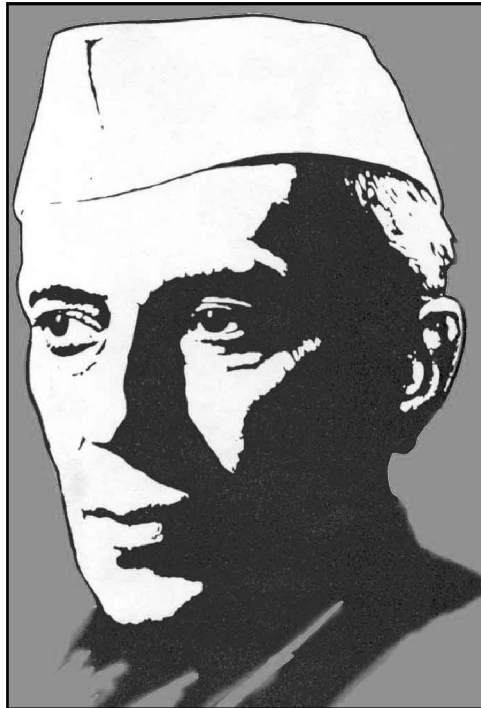


## Nehru in Orissa

*Siddhartha Dash*

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, the first Prime Minister of Independent India, was one of the greatest men of our generation. He was the able lieutenant and political successor of Mahatma Gandhi. Like Gandhi, his Guru, Nehru loved and admired the people of Orissa. He had visited Orissa several times. Below is given a very brief account of Nehru's visit to Orissa.

Due to persistent demands of the Congress for freedom, the British government ultimately decided to give Indians some share in the administration of provinces in the middle of the third decade of the last century. As a result, elections were declared in 1936. Mahatma Gandhi and almost all prominent Congress leaders travelled all over the country to campaign for the Congress. Nehru, despite severe mental agony caused due to the sad demise of his wife Kamala in Feb. 1936 travelled several states including Orissa. The Congress won the elections and formed Government in eight provinces.



Nehru visited Orissa for the first time on 10th Nov. 1936. He was received by the then President of Ganjam District Congress Committee Sri. Dibakar Pattnaik. Accompanied by Pandit Nilakantha Das and Bhagirathi

Mahapatra, President and Secretary of Utkal Provincial Congress respectively, Nehru toured several places of undivided Ganjam, Puri and Cuttack district. At first he addressed a small gathering at Balugaon. Large crowds greeted him at Athagada and Aska. To them Nehru spoke on the poverty of the farmers of Orissa and the oppression of the Zamindars. He told that poverty in India could be eradicated by all people joining the ranks of the Congress and by supporting congress candidates during the elections. Then he

proceeded to Sherguda. After a brief halt, he proceeded to Berhampur. A meeting was organized there where Nehru reiterated the

Congress demand for *Purna Swaraj*. In the Cuttack town hall, he addressed a big gathering. He also addressed numerous mass meetings in the rural pockets like Bahugram, Jagatsinghpur, Salepur and Kendrapara.

After a lapse of long twelve years of his first visit, Nehru came to Orissa for the second time on 12th April 1948. This time he was accompanied by his niece Miss Rita Pandit (daughter of Vijayalaxmi Pandit) and B.K. Nehru, ICS, Secretary Works, Mines and Power, Government of India. He was received at Jharsuguda aerodrome by Governor Kailash Nath Katju and Premier Dr. H.K. Mahtab. From Jharsuguda he motored to Sambalpur, got an idea of the entire area to be submerged by the proposed reservoir of the Hirakud Dam. He laid the foundation of independent India's first major river valley project at Hirakud which subsequently became the largest river valley project of the world. Addressing the gathering there Nehru said that the project would bring in immense wealth not only to Orissa but to the entire country. From Sambalpur he came to Bhubaneswar by air. On 13th April 1948 exactly at 10.20 AM in the presence of a very large jubilant crowd Nehru laid the foundation stone of Orissa's new capital Bhubaneswar.

In course of his speech he said "the laying of the foundation stone of this new city has been a task after my heart. Construction is always welcome. To build a city is something happy to think of. There could not be a greater joy than to create. It is almost god like to create. To be associated, therefore, with the construction of the city has been a thing I appreciate most."

