubaneswar, etc. Kalahandi had been lacking for any such major industrial development since decades by Government as well as private sectors. Among major KBK districts undivided Koraput has central government funded industries likes NALCO & HAL where as undivided Balangir has got Ordinance factory, where as undivided Kalahandi has not received any Central Government funded industries. Perhaps Central Government would take positive step to establish the long standing demand of a Railway Wagon Factory. A East Coast Railway division is also needed at Bhawanipatna/Kesinga/Lanjigarh road for the railway development of KBK-Kandhamal region. State Government may build a convention center, national stadium, Information Technology Park, KBK headquarter, Engineering and Medical divisions, Regional Divisional Commissioner office, new RDC at Bhawanipatna (Kalahandi is central district in Southern RDC), DRM office in Bhawanipatna, FCI sub-regional center, Paramilitary and military organization center, up-gradation with full staff for Doordarshan and Radio centers and Mini-sachibhalaya in Kalahandi.

CONCLUSION

Kalahandi is a rich land despite the fact that poverty is one of the serious concerns in the region. For the economic success and prosperity of this region, the people need to be proactively involved by generating a favorable market, strategy and policy for economic development and upliftment of the region and its people. This can be achieved by strengthening the positive image and exploiting the resources to attract private investors, while the weakness of Kalahandi & its starvation image may help to get Governmental aid. Boosting investment in the region is primary and utmost important for economic prosperity and reducing poverty in Kalahandi.

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