

Paradip the Pioneer of Indian Ports

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Sir W.Raleigh, the notable statesman has rightly said that, “Whoever commands the sea, commands the trade. Whoever commands the trade of the world, commands the riches of the world and consequently the world itself.” The trade plays an important role in the sustained economic development of the country. If the trade is considered as a chariot, the transport system is the wheel, which makes the system to achieve success. The transport system of any country comprises several systems as rail, road, shipping and air devices. Out of such systems, the maritime trade plays a vital role.

Our country has the coastline of 7515 kms, spread on eastern, western coast of main land and islands. The maritime trade is managed through twelve major ports and two hundred non major ports. It is surveyed that about 95 per cent of the cargo by volume and 68 per cent by value is moved through maritime transport. The water transport continues to remain unchallenged as the most efficient means of transport of the world. Therefore the ministry of shipping was specifically formed in the year 2009 as the independent ministry to recognise the importance of water transport, ship design, construction of ports and harbours. Out of twelve major ports of India, our state Odisha is blessed with the major port of

Paradip. Dhamra and Gopalpur are two non major ports of our state. Our state has a coastline of 480 kms from Andhra Pradesh border in Ganjam District to West Bengal border in Balasore District.

The proposal for the construction of the Port at Paradip came to light after independence. The creation of a port at the east coast of India between Kolkata and Vishakhapatnam was of urgent necessity and it was mooted by the Govt. of India ever since 1948 after the independence of our country. According to the Ports Technical committee recommendation, the investigation was done to find out the infrastructure that, river mouth of Mahanadi at Paradip was the most suitable place for a deep sea port at the coast of Odisha. That was subsequently confirmed, more or less, by the findings of the foreign experts from France, Japan and Britain. But the steps for the construction of the Port were inordinately delayed for a period of 13 years since its beginning in 1948. However, in the long run, the final decision was taken for the establishment of the Port by Govt. of India and the foundation stone was laid by the then Prime Minister of India, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru in 1962 through the initiative of Biju Pattnaik, the then Chief Minister of Odisha.

Apart from the investigation of the Ports technical committee, the central Water and Power Commission (CWPC) was entrusted by the govt. to find out suitable location of a Port at the east coast between Kolakata and Vizag as there existed no Port between the two on the coastline of 850 kms. The survey was undertaken by the commission in 1950 through the initiative of Govt. of Odisha and the recommendation was made by the commission (CWPC) for the location of the Port at the mouth of the river Mahanadi. Again, the central govt. engaged the French Technical Mission for the selection of a site for the Port in 1951 and that mission recommended the river mouth of Mahanadi to be suitable for the establishment of the Port. Meanwhile, another report in the hydrographically charts for the placement of the port was presented by the Indian Navy in 1951 indicating the ideal location of the site for the Port at the mouth of the river Mahanadi. Besides these findings, Central Water & Power Research Station (CWPRS) at Pune in their model study expressed the views regarding the location of the lagoon type harbour at the coast of Paradip. In addition, it may be stated that National Harbour Board held at Pune in April 1954, under the chairmanship of Lal Bahadur Sastri, Transport Minister, Govt. of India decided to carry out a model study to finalise the most suitable harbour at the mouth of the river Mahanadi. The findings of the survey by the officer, Sardar Kartar Singh had indicated the financial and technical feasibility of the project for the Port at Paradip coast and also a full-fledged analysis of the findings was published in the Indian Journal of River Valley Development under the caption, 'Development of Navigation on the Mahanadi'. Further, the State govt. of Odisha had engaged the reputed company of Japan, M/S the Kinoshita & Co. to conduct the study on the

assessment of mineral deposits around Tamka-Daitari and possibility of the exports of iron ore with linkage through the Paradip Port. The study conducted by the company in 1956 recommended for the placement of the harbour at the mouth of the river Mahanadi estuary. But ultimately, Intermediate Port Development Committee by the govt. of India recommended for the establishment of a minor port in 1958 at Paradip and in the same year Paradip was declared as a minor Port to act as the fair weather anchorage Port to export Iron ore.

The potentiality of the Port in exporting Iron Ore from Sukinda and thermal coal from Talcher was considered very significant because of its strategic location around mineral belts of Odisha. The export of Iron ore from Sukinda to Japan and thermal coal from Talcher to southern and western States of India through the sea routes played very important role for the construction of Paradip Port. The Iron ore deposits within 150-400 kms from Paradip set an added merit to the potentiality of the port. In this context, the findings of the NCAER (National Council of Applied Economic Research) in 1963 relating to the economic aspects of the development of the Port seem worth mentioning, "Given suitable road and rail links with Paradip, the end cost of delivery of Iron ore from mining area to the Port can be the lowest for any port on the east coast and with one or two exceptions such as Goa in the country as well."

