

Biju Patnaik : The Dynamic Person

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

be considered Nehru's statements would be more proved.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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