

What can be done for Odisha's abject poverty?



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Dedication

To Krishna, Raj and Neil,

The loves of my life

And

To the young people of Orissa.

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PREFACE

I was born in village Mulbar presently in Bargarh District (earlier it was in Sambalpur District) of Orissa. My father was a farmer with about 3 acres of land. As a child I used to help my father in farming chores. We were three brothers. My middle elder brother died few years ago. All, three of us got an education and escaped rural poverty. After graduating from All India Institute of Medical Sciences with an M.B.B.S degree, I emigrated to United States of America in 1970 and became a Pediatrician. Whenever we visit our family in Sambalpur (about every 3 years), we visit our village.

Our village is not in the irrigated area – i.e- it does not receive water from canal connected to Hirakud Reservoir. When I was growing up, our village had no electricity or all-weather roads. It had an elementary school with about 60 students and two teachers. When I was in Medical College, I helped to upgrade it to a middle school (upto 7th grade). About 18 Years ago our family trust built a high school in our village with a hostel for girls. Now around 250 students are studying in the high school (3 classes) out of which 60% are girls. Our village is situated near the Baraphal forest. When I was in elementary school (in 1950's), the nearby forest had tigers, bears, barasambar and lots of monkeys. The forest was denuded by Brajaraj Nagar Paper Mills (State Government sold all the bamboo to the paper mill) over 20-25 years. Now there is no wild lives to speak up and the forest is gone.

About 20 years ago, with the help of "TREES FOR LIFE" a U.S. based organization, we dug few tube wells and planted thousands fruits trees in our area. Now our village has more than 50 bore wells and villagers are growing multiple crops besides rice. There is a shortage of labor in our village. All our village boys and girls are attending high school. The village has electricity, phone and a all-weather road. But, our village still has many poor people, who are living a hand to mouth existence by working for the landed farmers or by selling some forest products.

The partial success story of our village is an exception rather than a norm in Orissa, especially non-costal Orissa. Most Oriya villages are still quite poor, with no

access to all-weather road, drinking water, sanitation and to minimal nutrition and basic health care. Most girls are not in school. Most men and women are unemployed or under employed. Judging by the Human Development Indicators, Orissa villages are at the bottom in whole of India.

Even though I am a successful physician now, I was born to a poor family, in a poor village, in a poor part of Orissa. I have known this village, Mulbar, all my life. I have been an integral part of its development. I understand village poverty and its deprivation well.

I have been interested in problems of poverty eradication for a long time. I have researched the subject extensively. I have written two books on the subject (in 1997 and 2002). The literature in the area of poverty eradication is vast. The problems are varied and complex (nation to nation, region to region) and the proposed solutions are many. None of the solution are easy. In this book, I have stated the problems and provided some solutions to the low Human Development Status of Orissa. I know that economic prosperity comes not from government programs but from entrepreneurial activities. Government of Orissa while felicitating the entrepreneurial activities of all Oriyas, should pay special attention to the bottom 50% who live below the national poverty guidelines. I have outlined some of the measures keeping above goal in mind. Most of the ideas (some are mine) have been borrowed from experts from all over the globes. As a writer, I am hoping that you, the reader, will find them informative. I am also hoping that you will do your part in helping Oriyas, who are at the bottom, facing “abject” poverty.

Dr. Saheb Sahu,
Bhubaneswar – 2008.

Chapter – 1

PRESENT DEVELOPMENT STATUS OF ORISSA

“Yet though our growth rate has gone up, it has not reduced social and regional imbalances in development adequately. It has not provided to crores of our SC, ST and OBC brethren their rightful share in nation’s development. It has not sufficiently addressed the problems and needs of agriculture and small-scale industries. It has not yet provided gainful employment to millions of Indians. Our villagers need better roads, accessible and affordable healthcare and educational opportunities for their children. If this need for development is not quenched soon, it could create problems for our democracy and governance.”

Atal Bihari Vajpayee

Former P.M of India,

India Today International, Jan;02;2006.

In the above quorate, former Prime Minister Vajpayee is talking about India in general, but it applies more to under developed Eastern States like Bihar, Orissa, Madhya Pradesh, West Bengal, Jharkhand and Chattisgarh. Most of these states have high tribal population and are the most underdeveloped and poor states in India.

The Human Development Index and The Human Poverty Index:-

Each year, United Nation Development Program (UNDP), publishes the Human Development Report. It consists of the Human Development Index (HDI), the Human Poverty Index (HPI), and the Gender Equality Index (GEI). The HDI for India, in 2005 was 0.619, which gives it a rank of 128th out of 177 countries in the world. The number one country in the world is Iceland, with HDI of 0.968. The Human Poverty Index (HPI) for India, in 2004 was 0.472, which ranks India 62 and among 108 developing countries for which the Index has been calculated.

The Planning Commission of India, follows the UNDP guidelines and calculates similar indices for all the states in India. (HDR – 2007/2008).

Definition of Poverty by UNDP: -

“If human development is about enlarging choices, poverty means that opportunities and choices most basic to human development are denied. Thus a person is not free to lead a long, healthy, and creative life and is denied access to a decent standard of living, freedom, dignity, self-respect and respect of others. From a human development prospective, poverty means more than the lack of what is necessary for material well.-being.”

UNDP- Human Development Report – 2007.

The Human Development Index:- (See Table - 1)

The Human Development Index is calculated based on 36 indicators, 6 of which are based on demography, 4 on income, 13 on education, 13 on health and 1 on environment. The HDI for Orissa in 2004 was 0.404 compared 0.472 for India. Almost, in all indicators, Orissa ranks close to bottom among Indian states, except for environment. The environmental indicator is high, as Orissa has more forest land compared to other states.