Prime Minister Nehru's third visit to Orissa took place on 13th December 1951. This time he was accompanied by his sister Mrs. Vijayalaxmi Pandit. A large crowd of distinguished

persons including Chief Minister Nabakrushna Choudhury and Utkal Congress President Biswanath Das received him at Jharsuguda. In course of his speech Nehru referred to the oneness of our ancient country and her age-old secular principles. He also pointed out the evils of casteism and communalism. From Jharsuguda, Nehru proceeded to Sambalpur. On the way he stopped at way-side villages, chatted with the children and reminded the people about Gandhiji's emphasis on Village Industry. On 14th Dec. accompanied by his sister Mrs. Pandit, Biswanath Das and Nabakrushna Choudhury, he came to Bhubaneswar where he motored round the new town, and reviewed the progress of the construction work of the new capital. Then on the same day at Cuttack, he addressed a gathering of nearly one lakh people for long ninety-five minutes.

On 8th May 1955 Nehru visited Orissa once again. He came to Berhampur from Bhubaneswar by a special train. This time his daughter Mrs. Indira Gandhi accompanied him. For sometime, he stayed in the premises of Khallikote College where he discussed for about an hour with Acharya Vinoba Bhave, who was already present there. In the evening of 8th May he addressed a large gathering at the famous Courtpeta grounds. Nehru stayed at Berhampur for two more days. He participated in the deliberations of the Working Committee of the Congress and attended a meeting which was held in his honour by the local Telgu association.

Nehru came to Orissa for the fifth time on January 13, 1957. His main purpose was to inaugurate the Hirakud Project. At the time of inauguration he declared " I dedicate this magnificent project to the well-being and prosperity of the people of Orissa". He further

said that Orissa a land of temples had now a new temple and in it a god for the whole country."

On 28th March, 1961 Nehru visited Orissa once again. In the morning of that day he arrived at Rourkela airstrip, where he was given a rousing reception by a large crowd. Then he inaugurated Rourkela Steel Plant which was the 1st public sector steel plant of India. In his inaugural speech Nehru spoke that the Rourkela Steel Plant had not only enriched Orissa but also enriched India.

On 3rd January 1962 Nehru came to Orissa. He inaugurated on that day Paradeep Port which is at present the deepest sea port of our country. In this connection it may be mentioned that it was Orissa's great dynamic leader Biju Patnaik, who despite opposition from several quarters almost compelled the Prime Minister for the establishment of Paradeep Port. The same day Nehru inaugurated the 49th session of Indian Science Congress in the premises of Ravenshaw College. In his inaugural address he appealed to the scientists to spread scientific temper among the people. A great historian as he was, the Prime Minister reminded the audience the glory of the ancient Kalingans who braved the stormy sea and settled in the South Asian Countries. Besides, he also spoke on the virtues of democratic decentralization of power.

Jawaharlal's last visit to Orissa was in January 1964. An unusually big jubilant crowd greeted their beloved Prime Minister and his daughter Mrs. Indira Gandhi as they arrived at Bhubaneswar on 5th January by a helicopter from Tikarapada. Earlier on that day at Tikarapada, Nehru laid the foundation of a multipurpose dam across the river Mahanadi and laid the foundation of Talcher Thermal Power Station. On 6th January, 1964 he attended the colourful ceremony of the 68th session of the Indian National Congress, which was held at Gopabandhu Nagara, Bhubaneswar. Most ironically Nehru spoke there for two minutes. Then suddenly, as ill luck would have it, he felt very tired and weak with a rise in blood pressure. As a result, for six days he was confined to a bed in the Raj Bhawan.

Nehru left Bhubaneswar, not to return anymore, on 12th January, and by 1 PM he reached Delhi. His last message to the people of Orissa was, "YOURS IS A SMALL STATE, BUT YOU HAVE A BIG HEART".

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#### IRON ORE PELLETTISATION COMPLEX IN ORISSA

Bramhani River Pellets Ltd. (BRPL) is an Indian Company promoted by STEMCOR GROUP of U.K. It is planning to set up an Iron Ore Pelletisation Complex in Keonjhar and Jajpur district in the State of Orissa, using Iron Ore fines with an investment of Rs.1485 crore. This type of plant for value addition to Iron Ore fines is first of its kind in the State.

The Project consists of the following:

- i) 4 MTPA Iron ore beneficiation plant at Tanto, Nalda of Barbil Tahasil in Keonjhar District.
- ii) 4 MTPA Iron Ore pelletisation plant at Kalinga Nagar Industries Complex, Duburi in Jajpur District.
- iii) Laying of 200 Kms pipeline from Barbil to Duburi to carry beneficiated Iron Ore in slurry form.