

Abstract

Janaki Ballav Patnaik is a luminous star who appeared in the political sky of Odisha. He rose like a new sun in the political sky of Odisha after a prolonged darkness. For the reason, he gave political stability and at a time became unparalleled leader of Odisha. He has expressed his concern for the Odia nationalist and was one of the main architects of modern Odisha. His achievements are identified with the half century of Odishan history and has had contributed to revamp the social culture of Odisha. A man of high ambition and dreams, boldness and courage, dignity and self respect, sharp intellect and ready wit, he devoted his life for the development of Odisha. He is the guiding star and prophet of Odisha's politics. Janaki Ballav Patnaik is worthiest son of Odisha.

Post-Independence Politics in Odisha : Janaki Ballav Patnaik as a Prominent Personality of Odisha

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Introduction: The first phase of post-independence politics in Odisha was marred by turbulence, instability and uncertainties. Unlike other states, it was not at all smooth sailing for the Congress in Odisha as it had to face formidable challenges from other political parties and groups. The fight for power and political supremacy was often bitter and prolonged. However, the struggle for power was not only among the parties or between the parties but also within the parties. And it was not for political issues or ideologies that parties fought both within and with each other, rather all the political battles were mostly driven by personal interests of the leaders and were manifestations of ego tussles.

Background: There is a general feeling that persons who are active in political life have to depend for their survival on their own image. For this reason, there is constant striving by them to keep up their images and to enhance them as much as possible. By “image” is meant the general opinion among the people about and individual engaged in public activity. This is supposed to develop gradually through the years depending on an assessment of his style of work and character. However, this need not always is true in the case of all and the image and actual figure may not tally. That happens due to the longing to build an image of one's linking and circumstances favouring it. The decisive influence of the news

media in forming public opinion is clearly exploited for purpose. Janaki Ballav Patnaik who evoking universal respect is an exception to this category of the highly image conscious political leader. Nobody can possibly cite anything that he did deliberately boost his own image, nor never encouraged people to eulogies.

Janaki Ballav Patnaik, obviously, is a politician of an extraordinary and uncommon man possessing the qualities of a poet, translator, and essayist, journalist, a freedom fighter, a Sanskrit Scholar, a thinker, and in every inch a true Odia, rose to the pinnacle of success from a humble beginning.

He rose to the highest position chronologically though destiny played a major role¹ shaving his future in political to successfully adorn the office of Chief Minister of Odisha, and Central Ministry. Probably, Janaki Ballav Patnaik is the first Odia Chief Minister who has enjoyed longest term in power and politic so far. He is a mass leader not the leader of few as he started his political life not as a non descript youth but as an young man set himself on a voyage of self discovery. That discovery was something which took him on a different path of politics. Basically a writer ends himself as a shrewd administrator of the state. A political creature as he is, Janaki Ballav Patnaik himself not have imagined that this last resort of 'Scoundrels' who take him to such amazing height.

Right from the student days, the quality of his leadership and the burning desire for the independence of the country were transparently visible in his activities and overall performance as a young and the shining star of the Motherland. Janaki Ballav Patnaik was closely known to Biren Mitra during the freedom movement and student

movement at Ravenshaw College centering round the Union Jack. Biren Mitra was a popular young leader of his time affectionately called by the people of Cuttack as 'Dada'. He was admired by common men for his charitable disposition.

On the other side of the political coin of Odisha, Nabakrishna Choudhury a veteran social organizer desired to form a social and voluntary organization to implement the Gandhian ideology. On the advice of Dr. Mahtab, a new organization called the 'Sarvodaya Sangha' was formed with an objective of launching an extensive programme in Odisha to work out Gandhiji's ideas and ideologies into practice. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, during his visit to Odisha, inaugurated this organization which was primarily functioning at Motilal Nehru's residence. Initially, Nabakrushna Choudhury became President of 'Sarvodaya Sangha'. Biren Mitra, Baidyanath Mishra and Janaki Ballav Patnaik were chosen as its members.

By the grace of Mahtab, Janaki Ballav Patnaik could become the president of the Youth Congress in Odisha. That was the first stepping stone to Odishan politics of Janaki Ballav Patnaik. But when the question of state leadership arose Janaki Ballav Patnaik openly supported N.K.Choudhury instead of H.K.Mahtab in the meeting of Odisha Pradesh Congress Committee. As a bonus to it in 1954, Janaki Ballav Patnaik was appointed as the member of the State Congress Executive Committee.

When Odisha politics was in turmoil, Janaki Ballav Patnaik left Prajatantra Prachar Samity in 1967 after the publication of 'Eastern Times' ceased. Having no option left out he decided to join active politics. Despite his political differences with Dr.H.K.Mahtab, Janaki Ballav

Patnaik maintained his reverence and regard with him as his political harbinger.