(Table 1-1)

ORISSA, KERALA AND INDIA
HUMAN DEVELOPMENT FACT SHEET
(The data sources are listed below)

Sl.	INDICES	Orissa	Kerala	India
1	Human Development Index value 2001 (calculated only for fifteen major states)	0.404	0.638	0.472
2	Human Development Index Rank (out of 32)	28	3	
3	Human Poverty Index Rank (out of 32)	31	4	
INDICATIONS				
DEMOGRAPHY				
1	Total Population - 2001	36,706,920	31,818,619	1,027,015,247
INCOME				
1	Per capital net state domestic product (at 1993-94 prices, Rs.(1998-99)	5,264	9,542	9,647
2	Percentage of Population below poverty line 1999-2000	47	13	26
EDUCATION				
1	Literacy Rate - 2001 (%)	64	91	65
2	Male Literacy Rate - 2001 (%)	76	94	76
3	Female Literacy Rate - 2001 (%)	51	88	54
4	Rural Female Literacy Rate - 2001 (%)	47	87	47
HEALTH				
1	Life Expectancy at Birth, 1992-96(Yrs.)	57	73	61
2	Infants Mortality Rate - 2000	96	14	68
3	Percentage of Children underweight(-2SD)1998-99	54	27	47
4	Percentage of houses with access to safe drinking water - 1991	39	19	62
ENVIRONMENT				
1	Percentage of Record Forest Area to total geographical area 1996-98	37	29	23

- 1) Indices - Government of India (2001), National Human Development Report, Planning Commission, New Delhi
- 2) hdr.undp.org/ind.india/India-orissa.2004

Population and Population Density: -

According to 2001 census, population of Orissa was 3.6 crores (36 millions), compared to 3.1 crores (31 million) for Kerala, and 102 crores (1,027 millions) for India. However, the population density for Orissa was 236 per sq. mile, compared to 819 for Kerala, 904 for West Bengal, and 324 for India (Population density is defined as no of persons per square kilometer). Even though Orissa's population density increased from 203 in 1991 to 236 in 2001, it ranks 22 among the States and Union territories. Hence, high population cannot be blamed for the Low Human Development Index of Orissa.

Income:-

The per captia net state domestic product (at 1993-1994 prices) for Orissa in 1990 was Rs.5200 compared to Rs.9500 for Kerala and Rs.9600 for India. Note, that Kerala's per capital income is not that high, close to national average, but its Human Development Index is No.1. The more important factor, percentage of population below the poverty line was 13 for Kerala, 26 for India and whopping 47 for Orissa. The poverty index rank for Orissa is 31, out of 32 states and Union territories. Think of it, fifty percent of Oriyas are dirt poor.

Education:-

The overall literacy for Orissa is 64% compared to 91% for Kerala and 65% for India as a whole. The female literacy rate is only 51, compared 88 for Kerala and 54 for India. However, the rural female literacy rate is more important - which is 47 for Orissa and 87 for Kerala and 47 for India. No state or country can move forward, unless its women are educated. This fact is well established now. Female education holds key to better Human Development Index. The urban female literacy rate for Orissa 73, same as average of India which is a hopeful sign.

Health: -

The life expectancy at birth (i.e how long one person will live) in 1996 for a Oriya was 57 years, compared to 73 years for a Keralite and 61 years for an average Indian. Besides, life expectancy, infant mortality rate, under 5 mortality rate, maternal mortality rate, total fertility rate and the percentage of underweight children and availability of drinking water and sanitation are other important indicators of health. Orissa's rank is almost at the bottom (see Table1-1) on all those indicators. The infant mortality rate is the most reliable indicator of overall health status as well as development of a state or country. It depends on the nutritional status of mothers and children, (i.e income) availability of drinking water and sanitation, immunization and health related infrastructure - doctors, nurses, hospitals and empowerment of women in the state or the country. The infant mortality rate (i.e number of children dying under 1 year of age per 1000 live births) for Orissa was 96 (2000), compared to 14 for Kerala and 68 for India. It is highest in the country. Under nourishment is a sign of poverty as well as poor health care. The percentage of children, underweight in Orissa (1999) was 54, compared 47 for India and 27 for Kerala. The percentage of houses with access to safe drinking water (1991) was 39 for Orissa compared to 62 for India, but the percentage of houses with access to toilet facilities was only 9, compared to 49 for India. In summary a large percentage of population Orissa are undernourished, lack safe drinking water and sanitation and medical care. As a result the infant mortality rate is very high and life expectancy is at least 4 years lower than an average Indian and 16 years lower than a Keralite.

Environment: -

Human Development Index takes into account percentage of recorded forest area to total geographic area, as the main environmental criteria. For Orissa, the percentage is 37 compared to 23 for India. It is a good sign but it is also misleading. Much of so called recorded forest areas are government's land, recorded as forest but denuded. Except for certain limited areas in some districts, most of Orissa's virgin forests have

been cut for revenue. Replantation schemes are just on paper. They have not worked. People are still using fire wood for cooking and cutting small trees for fuel. So, the actual percentage of forest area may be closer to 15 or 20% rather than 37% as shown on government's statistics. Orissa is also facing other environmental problems like - polluted air and water, excess garbage, and continued pollution by small and large scale industries. There is also tremendous environmental damage being done by all the surface minings. Even though stripe mining has been banned in most developed countries, as it causes serious environmental damage, in Orissa it is the main modality of extracting coals and minerals. The way the past and present Orissa governments have sold its natural resources (forest products and minerals), Orissa will be depleted of its most natural resources within next 40-50 years. The remaining forests and minerals will be gone and the villages in the mining area will be left with large holes surrounding their villages. The poor local villagers would have got very little in return.

The Human Poverty Index: - (HPI)

The Human Development Report (of UNDP) in 1997, introduced the concept of a Human Poverty Index (HPI). Rather than measure poverty by income alone, the HPI uses indicators of the most basic dimensions of deprivations: a short life, lack of basic education and lack of access to public and private resources. The HPI concentrates on the deprivation in the three essential elements of human life already reflected in the Human Development Index: longevity, literacy and decent standard of living. The Planning Commission of India, follows UNDP guidelines and calculates the Human Poverty Index for all the states.

