



## Padmashree Krishna Chandra Panigrahi

*Dr. Jayanti Rath*

An erudite scholar, ace archaeologist and eminent historian, Krishna Chandra Panigrahi shines as a resplendent star in the intellectual firmament of Odisha, born in a lower middle class family of Khiching in the district of Mayurbhanj to Sagar Panigrahi and Saraswati Devi in the year 1909, he had an eventful and chequered career. His father had to make both ends meet with the meager income derived from the land and the priestly services.

Krishna Chandra started his education in the traditional village Chatasalis run by the Avadhans. The death of his father and elder brother (in the same year, 1919), brought untold miseries to his family. With great difficulty, he passed the upper primary examination and was awarded a scholarship, which enabled him to continue his study in the M.E. School at Karanjia. He received scholarship throughout his educational career and successfully completed B.A. examination with History honours from Ravenshaw College, Cuttack in the year 1935. His diligence in studies, humility in behavior and fixity of purpose drew the attention of the then ruling chief of Mayurbhanj State who also extended financial support to prosecute his studies. In 1937, he passed M.A. in Ancient Indian History and Culture from Calcutta University. During his stay at Kolkata, he was greatly influenced by

Pandit Binayak Mishra, who was then teaching in the University.

Much before the completion of studies, Krishna Chandra married Taramani Devi, the youngest daughter of Bharat Chandra Panda of Chhdia village near Badasahi of Mayurbhanj district. He lived with his wife at Kolkata while continuing his master's programme.

When he returned from Kolkata, Maharaja Pratap Chandra Bhanja Deo offered him the job of Research Assistant. He was required to assist the eminent archaeologist R.P.Chanda in editing old records and archaeological remains in the State. While working with R.P.Chanda, he was deputed to Delhi to receive training in the Archaeological Survey of India (A.S.I.). After the completion of the training he got a chance to work as an Archaeological Scholar there and continued in the same post till 1944.

During his tenure in the A.S.I., he got himself associated with the excavations at Nalanda, Rajgir and Nandangarh in Bihar, Rajghat near Benaras and at Panchmadi in Madhya Pradesh and Ahichhatra. He also awaited the chance of visiting the important museums at Kolkata, Nalanda, Patna, Benaras, Saranath, Allahabad, Mathura, Lucknow, Delhi, Taxila etc.



During this period, he undertook extensive research on the pottery and produced a highly acclaimed research work on the theme of the evolution of Indian Pottery, a pioneering study.

He joined as a Lecturer in History, G.M.College, Sambalpur in the year 1944 and continued there for about three years. Then, he was appointed as a Curator of the Provincial Museum in 1947 at Cuttack, which was finally shifted to Bhubaneswar in 1949. The present Odisha State Museum owes him greatly as he took keen interest in the collection of sculptures and other archaeological properties. It was during this period that he was associated with the excavation of Sisupalgarh near Bhubaneswar and published a series of research articles. He also completed his magnum opus, "Archaeological Remains at Bhubaneswar" and later submitted this treatise to Calcutta University. He was awarded the D.Phil Degree in 1954. This book got international recognition and was accepted as a text book in the Oriental School of Art, London. Many Indian Universities accepted it as a reference book.

Again, he opted for Odisha Education Service and joined in Ravenshaw College as a Lecturer in 1951. But, three years after in 1954, he again joined the A.S.I. as Asst. Superintendent and then promoted as Circle Superintendent in 1957. But, he did not get satisfaction in the A.S.I. and after rendering seven years of service he left the job. In 1961, he was posted as a Reader in History in Ravenshaw College, Cuttack. He served there for a long period and just before his retirement in 1968, he was promoted as Professor of History in G.M.College, Sambalpur. After his retirement from Government Service, he joined Berhampur University as Professor and continued there for four years. After that, he continued to

render his valuable service in the domain as the UGC Professor in Ravenshaw College, Cuttack.

The President of India conferred upon him the title of "Padmashree" in 1976 as a mark of recognition to his valuable services. He received the prestigious Odisha Sahitya Academy Award in 1983 for his book "Mo Samayara Odisha".

Professor Panigrahi's contribution as a researcher is invaluable. His notable works in English and Odia are Archaeological Remains at Bhubaneswar, Chronology of the Bhaumakaras and Somavamsis of Orissa, History of Orissa (Hindu Period), Sarala Sahityare Aitihāsika Chitra (Odia), Itihāsa '0' Kimbadanti (Odia), Prabandha Manasa (Odia). In addition he has written a large number of articles in English and Odia.

The hallmark of his writings was his natural inclination of getting at the historical truth and empirical analysis. He was never rigid in his views and open to contradictions with right arguments based on evidences. He was the first person in the country to initiate scientific study on ancient pottery. In Odisha, he was also the pioneer to initiate the study on iconography and architecture. Professor Panigrahi for the first time classified Odishan temples on the basis of architectural style. His learned articles on epigraphy, sculpture, literature, museology etc. make him stand apart in the galaxy of scholars.

After his retirement, Professor Krishna Chandra Panigrahi settled at Saanta Sahi in Cuttack City. The sudden death of his eldest son in 1985 brought great shock to him and thereafter, he fell ill. Finally, he passed away on 25th February, 1987. His life and activities constitute a theme of hope and aspiration for the posterity.

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