

BIJU BABU: THE ARCHITECT OF MODERN ODISHA

Biju Patnaik, the epitome of the Odia pride and honour, the legendary leader and architect of modern Odisha has proved his worth as an Eminent son of the soil through his novel, daring and revolutionary strides. This great visionary and stalwart was born in a cultured, reputed freedom fighter family in March 5th, 1916 at Anand Bhawan in Tulasipur area of Cuttack. His father Laxminarayan Patnaik and his mother Ashalata Devi nurtured in him courage and inspired and encouraged him on his brave daredevil deeds from his early childhood. Bijubabu's dreams, determination and dedication brought him success all along and earned him and the land of Odisha great fame worldwide. Bijubabu is one of the rare breed of leaders whose thoughts and visions encompassed the entire humanity. His field of action was not ever confined to state or National territories but transcended to the International arena. Although he engaged himself with civilian political activities his aviation prowess pulled him into many military operations where his exploits became a part of modern folklore. Bijubabu was immensely inspired by the great French Statesman Napoleon Bonaparte and accepted him as his role-model.

Since boyhood, Bijubabu was fond of an adventurous life. When he was studying B.Sc. in Ravenshaw College he had great interest in Aeronautics and Industry. His dreams of becoming a pilot became a reality when he joined the Royal Indian Air Force and the Indian National Airways. Bijubabu, during his student life set out on cycle from Cuttack to Peshawar. Later Bijubabu joined Indian National Airways and became its ace pilot. In 1940, Bijubabu came in contact with Loknayak Jayprakash Narayan and accepted him as his "Political Guru". Bijubabu's Political Career began during the Quit India Movement when he collaborated with underground Leaders and was imprisoned for thirty months. During the Second World War, when Japan attacked Burma, Bijubabu risked his life while saving many British families. Bijubabu had extended great help to the Chinese rebels by flying over the Himalayan region. In 1947 during the Dutch-Indonesia war with Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru's instructions, Bijubabu helped the first Prime Minister of Indonesia, Sultan Sahariyar, Md. Hatta and other freedom fighters fly across Rangoon from Jakarta to Delhi. The first Indian Plane was landed by him in Kashmir in 1947 when Pakistan attacked India. On returning to Odisha, Bijubabu took interest in industries and established many. Bijubabu became the President of UPCC for one term. In 1961 mid-term election under his leadership, Bijubabu, brought unprecedented absolute majority for Congress Party. Bijubabu became the Chief Minister of Odisha on June 23rd, 1961. During his dynamic regime as the Chief Minister of Odisha on October 1st 1963 Bijubabu ushered in an era of developments. From 1961-1963, Odisha witnessed remarkable transformations in the Industry Sector. Among many development programmes carried out during

the time, Paradip port, 91 Km. Daitari-Paradip Express Highway connecting-line to the mines today's (National NH-5, A). Balimela Hydro-electric Project, Thermal Plan, Talcher Thermal Project, Sunabeda MIG aircraft factory, Barbil Sponge iron factory, NALCO Aluminium project and establishment of many other projects and micro & medium industries at Panchayat level were Bijubabu's achievements. Odisha State Electricity Board (1961), Odisha Industrial Development Corporation (1962), Odisha Small Industries Corporation (1961-1962) and many other corporations and boards were established by this great Son of Odisha. Grampanchayat Industrial Units was established by Bijubabu for industrial development in the rural areas. Bijubabu is the founder of panchayat level industries in Odisha. During his tenure, Regional Engineering College and many Engineering and Polytechnic colleges were established. Prioritizing spread of education specially technical education massive steps were taken up during the time. Sainik School and Regional Training College were opened at the time. Primary school course books from class 1 to 5th was nationalized. Military Airbase and landing unit at Charbatia, Sambalpur and Berhampur University, Odisha University of Agriculture & Technology, Engineering and Medical College at Burla were among the major accomplishments of Bijubabu. Kalinga Airways is one of his creations. Bijubabu, after resigning from the post of Chief Minister of Odisha he became the organizer of Kamraj Yojana.