At the national level, the incidence of poverty declined from 44.48 percent in 1983 to 26.10 percent in 1999-2000. At the states level, among the major states, Orissa, Bihar, West Bengal and Tamil Nadu had more than 50 percent of their population below the poverty line 1983. By 1999-2000, while Tamil Nadu and West Bengal had reduced their poverty ratios by nearly half, Orissa and Bihar continued to be the two

poorest states with poverty ratio of 47 and 43 percent respectively. According to the Planning Commission Report, rural Orissa and rural Bihar continued to be the poorest areas both in 1983, as well as in 1999-2000. Even in urban areas the poorest three states were Orissa, Madhya Pradesh and Bihar. Thus, Orissa is the poorest state in India, both in rural and urban areas. (Planning Commission National Development Report - 2001).

Conclusion: -

According to the Planning Commission's Human Development Report, the status of Orissa as measured by HDI and HPI is at the bottom among the Indian states. In 1983, 50 percent of population in Orissa, Bihar, West Bengal and Tamil Nadu were poor. While all other states have improved significantly, Orissa, in 1999-2000 still has 47 percent of its population below the poverty line. A change of 3 percent in 17 years! The per capita income, the life expectancy, the literacy rate are at the bottom among Indian states. The Infant Mortality Rate is the highest in India. While 51 percent of the households in Kerala have access to toilets, in Orissa the figure is less than 10 percent. Among the various population segments poverty among Schedule Castes and Schedule Tribes is even worse. While other states have reduced their poverty ratios, Orissa and Bihar have been stationary. Why? The causes are many and the solutions are complex. There is no easy answer. We will explore some of the solutions in part II of the book.

References: -

1. www.hdr.undp.2008.
2. Orissa - Human Development Fact Sheet. Govt. of India - 2001. "National Human Development Report". Planning Commission, New Delhi.

PART - II

WHAT CAN BE DONE?

Chapter – 2

GIRL'S EDUCATION

Literacy is a useful indicator of the relative development of a society. It is widely recognized that societies with a higher percentage of literates have higher levels of development. Orissa has one of the lowest literacy rate in India (64% compared to 65% for India). The female literacy rate is even worse (51% compared to 54% for India and 88% for Kerala, 2001 census).

All experts now agree that the potential benefits of elementary education is extremely large. The potential benefits for girl's education is even greater. **When you educate a boy, you educate one person, but when you educate a girl, you educate an entire family.** The benefits of girl's education are many:-

1. Reduction of Under-5 Child Mortality:-

Female literacy and education have an unambiguously powerful impact in reducing under-5 child mortality. This relationship is not tied to father's education or income or availability of healthcare. Educated mothers take better care of their children, themselves and their families, hence lower under-5 child mortality rate.

2. Decreased Fertility Rate:-

The link between female literacy and fertility is particularly clear. This connection has been widely observed in other countries around the world. Educated girls delay their marriage. When they have children, they space them better (i.e. increased time interval between 1st child, and the second and between second and the third etc.,). They are also unwilling to be shackled to continuous child rearing. They also exercise greater freedom in the family decisions to have or not to have more children, to use or not to use contraceptive. All these decisions lead to lower over all fertility and

birth rate. The case of Kerala state is the best example in the world. While the total fertility rate (fertility rate – no of lives birth to 1,000 women between 15-44 years of age) for India as a whole is still as high as 3.0 that rate for Kerala has fallen 2.0. Tamil Nadu and Himachal Pradesh have also experienced similar reduction in fertility rate. When the fertility rate is under-2, the population growth is at replacement level.

3. Increased Productivity:-

Studies have shown that even one grade of education increases a person's productivity by ten to fifteen percents.

4. Gender Equality and Decision Making:-

Women who are educated are more likely to work outside the home. Women who have independent income have higher social standing at home and in the society. Their contribution to the prosperity of the family is more visible. They have more voice in the family decisions. Women's power and initiative can uplift the lives of all human beings – women, men and children. Literate women are more likely to attain that power and equality than their illiterate counterparts.

HOW TO IMPROVE GIRL'D EDUCATION?

1. Compulsory Enrollment:-

The goal of the state should be to enroll all school aged boys and all girls into elementary schools – with no exception.

2. Provide Mid-Day Meal:-

Studies show that, as the education grade rises, the school dropout rate increases. The dropout rate for girls is much higher than that of boys. Many states have been quite successful in reducing the dropout rate by providing mid-day meals, (example – Tamil Nadu). Mid-Day Meals provides at least one nutritional meal to improvised children and improves their nutritional health status. A healthy child learns better.

3. Hire More Female Teachers:-

At present most elementary school teachers are men. If more teachers are female, they will act as role-models to the girl students. The retention rate will improve.

4. Improve the Infrastructure of Schools:-

Many elementary and secondary schools are old and falling apart. Many of them lack drinking water, latrine or electricity, let alone computers. The state's education department spends very little on school infrastructure. Most of its budget is spent on teachers and administration. Every school should be provided with clean drinking water, latrines and appropriate teaching aids. Computers are ideal but not as important.

5. Improve the Quality of Teaching:-

The quality of teaching is as important as the access to school. The qualities of present teachers are so so. They are poorly trained. Many of them are not showing up in class – especially in village schools. Many are drawing full time salary, without working full time. The absentee rate in one teacher school is more than 50 percent. The teachers are not afraid of the parents and are not showing up in class. The supervision of all the elementary schools should be handed over to the village Panchayat. There should be a school management committee consisting of parents of children in that school. The committee should closely monitor all the activities of the school, including the teachers and mid-day meal provider staff. The local Panchayat should hire and fire the teachers and other staff. The total amount budgeted for the school (teacher's salary, maintenance, supply etc.,) should be handed over to the Panchayat by the Education Department. At present, teachers are being hired and fired at Bhubaneswar. The school inspectors are being bribed and very little real teaching is going on. The school inspector, who comes once or twice a year for inspection cannot monitor the teachers. It

should be the job of the school committee. Their children are in school. They are the most interested parties.

A proper curriculum, appropriate teaching tools and testing are also important.

6. Reduce the dropout rate:-

The overall dropout rate at the primary stage in Orissa (2003-2004) was 35% for girls and 32% for boys. The dropout rate in the upper primary level is even greater 59% for girls and 57% for boys. So, if 1000 students start school at elementary level, only 89 girls and 100 boys will reach the high school level. The dropout rate is outrageous. Building more schools and hiring more teachers (who will not go to villages) is not the answer. The causes of dropout for each child have to be investigated by the school teachers and steps taken to remedy them. The mid-day meal program has reduced the dropout rate in Tamil Nadu and other parts of the world. Orissa should implement this program vigorously in all schools.