Meanwhile, at the initiative of government of Odisha in 1958, a team of experts from Japan in collaboration with the University of Tokyo, conducted a model study and submitted a comprehensive report in favour of the establishment of port at Paradip. Since then, the State government took initiative in cooperating

and coordinating with the Central Government time and again for the establishment of a port at Paradip. In this context, it is worth mentioning here that, the role of freedom fighter Narayan Birabar Samanta was also important for co-operating with the hydrographic survey at the Mahanadi river mouth. Besides, he also published some articles in the local newspapers regarding the economic growth and potentiality of the hinterland of the port. He had been in touch with the State and Central government agencies in respect of the establishment of the port. Ultimately, a master plan was drawn up for developing a port at Paradip in 1961 through the help of British consulting engineers, M/s Rendal, Palmar and Triton in 1961 by the initiative of Govt. of Odisha.

The final decision was taken in that year for a deep sea port at Paradip by the Govt. of India. Though the decision was taken for the establishment of the port after the recommendation of the experts, the construction of the port could have been further delayed as there was no financial sanction and approval by the planning commission to that effect. However, the decision for the visit and inauguration for the port by the Prime Minister of India was possible due to the dynamic leadership of Biju Pattanaik (the-then Chief Minister) for his political and personal relationship with Pandit Nehru. On the occasion of the visit of the Prime Minister of India, for laying the foundation stone for the Port at Paradip, a meeting was held on the premises of the Bana Bihari High School, Kujang on the 2nd January 1962 under the presidentship of Biju Pattnaik, in which both Ratnamali Jema, M.L.A and N. B. Samanta were present. The decision for the establishment of the port was declared amidst the loud cheers of joy among the unprecedented crowd. Ratnamali Jema presented a decorated ship made of silver to the

Prime Minister in the meeting. On the preceding day, that is on 3rd January, 1962 the foundation stone for the port was laid by the Prime Minister at the selected site in the presence of large number of officials of the State and Central Government including the dignitaries and huge local crowd and he dedicated the port to the people of India with the following proclamation, "Willed by the people I commend you, to this yet another National Adventure". Metaphorically speaking, this occasion seemed to have symbolised the linkage between the old glorious regional maritime tradition and the modern India naval excellence.

Certainly, it would be a matter of missing link and unwritten event in the history of the Port if the interesting episode relating to the approval of the plan and design for the Port from Prime Minister, Pandit Nehru is not narrated. It is very amusing and interesting to note that while Pandit Nehru was in a relaxing mood in the steamer on the 3rd January the scheduled day of inauguration near Nehru Bungalow, Biju Pattanaik could be able to get the signature of approval for the project of the Port keeping the map on the back of the body of Nilamani Routray, the commerce Minister of the State govt. In the words of a close associate of Biju Pattanaik and M.P. from Odisha, the story of tactical deal runs thus: "The time was a first approaching evening winter of 1962 and the Sun was setting. Pandit Nehru stood at the deck and he was completely overwhelmed at the setting glamour of the Sun on the sea. Just at that time Biju Babu slowly moved towards Pandit Nehru with a map in his hand and broke his silence with the word, 'Panditjee'. Pt. Nehru who was then oblivious of the outside world expressed annoyance at being disturbed abruptly in the midst of his aesthetic meditation. Biju Babu replied; if Prime Minister of India spares two minutes time,

the destiny of two crore Odias will change forever. Pandit Nehru expressed desire to know the fact. There was no table on the deck of the steamer and Biju Babu had no patience to wait. He asked his good friend the commerce minister, Nilamani Babu to put his hand on the deck so that his back could be used as a table where Biju Babu spread the map and explained rich maritime history of Odia Sadhabs along with the proposal for a sea born lagoon type port at Paradip, where he needed his signature and Pt. Nehru obliged generously without any further inquiry.

The dazzling plaque placed on a pillar at Nehru Bungalow exists till today and it bears the first Prime Minister's message to the nation implying revival of glorious maritime tradition of the country. The newly constructed building for that occasion remains today being termed as Jawahar Guest House which once upon a time accommodated the VIPs like Prime Minister. Pandit Nehru, Governor, Y.N. Sukthankar, Chief Minister, Biju Pattanaik, commerce Minister, Nilamani Routray and some other official dignitaries as its first guests. The Jawahar Guest House is the first masonry construction on the virgin land of the selected site. In fact, at present, the foundation stone which was laid at a site located at the distance of about 3kms from the confluence point of the river Mahanadi (Hettamundia) has been shifted from that place due to threat of erosion and it is now placed in the premises of Jawahar Guest House.

The construction of the port started from 19th Nov.1962. As a matter of fact, the establishment of the port was possible due to sole initiative, decision and determination of the then chief minister, Biju Pattanaik in spite of financial crisis of the state government. It is worth mentioning here that, Biju Pattanaik is not only

known as a freedom fighter and pioneer in the national struggle for independence but also his contribution to overall economic development of the state of Odisha remains unparalleled in the history of modern Odisha.

The construction of the port was taken up on war footing by the State government under the dynamic leadership of Biju Pattanaik in the revenue village Sandhkud basing upon the report of stability of the seashore. Prior to the construction, the land was acquired for the purpose within a very short span of time through the procedure of the Govt. notification by the special direction of the Chief Minister.