Emergence of J.B.

Meanwhile, in the year 1969, serious political developments with far reaching consequences took place in the country over the Presidential election followed by a split in the All India Congress with its repercussion on all the States. The Odisha Congress Party was also divided in the matters of the Presidential poll. Biju Patnaik and his followers voted for the official candidate, Sanjeev Reddy, while Mahtab, the Jana Congress leader and other had successfully motivated their party man to support V.V.Giri's candidature who was regarded as an Indira Gandhi's candidate. The outcome was in favour of Mr. V.V.Giri. In Odisha Mr. V.V.Giri got 67, Mr. C.D. Demukh got 46 and Mr. Reddy got only 15. But Biju Patnaik, because of his Pro-Sanjeev Reddy stand ousted from the party as he went against the whip of party high command. Biju's ousting from congress, paved the way for Janaki Ballav Patnaik to enter into the Congress. He joined the Indira Congress in 1969 and became an active member of it.

Ridding on the crest of Indira wave the Congress came out as the single largest party both at the centre and in the state in 1971. Seizing this opportunity Janaki Ballav Patnaik contested form the Cuttack Lok Sabha constituency in the general election of 1971 as an Indira congress candidate and got elected as an M.P for the first time. This was his first breeding point of entering into successful political career in Odisha and outside.

Meanwhile, acumen, political influence, sagacity, popularity and confidence of Janaki Ballav Patnaik were already tested by Prime

Minister Smt. Indira Gandhi soon after the golden crown of Central Ministry was endowed on Janaki Ballav Patnaik. This was the first political gain of Janaki Ballav Patnaik as he was the staunch opponent to Smt. Nandini Satapathy. Janaki Ballav Patnaik always carried with him the courage and conviction to tackle any responsibility even if he is stranger to it. He became the first Odia Minister in the Defense Ministry in the Central Cabinet. This was a rare opportunity for him to become a Central Minister in his first election to the Parliament.

As a mark of recognition to his caliber, he could draw due attention of Prime Minister Mrs. Indira Gandhi. He could become an efficient Parliamentarian through his fluency in both Hindi and English. As he was the only Central Minister from Odisha, he was in the absolute confidence of Mrs. Indira Gandhi. The political situation of Odisha was candidly highlighted through him. As a bonus to it, Janaki Ballav Patnaik could able to establish a Naval base at Chilika, which was one of his most vital contributions.

But serious intra Party feud broke out over Satpathy's virtual non cooperation with the reconstituted state Youth Congress which enjoyed the patronage of the high command. Shrewd Janaki Ballav Patnaik in collaboration with Ramachandra Rath instigated five youth Ministers of Odisha. Sriballav Panigrahy, Kanhu Charan Lenka, Jagannath Patnaik, Harihar Karan and Shaikh Matlub Ali revolted against Chief Minister Mrs. Nandini Satapathy.

Mrs. Indira Gandhi returned to power after a gap of two year and ten month. The landslide victory of the Congress (I) in Odisha had proved the amount of faith the electorate restored

in the Congress Party and Janaki Ballav Patnaik in particular as the unchallenged leader of Odisha. By bagging 19 seats out of 21 seats he proved his leadership calibre before Mrs. Indira Gandhi. Only Biju Patnaik had won from the Kendrapada Loka Sabha constituency with a margin of five thousand votes. Senior Janata Party leader Rabi Ray had lost his election from the Jagatsinghpur Loka Sabha constituency. Janaki Ballav Patnaik had won the election by a thumping margin of one Lakh and twenty three thousand votes from the Cuttack Lok Sabha constituency. This time all the election campaign and propaganda were held under the direct control and supervision of Janaki Ballav Patnaik. The Lok Sabha results in Odisha once again proved his organizational ability and popular leadership. The Central authority reposed more confidence in him.

The defeat of the Congress in 1975 had thrilled Mrs. Indira Gandhi and she could gain new experiences out of it. She tried her best to reform his party and the drawbacks in the previous election led her to be more corrective and cautious. She had tried again to win the heart of masses and the public opinion in favour of her. She had entrusted the Congress organizations of Odisha to a trusted man Janaki Ballav Patnaik, as the President of Pradesh Congress Committee in 1978.

Janaki Ballav Patnaik took right steps to rebuild the Congress Party in Odisha, which faced a debacle defeat in 1975 election. He visited all the nooks and corners of Odisha and could able to win the heart of students, youths, workers, peasants, tribals and people of Odisha.