7. Higher Education:-

The state's education department should be mainly responsible for elementary and secondary education. State run elementary and secondary schools should compete with private schools. Government should spend smaller part of its education budget on higher education. The higher education (College, Universities, Technical Colleges) should be privatize as much as possible. Private institutions – like Trusts and even for profit enterprises should be encouraged to open institutions of higher learning like – medical, dental, nursing, engineering in the state. The state should provide them free land and in return get 20-25 percent seats free for students of BPL families. All the state's government colleges and universities should have their own governing boards, consisting of educators and local citizens. The state education department should provide the necessary resources but not interfere with the college governing bodies.

Student loans for higher education should be subsidized by the state and be easily available. The processing of the loan will be done by the colleges.

Conclusion:-

Orissa has one of the lowest literacy rates in India. Even though the male literacy rate is close to the national norm, the female literacy rate is lower. The literacy rate in rural areas, especially among SC and ST is much lower. All experts now agree that without educating its women, no country can develop. The benefits of girl's education are many: reduction of under-5 mortality, decreased fertility and ultimately slowing of population growth, increased productivity and gender equality. According to Duraisamy, "returns (on pure economic basis) to women's education exceed that to men's at middle, secondary and higher secondary levels. Especially at the secondary level the returns to additional schooling of women is over twice as large as the corresponding returns for men." Female education can be improved in Orissa, by compulsory enrollment of all eligible girls in elementary and middle schools, provision of mid-day meal, hiring of more female teachers, improving the school's infrastructures and quality of teaching and reduction in the dropout rate of the students.

Other Resources:-

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Chapter - 3

PROVISION OF BASIC HEALTHCARE

Relationship between Health and Poverty:-

“To reduce poverty, countries have to improve in several key areas: health, education, governance, infrastructure and access to market.” (World Bank - 2003)

Unhealthy people are usually poor because they cannot work to earn a living. They are usually malnourished and susceptible to disease. If they are sick, they are unable to work in the fields in rural areas and in the factories in cities. Thus without an income they cannot buy enough food and cannot afford even minimal health care and become sick again. The vicious cycle of poor health -> Unemployment ->Poverty ->Poor health continues.

Relationship between Nutrition, Health and Learning:-

Malnourished children often have limited attention span and do poorly at school. They are usually anemic. They are tired, restless and irritable. They have increased susceptibility to infections like measles, pneumonia and diarrhea. It is a vicious cycle of malnutrition ->disease ->malnutrition->poor learning. The mid-day meal program which has been successful in many poor countries not only provides nutrition to children, it also helps them learn better in school.

Health or lack of diseases depends; among other things on quantities and quality of diet, clean water, sanitary housing and sewage system and the availability of nurses, doctors, dentists, drugs and hospitals. In Orissa, diseases like malaria, tuberculosis,

leprosy, hookworms and roundworms and diarrhea are very common. There are tremendous shortages of hospital beds, doctors, nurses and medical technologists.

In India, the largest number of malaria related deaths are in Orissa. Orissa's infant Mortality Rate (no. of infants dying under 1 year of age per 1,000 live births) of 96 is the highest in India. Under-5 Mortality Rate (No. of children dying under 5 years of age per 1,000 births) is well above the national average (133 vs 94). The life expectancy is lower than the national average. 39% of the households have safe drinking water and only 9% of them have access toilet facilities (the national average 49%). Thus, all the health related Human Development Indicators, are much worse than the national norm. The Infant Mortality Rate is considered to be one of the best indicators (if one has to choose only one indicator) for not only the health status of a country but also the overall development of it. It reflects the nutritional status of the mothers and infants, availability of safe drinking water, food and sanitation, healthcare infrastructures (nurses, doctors, hospitals) and the general income of the people. The high infant mortality rate reflects not only the poor state of healthcare in Orissa, but also her overall poverty.

SOLUTIONS:-

1. Provide Clean Drinkable Water:-

Lots of infectious diseases are spread by the poor quality of drinking water. No matter, how remote is the location of a Oriya village, it should be the government's job to provide clean drinking water to all its citizen. The village wells should be deep and the water chlorinated. During the time of water shortage the public health department should truck drinking water to the people, both in urban and rural areas.

2. Mid-Day Meal:-

Every school in the state (upto 7th grade) should provide a nutritious mid-day meal to all children, rich or poor. The program should be totally funded by the state with the help of the Central Government. However, the program should be administered at the Panchayat level.

3. Immunization:-

Childhood Immunization is the most cost effective method of preventing serious childhood diseases like - measles, polio, tetanus, hepatitis, ear infections and pneumonia. The state should take advantage of Central and International Funding and try to immunize every child in the state.

4. Village Health Workers:-

At present, most of the government healthcare budget is being spent in acute care. Most of the tertiary care facilities (hospitals and nursing homes) are in the urban areas and benefiting may be 25 to 30% of the population. Private acute care treatment is expensive and most people cannot afford it. The so called free care provided by the primary health centers, sub divisional, district and medical college hospitals are not really free. Patients are paying for X-rays, lab works, drugs and even to see a doctor who is a full-time salaried employee of the state government. Nothing is free to the patient. It is only on paper. Many doctors are not going to the primary health centers, just drawing the salaries. There is no indication that even if their salaries are increased, they will go to the villages. Getting admission into medical colleges is quite difficult. Most of the students who get admitted to medical colleges are from upper class families and have grown up in town and cities. Very few of them will ever move to a village to practice medicine there. Even in advanced country like U.S.A, there is shortage of doctors in rural areas. So the short term solution to provide the basic health care to the

rural poor is the village health worker, the equivalent of barefoot doctors in China or the “Shastho Shebikas” of the BRAC model in Bangladesh.