Bijubabu was honoured the highest civilian honour of Indonesia "Bhumi Putra" for his heroic contribution for that country. Bijubabu instituted the prestigious Kalinga Award in UNESCO which is conferred on eminent Scientists every year. Biju Patnaik's versatile personality, daredevilry attitude, his visions and contributions to the entire country has made him immortal. In 1948 when Pakistan attacked India, Bijubabu was the first one to land the Indian soldiers at Srinagar Airbase. In 1962 during China aggression, Bijubabu set on a secret mission to America with the instructions of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. In 1965, during India-Pakistan war, the then Prime Minister, Lalbahadur Shastri sent Bijubabu to Indonesia. Through Bijubabu's efforts, Indonesia ceased the sale of war planes to Pakistan. Iron man Sardar Ballavbhai Patel's inspirations motivated Bijubabu to dedicate himself to the services of common man. And hence begun Bijubabu's entry into active politics in 1946 when he was elected to the Bidhansabha from Cuttack constituency. Bijubabu was a very close aide of Dr. Harekrushna Mahtab. In 1957 in the 2nd general Assembly election, Bijubabu gained the support of Jharkhand & Communist Party and took a leading role in the Mahtab Ministry formation. Bijubabu's efforts bore fruit and in May 1959 a Union Ministry was constituted under the leadership of Dr. H. K. Mahtab. During Bijubabu's regime as Pradesh Congress leader, youth Congress leadership emerged in Odisha politics. On April 6th 1970 after separating from Congress Bijubabu constituted 'Utkal Congress'. Later in 1973 January

26th Biju Patnaik formed the 'Pragati Dal'. On February, 1990 under Bijubabu's leadership Janata Party secured majority and then on March 5th 1990, Bijubabu's second term as the Chief Minister of Odisha began. His ministry continued for 5 long years till 1995. Innovative programmes were introduced to eradicate poverty and unemployment in Odisha. Bijubabu pioneered Women Emancipation in Odisha. Prioritizing and patronising women employability, age limit of women was relaxed. Minimum wages of daily labourers was raised to Rs.25/-. Pension for old age, differently abled and widows was raised to Rs.100/-. Construction of dwellings for the rural poor under Kalinga Kutir Yojana, financial assistance scheme for the small and marginal farmers were some of the programmes implemented during his time. Age limit was lifted off on pension for widows. Mahila Bikash Nigam, Mahila Bank and State Women Commission were established. Number of Districts in Odisha was raised to 30. Bijubabu was the promoter of universalisation of Primary Education in Odisha. Total literacy programme was started in 6 Districts during the time.

In 1995 Bijubabu became the leader of opposition. Later he contested for Lok Sabha Election held in June 1996 from Aska and Cuttack constituency. He was elected from both the constituencies. He resigned from O.L.A. as Parliament Member from Aska Lok Sabha constituency.

Bijubabu had taken up pledge to take Odisha to the top in every sphere. "Kalinga" was associated in his dream and actions. He had set up Kalinga Tubes, Kalinga Airlines, Kalinga Iron Works, Kalinga Awards, Kalinga Refrigerator, Kalinga Newspaper, Kalinga Foundation etc. Odisha Textile Mills was set up at Choudwar. Bijubabu's self confidence and self esteem inspired him always to stride ahead. He was the motivator of work culture. His straight-forwardness was his innate quality. His efforts in bringing about reformation in Administration and Capacity Building will forever be etched in the mind of million Odia's.

This veteran leader Biju Patnaik passed away on 17th April 1997 at Escort Hospital, New Delhi. He was survived by his wife Gyan Patnaik, two Sons Prem and Naveen and one daughter Gita. Bijubabu will forever remain a milestone in the History of developed Modern Odisha.
