

## Editor's Note

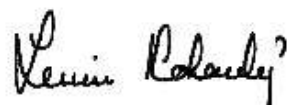


A fountain head of rich cultural heritage, our State is rightly regarded as the land of myriad marvels. It is the soul of our country. Time bears testimony to the long and glorious history of Odisha. The culture of Lord Jagannath constitutes the collective pulse of Odia people. It represents the organic core of the idea of Odisha as a cultural entity. Odisha, in fact, evokes the name of the Lord of the universe, Lord Jagannath. The holy city of Puri is world famous for the magnificent twelfth century temple where Shree Jagannath, Shree Balabhadra and Devi Subhadra with Chakraraj Sudarshan are worshipped and revered by millions. The temple, festivals, celebrations, rituals, devotees and the people have all contributed to the continuity of the living tradition. The myths and legends woven around Lord Jagannath are fascinating. It is the temple of Lord Jagannath that has become a focal point of all activities in the region even as it exercises a far-reaching influence on the people. It has become the centre of culture and has given birth to a new religion “the Dharma of Lord Jagannath”. Jagannath Culture is the foundation of Odia culture and tradition. History of Odisha remains incomplete without Jagannath Culture.

The Rath Yatra is a much-awaited festival every year when the Chaturddhamurti embark on Their annual journey who embraced the devotion and worship of millions of believers from all across the country and the world. On the day of the Rath Yatra after the initial morning rituals of *mangala alati* and *mangalarpana* on the sanctum sanctorum the four deities are brought to the chariots on the Grand Road individually through *pahandi* by temple servitors. The Chherapanhara is solemnized by Puri Gajapati Divya Singh Dev followed by sprinkling of holy water. This is a symbolic gesture by the king to convey the divine message of dignity of labour and equality before God.

Pulling of Taladhawaja, the chariot of Shree Balabhadra begins first. Then the chariot of Devi Subhadra “Darpadalana” is started. Finally the chariot of Shree Jagannath “Nandighosha” is pulled with passion and fervor by lakhs of devotees till Shree Gundicha Temple where the deities rest for a night adorned with *dashabatara* costumes. They enter Shree Gundicha temple in the next day morning in the usual *pahandi* style and stay there for seven days. *On the tenth day of bright fortnight of Ashadha* the return of chariot or Bahuda Yatra takes place. Three chariots pulled by lakhs of devotees reach the Simhadwar. The next day the deities are attired in the costumes of glittering gold which is known as “Sunabesha”. After completion of certain rites like “Adharapana”, the deities go back to “Ratna Simhasan” on the Dwadashi day which is popularly known as “Niladri Bije”. Their arrival to the sanctum sanctorum marks the end of Rath Yatra, the grand festival of Chariots.

A solid foundation has been laid by the State Government for the development of human and natural resources, physical and social infrastructure and institutional frameworks. By the blessings of Lord Jagannath, the development vision carried forward by the Government of Odisha over the years has fetched visible results. The State’s over-arching approach towards development is closely aligned with the sustainable development goals of the United Nations crafted as a plan of action for people, planet and prosperity. The State Government under the leadership of popular Chief Minister Shri Naveen Patnaik is determined in its approach to mobilize the means required to cater to the needs of the people-the poorest and the vulnerable in particular.



**Editor, Odisha Review**