The BRAC (Bangladesh Rural Advance Commission. www.brac.net.) model of providing the Essential Health Care (EHC) to the rural poor has been quite successful. BRAC’S community health volunteers called the “Shastho Shebikas” (SS) are members of the BRAC’S village organization. They serve 300 households each. The Shebikas are semi-literate middle aged women, indigenous to the village. They are given 12 weeks of training by BRAC’S field staff. They receive some financial help (about Rs.500.00) from BRAC to buy medicine and medical supplies. Though the Shebikas work on a voluntary basis, they are able to earn some money through selling of essential health commodities (drugs and some medical supplies). Today BRACR’S SS volunteers are serving 3 corers people in Bangladesh.

Like the BRAC, “Shastho Shebikas” the village health workers in Orissa should be recruited from the village (both male and female, female preferable because they can assist in child birth) and should be given 3-6 months of training in a primary healthcare center, nearer to her village. The village health worker will provide health education (from nutrition to family planning and disease prevention), treat basic ailments like cold, diarrhea, anemia, worms, scabies, dressing of wounds, provide prenatal and post natal care to mothers, weigh and measures infants and children and plot their growth chart, distribute folic acid, prenatal vitamins and iron tablets to mothers, vitamin A capsule to young children, and support Expanded Immunization Programmers run by the governments and NGO’S. They will be the point persons for Direct Observed Treatment Short Course (DOTS) for Tuberculosis. They will be provided with direct communication link to the doctors at the Primary Health Centers and other acute care facilities. They will also be empowered to call for the ambulance services to transport the more serious patients to an acute care facility. For all their work they will be paid a small stipend by the government but they will earn extra money by selling medicines

and medical supplies like bandages, packages of Oral Rehydration Therapy (ORT) and antiseptic solution etc., "BRAC" has significantly reduced infant mortality rate in Bangladesh. The BRAC type health workers in Orissa, will be able to do the same in few years.

NRHM - National Rural Health Mission has been started by central government in 2005. The national programmes mission is to reduce Infant Mortality Rate, Maternal Mortality Rate (MMR) and Prevention of Malaria, Filaria, Kalazar, TB and Leprosy. If, it works in Orissa, it will be great.

5. Emphasize Health Education and Preventive Healthcare

Disease and death related to diabetes, heart disease, kidney disease, cancer of mouth, lung, cervix and bladder, hepatitis, HIV-AIDS, obesity, childhood diseases like-diarrhea, hookworm, roundworm, blood infection, measles, polio, pneumonia and malaria are preventable. Many of these diseases can be prevented by health education, immunization and provision of chlorinated drinking water and sanitation (i.e. toilet). Eighty percent of malaria can be prevented by regular use of mosquito-nets. Most common cancer among Oriyas is mouth cancer. Mouth cancer, lung cancer and bladder cancer can be prevented by avoidance of pan, bidi, cigarette, panbahar, bettle nut and other tobacco products. The state government should ban the sale of these products and enforce the ban vigorously. By health education and screening, diabetes, high blood pressure, heart disease, kidney disease, cancer of the breast, cancer of the cervix, cancer of the mouth can be diagnosed early. With early diagnosis and treatment serious complications and deaths can be prevented. Serious head injuries can be prevented by regular use of helmet by bicyclists, motor cyclists and scooter riders. Strict enforcement of non-drinking by drivers of all kinds of vehicles will reduce all forms vehicular injuries and death.

The state's health expenditure should be increased significantly and spent mostly on health education, public health measures and preventive health care rather than specialized health care. The state will get lot more return for its money.

6. Decentralize Tertiary Care:-

The New Indian Express, Bhubaneswar dated October 6, 2008 had headlines “Dist. HQ hospital in dire straits”. According to the report, the district headquarters hospital at Keonjhar has 250 bed and has only 20 doctors against the sanctioned strength of 40. The hospital has an ICU but no patient has ever been treated there. Though industrial accidents are common, the victims are being shifted to the SCB Medical College, Cuttack, 200 km away. According to the report, the hospital requires an ambulance. ECG, X-ray, Ultrasound machines and a well equipped operation theatre. Due to shortage of beds, the patients are forced to sleep on the floor and verandah.”

“Healthcare facilities in the state are not as rosy as projected by the state government. The SCB Medical College and Hospital, one of the premier hospitals in the State, does not even provide basic amenities to patients, leave aside quality healthcare.

The hospital doesn’t have digital x-ray machines, MRI facility and adequate number of ventilators. Even emergency investigation is not available in the casualty department of the referral hospital.”

The Times of India,
Bhubaneswar,
Saturday, Nov 22, 2008. P.2

Above are some of the stories about secondary & tertiary healthcare in Orissa.

The current system of primary health centers, sub divisional, district and medical college hospital for treatment of serious illnesses is dysfunctional. Doctors are drawing salaries but not going to a village level primary health centers. In all government run hospitals (District, Medical College Hospitals) the infrastructure are run down. The hospitals are dirty. Patients are paying for x-rays, lab works and drugs to the for profit companies who are inside or just outside the compound of these hospitals. All of them are doing a booming business. The full-time hospital doctors are coming to the hospital clinics or the operation theatres only few hours a day and are busy doing private

practice. As the situation stands now, every body in the system is benefiting except the patients. The state government is spending most of its healthcare budget in these hospitals and getting very little in return. To provide better secondary and tertiary care to its citizens the state government should do the following -

A. Improve Infrastructure and Decentralize -

The infrastructures of all the present government hospitals are poor. The buildings are old and poorly maintained. Most hospitals do not have basic equipments like functioning x-ray or ultrasound machine or laboratory equipments. Private vendors are providing these services - some within the hospital compound and many outside it. There is no quality control or proper pricing for these services. Patients are paying for it from their own pockets. They are at the mercy of private profit-making vendors.

The state government should spend large amount of money over 5-10 years and improve the infrastructures of all the secondary and tertiary care hospitals. That may involve building new hospitals where one does not exist, upgrading and expanding the existing hospitals and equipping them properly. After the hospital is upgraded to the present standard, it should be handed over to a local Hospital Trust. The hospital will be fully autonomous and will not be controlled by the state health department. The funding will come partly from the state, partly from patient's fee and some from donation of local citizen. The hospital will run like a for profit hospital except for BPL - card holders, the charges will be reduced or completely waived. As a condition of handing over the entire infrastructures to the local hospital trust, the state government will see that these hospitals provide free care to at least 40-50% of its patients who are BPL - card holders but have no health insurance. Hopefully the state will provide health insurance to all the BPL families, so that these hospitals will get some revenue from the insurance companies for treating the BPL patients. This system is already working in Andhra Pradesh under the Rajiv Aarogyassri Community Health Insurance Scheme.