Mrs. Indira Gandhi crowned as the India's Prime Minister on 14th January, 1980. She inducted Janaki Ballav Patnaik into her cabinet

as the Minister of Tourism and Civil Aviation. As a mark of great respect to Mrs. Gandhi, Janaki Ballav Patnaik invited her to inaugurate the Chilika Naval base on 21st February 1980 which was the brainchild of Janaki Ballav Patnaik during his Central Ministership in 1973. For the first time he introduced direct air links between Delhi and Bhubaneswar via-Benaras. He also introduced direct railway connection between Delhi and Odisha and flagged off the Nilachal Express from Puri.

The real trickery and game of politics started when Janaki Ballav Patnaik was in the pivotal helm of Central politics. His main target was capturing of Odisha administration. Floor crossing, merger and split were ardently encouraged to oust Nilamani Routray Ministry. Keeping that in view Janaki Ballav Patnaik united some enthusiastic young and energetic political leaders in Odisha, prominently, Raghunath Patnaik, Gopinath Das, Kapil Narayan Tiwari, Prasanna Kumar Patnaik, Gangadhar Das and Sairindri Nayak who were prompted to the extent of meeting President of India Mr. N. Sanjeeb Reddy demanding with a memorandum for the dismissal of Nilamani Routray's Ministry. Simultaneously other opposition states' ministry i.e. Bihar, Tamilnadu, Rajasthan, Punjab, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh and Maharastra were also dissolved as a retaliatory measure of Mrs. Indira Gandhi. On May 1980, Odisha witnessed another challenging Assembly Election. In this election, the electorate returned the Congress(I) to power with a stronger and more effective majority with the hope that, it would provide a stable government and a new welfare programme and development oriented administration. The election results demonstrated a clear mandate in favour of the Congress Party. The electoral

mandate marked the return of the Congress Party to power after a gap of nearly two and half years. Congress party had won 117 seats out of 146 seats. Election was countermanded in one constituency. The poll verdict in 1977 was a vote of censure against the excesses of internal emergency. In 1980, the same electorate fed up with the endless internal squabbles and ineffectiveness of the strife torn of Janata Party, through a unambiguous verdict ensured the fantastic political rehabilitation of Mrs. Indira Gandhi.

Janaki Ballav Patnaik elected as the leader of the Congress legislature party although, he was not a member of the Odisha legislative Assembly. He was elected as the leader because of his formidable contribution and calculated campaign during the election and as the unchallenged leader of the Congress Party in Odisha. Janaki Ballav Patnaik took oath of office and secrecy as the twelfth Chief Minister of Odisha on 10th June, 1980. Having been resigned from the Central Ministry, Janaki Ballav Patnaik choose to contest from Athagarh constituency as a sitting M.L.A, Sri Rasananda Sahu resigned in favour of Janaki Ballav Patnaik. Despite heavy opposition, Janaki Ballav Patnaik got elected to the Odisha Assembly.

Janaki Ballav Patnaik was an undisputed leader of Congress party. Opposition leaders almost annihilated. Nandini Satapathy who was once upon a time an unchallenging leader became spineless since she left congress. Harekrushna Mahtab was almost at his retiring stage from the Centre to run the Odisha administration.

Confident Janaki Ballav Patnaik raised high hopes on the minds of the people with promises of one thousand industries in one

thousand days. He established the Industrial Development Corporation of Odisha (IDCOL) in 1981. He also established NALCO, at Angul and Damanjodi, Paradeep Phosphates Limited, at Paradeep and Ordnance Factory, at Saintala in Bolangir District. He took steps for increasing the small scale industries to a considerable extent.

What marked Janaki Ballav Patnaik as the successful Chief Minister was his conventional approach to the problems of the state, his zeal and energy for work and his patience to get things done as quickly as possible. Naturally he concentrated all his efforts in finding ways and means to make Odisha a rich state. For his close contact with Mrs. Indira Gandhi, the Prime Minister of India, Janaki Ballav Patnaik not only accelerated the process of development but able to locate a number of prestigious project in the state. His concept of one thousand industries in one thousand days was given a trial to boost the rural economy. Many small, medium and major industries were set up. The establishment of small and medium industries contributed a lot for the state. Truly, the state had embarked on a new adventure under his leadership.

Conclusion:

He is not a charismatic leader like Biju Patnaik, who does believe in compromise. He is not a traditional leader like Rajiv Gandhi by virtue of birth of class position, or not bureaucratic leader, by technical competence. He is not a benevolent autocrat. Above all he is a true liberal Democrat. His leadership characteristics are friendliness, affectionate, cooperativeness, reciprocal, integrity, technical mastery, decisiveness, intelligence, faith, self assertiveness, self confidence, superior mental ability, amiability, pleasing personality, courtesy, fearlessness,

cheerfulness, industriousness, emotional stability, sympathy, sincerity, vision and ethics.

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