Contrary to the general procedures followed in the acquisition of land from the public and private sectors of industries or for any developmental projects, the land for the Port was acquired by the Govt. under certain exigencies of the circumstances due to special initiative of the Chief Minister for the establishment of the Port. Thus the steps were taken accordingly on the basis of emergency. Both the forest land and private land were utilised for the purpose and the land under the private ownership was acquired through proper notification and payment of compensation.

No resistance or any kind of agitation was exhibited in any form by anybody in view of the public support at large for the construction of the Port. The total acreage of land acquired for the Port, both the Govt. and private ownership to the extent of about 8156.96 acres was found to be incorrect. In the long run, after proper verification and estimate from the govt. records, ultimately the total acreage of the land to the extent of 6285.54 acres was settled up and finalised in favour of the Port Trust.

The entire machinery of the govt. was geared up and diverted towards the construction of the Port. At that time, the govt. was facing financial hardship on account of natural calamity of drought. But the Chief Minister braved the situation and an amount of 20.3 crores was spent from govt. exchequer for the construction of the Port. During the initial stage of construction, the attention was also paid towards creating communication facilities by the road to the sites of the mineral deposits. With that end in view, the construction of the Express Highway from Paradip to Daitary was started in 1962 in spite of financial deficit of the State Govt.

The full-fledged infrastructures of the Port could not be completed in time due to want of requisite funds. At last, at the request of the State Government, the Government of India took over the management of the Port since 1st June 1965. The Port was declared to be navigable by Peter Stambolic, Prime Minister of Yugoslavia with the entry of the Naval Vessel, INS INVESTIGATOR on the 12th March, 1966. Paradip Port was declared as a major port on the 18th April, 1966 as per the notification no. GSR 614 dated 18.4.1966 Govt. of India. A Trust Board was constituted for the port under the Ports Trust Act, 1963 for the management of the Port on 1st November 1967. The first Board of the Trustees was appointed by the Govt. of India under the chairmanship of Kartar Singh.

The Paradip port is situated at latitude $20^{\circ} - 15' - 6''$, N longitude $85^{\circ} - 40' - 35''$ East. It is located at about 10 kms away southwest of False Point. The distance via sea route from Calcutta and Visakhapatnam and Chennai are 210, 216 and 598 nautical miles respectively. The port is 122 kms. from Bhubaneswar and 90kms from Cuttack. The nearest airport is at Bhubaneswar.

At present, the Paradip Port is one of the major ports and occupies second position among all the major Ports of India as far as the volume of cargo handling in the last financial year (2019-2020).

There altogether 20 (twenty) berths with 3 (three) single point moorings, are operating. The Paradip Port is situated strategically to serve the hinterland spreading across India in the States of Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and West Bengal. The Port is involved in carrying business of various cargoes such as Crude oil, POL Products, Iron ore, Thermal Coal, Chrome Ore, Coking Coal, Manganese Ore, Charge Chrome, Scrap, Fertilizer, Fertilizer Raw materials, Clinker, Gypsum, Project Cargo and containers. The Port crossed 57 million tones of cargo in export and import for the first time in the year 2009-2010 as its glorious achievement.

To state in precision, the depth of any Port is primarily responsible for earning reputation far and wide for its dynamic role. The depth of the approach channel Paradip Port is measured to be 18.7mtrs. and under the existing state of its operation a large vessel carrying cargoes to the tune of one lakh metric ton can enter into the Port because of continuity of depth of 17.1 mtrs in the channel of the Port. Thus, the Paradip Port is fortunate enough to have this opportunity at the entire eastern coast line of India. At any time the sea depth (draught) can be increased at a very low cost because of sandy nature of the soil at the bottom level. Further in view of feasibility and natural strength of the Port, it will be capable for handling cargo to the tune of 325 million tonnes by the year 2025. Undoubtedly, the Paradip Port stands for its glorious achievement and bright future due to its strategic geographical location and Nature's gift.

Port facilities consist of mechanical coal handling plant, Iron ore handling plants, General cargo Berths, Oil Jett, Fertilizer and petroleum products handling berths, Rollon Rolloff Jetty and oil handling mooring Points. All berths are equipped with high power cargo Handling Equipments. The Port has 19,99,515 sq mts open stackyard and two warehouses of 7711 sq mts area. The Port has own railway system with seven loco motives. There is 7.4 kms route length and 85 kms track length in the port area. Paradip Port is a ISO 9001-2015 certified and ISPS compliant port.

All major ports of India have handled 704.650 million tons of cargo in the financial year 2019-2020. Deendayal (Kandla) port has

handled 122.499 million tons of cargo as the highest volume of cargo, where as Paradip Port has handled 112.689 million tons of cargo securing second highest volume cargo handling of our country.

With continuous increasing trend in modernising the port and natural draught facility to accommodate bigger vessels, Paradip Port will no doubt achieve the laurel of highest volume cargo handling port of India within a period of couple of years and will be the pioneer of major ports.

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The Regime of Terror

Sonali Mohapatra

I was not there
but I heard it all
felt it all
Paris fell and so did we
Baghdad and Mumbai
and Lebanon and Syria.

At the end somebody wins
builds an empire of skeletons
and empty eye holes
loses his mind sitting on a
burning pile of shit.

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