B. Encourage Building of for Profit Tertiary Care Hospitals in Private Sector:-

The only source of wealth and leverage for the state government at present is its total monopoly on land ownership. In most towns and city (Example – Bhubaneswar) it is difficult to find 5-10 acres of land at reasonable price. Many private hospital companies will be willing to build hospital in Orissa, if they are given land at concessional rate at proper locations. In return they will have to sign a contract with the state government to provide free care to 15% to 20% of its patients who are BPL – card holders. This way Orissa will have significant increase of tertiary care beds without any expenditure on the part of the state government.

7. Provide Health Insurance for the Poor:-

Serious acute care like heart and kidney disease and all forms of surgeries are costly, no matter who provides the care. An open-heart surgery at Kalinga Hospital, Bhubaneswar cost at least 1.5 lakhs rupees. Same surgery in Bombay or Delhi or Calcutta will cost 4-5 lakhs rupees. The average cost for a day in an adult intensive care unit can be Rs.2000 to Rs.3000. Ninety five percent of people in Orissa do not have that kind of money to afford the care. At present only the employees of big companies like Mahanadi Coalfield Limited, East Coast Railways, Rourkela Steel Plant, State Bank of India, NALCO are able to get private tertiary care, with minimal or no cost to them. Most other Oriyas, unless they are rich (very few Oriyas are) are either selling their land or jewellery to pay for acute care. In that process many of them are growing broke or depleting their entire lives savings. The poor people (who are atleast 50% of Oriyas) who are supposed to be getting free care at district or medical college hospitals are being asked to pay for x-rays, lab workers, CT scans and extra money for surgeries. In the process of getting so called “free care” that they are also going broke.

Tertiary care is going to be expensive no matter who provides it – government or the private sector. The only way it can be paid for is to make reasonable - cost health insurance available for all Oriyas – rich or poor. The Karnataka Government has already launched a similar program for its farmers with a monthly premium of Rs.5, which provides Rs.25,000.00 of coverage.

Andhra Pradesh's **Rajiv Aarogyasri Community Health Insurance Scheme** – has insured 65 million people, below poverty line (BPL) in 2007-2008. (Business standard 22-23/8/08). The premium paid by the state is Rs.330/- per BPL family. It covers all healthcare expenditure upto 1.5 lakh rupees per member, with no out of pocket money for the family. The program is available in all government and private hospitals in Andhra Pradesh.

Orissa should follow Andhra Pradesh example and broaden it to include all – farmers, teachers, all government employees, all small business owners and anyone else who wants to participate. The state government should pay the premium for all the BPL card holders. The state health department, in co-operation with the health insurance industries, should publicize and open the insurance scheme to all. The economics of insurance is such that, more people enroll in an insurance scheme, there are more people to share the risk and the cost of insurance to the individual enrollee goes down. The company also makes more profit. When profit goes up, other companies enter the market and the insurance premium goes further down from competition. Competition always improves service and reduces cost.

Conclusion:-

Provision of basic healthcare is essential for the development of a country. Poor health leads to unemployment and poverty. Unhealthy children do not learn well. Poor health also decreases productivity. Provision of basic healthcare, clean drinking water and sanitation, immunization of all children, mid-day meal to all school going children, should be the responsibility of the state government. Central government and International bodies like the World Bank, W.H.O, Gates Foundation, Ford Foundation,

UNICEF, and many other foundations are providing money to implement many of these schemes. The government of Orissa should be taking advantage of all the available resources, from all the sources.

The state government should significantly increase its health budget. It should reduce the expenditure of providing tertiary care and spend most of its healthcare budget in providing basic healthcare and improving public health measures like provision of drinking water, sanitation and immunization. City trained medical doctors have not gone to rural areas without compulsion and they are not likely to do so in the future. For Orissa, the immediate solution is to implement National Rural Health Mission (NRHM) and encourage "BRAC" or "Barefoot Doctor of China" type of healthcare workers for its villages. It should also follow the example of Andhra Pradesh and provide health insurance free to all the BPL families and make the program available to others to participate.

Other Resources:-

1. Sen, Amartya - *The Argumentative Indian*, New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2005.
2. www.brac.net.
3. Business Standard, Bhubaneswar, The Andhra Pradesh model is a trendsetter 22-23/8/2008

Chapter – 4

PRIVATE PROPERTY RIGHTS

“Ownership is sine qua non of sustainable development”.

James. D.Wofesohn,
President,The World Bank.

Definition of Property Rights:-

Property rights define who owns property, to what use it can be put, the rights of other people over it and how it may be transferred.

Property and Ownership:-

All property must be owned by someone. There are several reasons why private ownership is preferable to government ownership. Private owners tend to take better care of their property because they will reap the benefits of any increase in its value or suffer if its value declines. Owner generally takes better care of their property than renters do. Privately owned flats or houses are better maintained than government housing. The reason is simple. The people who occupy government houses do not feel like owners and hence do not take care of them. Similar way, a farmer, who owns his land, takes better care of it, than the tenant farmer. A rickshaw-puller who owns his rickshaw takes better care of it, than one who rents it. The price of an asset reflects the income it will produce in the future. Thus private owners, who have the right to that income, have incentive to maintain and improve their assets.

Why We Need Property Rights?:-

The right to self-ownership means that individuals must have the right to acquire and exchange property in order to fulfill their needs and desires. To feed ourselves or to provide shelter for our families or open a business, we must make use of the property. And for people to be willing to save and invest, we need to be confident that our property rights are legally secure that someone else, including the government cannot come and confiscate the wealth we have created. That wealth may be in the form of the crop we have planted, the mansion or the hut we have built, the bicycle we have bought or the small or the large business we have created. In the absence of secured property rights, no body will have incentive to create wealth (as happened in the communist countries). It is the property rights, which make trade possible and profitable. Profit motive leads to hard work and make impossible dream possible.

Rethinking Ownership:-

Private property is essential for free-market and free-market is essential for wealth creation. Most economists agree that private property (land, business, animals, patents etc.,) is a powerful engine of economic growth. They also agree that there are large inequalities in property ownership – some having so much while others have so little. In Orissa, the problem is so many have so little of property. One of the solution to the large inequalities is the wide spread ownership of property by individuals, especially women.

WHAT CAN BE DONE?

1. Land Reforms:-

Orissa is an agricultural state. About 75% of the people live in the village and work in the fields. However, a minority of the population own majority of the cultivable land. People who till the lands are either bonded laborers or tenant farmers. They do not own the land. They have no incentive to improve the land (irrigation, fertilization, soil conservation etc.,). The productivity of the land is stagnant. The state government

has to enact land reforms laws and enforce them. The land should not be confiscated from the present owners (that is violation of property rights!), but be bought by the government from the absentee land owners and be sold to tenant farmers at concessional rate.

2. Distribution of Government Land to Landless:-

In a typical village, most of the cultivable land is owned by few families. There are many families in a village (I am quite familiar with our village, Mulbar in Bargarh District), who have never own any land. Some of them work for the landed farmers as temporary laborers during the planting and harvesting seasons. Others work part time, when they find some work, in non farm related fields. In any particular village in Orissa, the families with no land, usually are the poorest. There is non-productive government land surrounding most villages (especially non coastal villages). There is also government forest land nearer to many villages. Most of the government land is denuded of trees and is non productive. All these government land (except the true forest land) should be improved and given to the landless. The amount of land may be small may be 1 acre or 5 acres, but at least the landless villager will be owner of some land nearer to his village. The land should be sold, at very concessional rate to the landless. It should not be leased, but sold, so that the new owner will have all the property rights. As most of these lands will not be suitable for cultivation, the government should help them to plant trees especially hard wood trees like teak as a cash crop.

Peruvian economist Hernando De Soto, has clearly shown that if poor people are given title to their meager asset (juggies or a small illegal road side shop), it frees lots of capital (which is unaccounted now) and leads to prosperity. His studies showed that, the poor in Cairo had an accumulated capital of some 245 billion dollars, which is thirty times greater than the Cairo Stock Exchange. According to him if the poor are given clear title to their asset and the government's related transaction cost is reduced (permit, rules, regulation etc.), the city poor will create new enterprises by leveraging their asset.

3. Micro credit:-

The micro credit movement popularized by Dr. Yunus of “Grameen Bank” of Bangladesh, has been quite successful in alleviating poverty and providing property ownership to millions of women. The “Grameen Bank” concept of small loan to poor women has been copied in many developing and developed countries. With a small loan from the bank, the borrower can buy a pig or a goat or a chicken or a cellphone, can raise fish in the backyard pond or can sell vegetable at the road side. The borrower becomes a property owner. The property generates a stream of future income. In few years, the property owner, trades up to a little bigger property, or sends her son or daughter to college or expands her existing business. The government of Orissa should invite “Grameen Bank” to set up operation in Orissa. It should also invest in other micro credit banks presently operating in the state. The state government should give initial financial boost to these banks, but not run them. These banks should be in private hands for better operational efficiency.

4. Ownership by Women:-

The ownership of land and capital has been concentrated on the male members of the family. There is plenty of evidence that women can run a successful business as well as men. The remarkable success of “Grameen Bank” and “BRAC” in Bangladesh are excellent examples. The back bones of both of these organizations are semi-literate, poor women. There are lots of advantages to women being property owners. It improves their standing in the family and the society. They usually do not waste their wealth on drinking, smoking, gambling or on prostitution. They utilize their limited resources better than men. According to Professor Amartya Sen, “Where women’s agency (power) has improved, the infant mortality rate and fertility rate have decreased.” (Example – Kerala State).

Conclusion:-

The hundred years experiment in socialism and communism is over. Economists, every where, now agree that, without secure property right and rule of law there can be no prosperity. No man will work to produce what he may be deprived of the next hour. Land reform does not succeed when all that government does is to pass legislations to take land from existing owners and distribute them to the landless. There is always unrest among the owners and they do everything possible to by-pass the laws. Productivity decreases (example-Zimbabwe). New land has to be created and distributed. The landless peasants should be given title to the land – so that they can buy and sell it without restriction. Ownership of property by women should be facilitated by the state government at all levels. It empowers them and leads to more gender equality.

Property right is essential for the accumulation of wealth. People who fear for their lives, or who face the risk of losing, through theft or force or government's action (without their approval), whatever valuable asset they might accumulate are unlikely to make investment in their business. They will hoard their wealth in the form of gold or silver or something tangible. Uncirculated wealth does not help anybody. It is dead money. As Francis Bacon (1561-1626) said "Money is like muck, not good except it be spread."

Other Sources:-

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2. Sen, Amartya, Development As Freedom. New York: Alfred A. Knoff 1999.
3. Grameen Foundation. www.grameenfoundation.org.
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5. De.Sota Hermando, The Poor are the Solution, Not the Problem, Action Institute. www.acton.org.

Chapter – 5

THE ROLE OF THE STATE GOVERNMENT

“The important thing for the government is not to do the things which individuals are doing already and do them a little better or a little worse; but to do those things which at present, are not done at all.”

John Menard Keynes (1926)

Since Independence, Orissa had relatively stable governments but most of them have been ineffective except for the administration of Mr. Biju Patnaik, in early 1960's. Most of other Chief Ministers have not been visionary leaders. They have just ruled and tried to maintain power. In spite of its vast natural resources, relatively low population, Orissa still is at the bottom among the Indian States, as measured by many development indicators like GDP, literacy rate, infant mortality rate, etc.,. It is time, Orissa moves at least to the middle rank among the Indian States.

What The Orissa Government Has To Do?

1. Maintain Law and Order:-

One of the main functions of the state government or any government is to maintain law and order. The government should enforce the laws fairly but efficiently, honor private property rights and minimize the taxation on its citizens. The taxes on the businesses should be competitive with other states. The state labor laws should be conducive to businesses so that, they are encouraged to start business in Orissa. If there is labor unrest and strike every other month, no business will come to Orissa or stay in Orissa. Unless new businesses are started, and the existing businesses expand, there will be no new job creation.

2. Reduce Bureaucratic Control:-

At present the state government is run by a few IAS, IPS and OAS officers, with some input from the politicians. All the minor and the major decisions are made in Bhubaneswar. Even the transfer of a teacher or a clerk cannot be done without the approval of some body at the state's capital. The bureaucratic power can only be broken, by transferring most of the developmental decisions to the Panchayats. The decision to dig or not to dig a well, pave a road, hire or fire a teacher, or the primary health center's staff, should be given to the village Panchayat. All the developmental funds, state's, central's and World Bank's should be handed over to the Panchayats. The state's Auditor General's office, should audit the books of the Panchayat once a year and publish its report in the internet and the local paper for all to see. Transparency is the key to reduce corruption.

3. Decentralize Administration From Bhubaneswar:-

At present, except for the few coastal districts, most other districts are quite backward. Some of the district head quarters are not even connected by good roads. Many of them do not have good colleges or hospitals. Things are not going to change in these districts as long as all the department secretaries and ministers have their office in Bhubaneswar. Except for Home and General Administration, all other departments should be moved to different district head quarters. The location will be decided by lottery. The entire departmental staff, including the minister and secretaries should move to the newly designated district head quarters. All the employees including the departmental secretaries will lose their official residences at Bhubaneswar. This move will help each district headquarter to develop as a regional center of education, business and industry. As a general rule, all the government services should be brought to the people, close to where they live, rather than making them travel long distances to the place where the government officials live. In all plans and projects, it would be better to have bottom-up approach than top down approach. Decentralization of powers,

authority and resources to locally elected bodies is the key to governance reforms. The masses especially women, have to be empowered.

4. Privatization:-

The state government should do few things well and get out of business it does not do well or does poorly. Except for law and order, middle and secondary education, basic healthcare and infrastructures development, government should privatize most other services. Government should not be in the business of running industries which are losing money. It should sell them. The transportation department should be closed, except for transportation safety department. Government should hand over the universities and government hospitals to independence Board of Trustees. All the government stores should be sold to private groups or to the employees. Government should not be in the housing business - like the Bhubaneswar Development Authority. It should not be in the banking business or the co-operative bank business. Government should not own or operate mines. It should lease them. The need of every department, every society, every commission or every agency should be re evaluated and many of them should be closed down. Most commissions and agencies have become the parking places for politicians (who have lost elections) and retired civil servants. Most of them should be abolished.

5. Infrastructure Development:-

One of the main functions of the state government is infrastructure (especially rural) development, as private sector is unlikely to do so. The state government should utilize all the central funds and vigorously fight for and implement central schemes like "Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan" and "Bharat Nirman". Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan's goal is to educate all children. The goal of the "National Rural Health Mission" is to provide basic health care to all villagers. The goal of "Bharat Nirman" is to improve rural infrastructures like - irrigation, water supply, housing, roads, telephone and electrification. The state government should also implement the "National Rural

Employment Guarantee Schemes (NREGS)”. As Orissa is at the bottom in every areas she will be eligible and benefit from all the above programs. As all these programs come with generous central funding. The state government should do everything in its power to implement all these schemes and stop returning money to Delhi.

6. Invest In Human Capitals:-

Perhaps the most important investments, the state government can make are in its people. The long term economic returns from public and private investments in education (especially girl’s education) and basic healthcare are extremely high. Most of the government’s education budget should be spent in elementary and secondary education. The higher education should be left to private sector (example – Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh). The state government should provide generous low interest loan to the poor students. Private sector involvement in middle and secondary education should also be encouraged as it will improve the teaching quality of public schools. Most of the state’s health budget should be spent on public health measures like clean water, sanitation, mosquito control and provision of basic healthcare. Tertiary care (complicated medical care) should be left to the private sector. However, the government should take steps to provide free health insurance to all BPL families and make affordable health insurance available for all.

7. Job Creation:-

Most educated young men and women in Orissa are looking for a government job, with job security and generous benefits and pension. The days of government’s job for educated people are over. The state government cannot afford to spend all its revenue on the salaries and benefits for the state’s employees who constitute around 1.5% of the state’s population. The state should drastically reduce its payroll. The old way of doing business is over. Most of the new jobs in India are being created in the private sector, both in manufacturing and in service industries. Even though close to

70% Oriyas are employed in the agriculture sector, as the economy improves that number will slowly decline (In USA 1.3% of the Population work in the farms). The job growth in manufacturing, mining and construction will be modest. Most of the job growth will occur in the service sectors like - small shops, restaurant, sale and marketing, transportation and domestic services. Small business of all kind, employing 1-10 people will provide the most job opportunities. The state government should do away with most of the licensing and regulatory requirements for opening a new business and expanding the existing business. The state's labor laws should be modified so that business can hire and fire people depending on their needs. However, workers right to strike and bargain collectively should be preserved. The state should create mini industrial estates in all sub divisional head quarter towns, with subsidized water, electricity and warehouses. Small business should be provided all kinds of help, as they will be the main engine of the job growth. They should not be taxed at least for five years from the starting date of their operation.

8. Promote Non-Profit Organizations (Trusts):-

Non-profit organizations can play a vital role in eradication of illiteracy, hunger, poverty and caste and sex discrimination in Orissa. They should not be confused with Non-Government Organization (NGO's). NGO's have their own bureaucratic structures and have to justify their existence. They are usually not subject to government's oversight. I am in favour of non-profit organizations or trusts. The great majority of them are close to their communities and are dedicated to one goal. Most of their staff are volunteers. They have limited resource and they do more with less. The state government should provide incentives like matching grants, and provide technical support. The books of all the trusts receiving public fund should be audited by an independent auditor and the reports should be available on an internet site.

9. Correction of Regional Imbalance in Development:-

“There are very significant regional differences in the incidence of poverty within Orissa”

Human Development Report 2004
Govt. of Orissa P.22

In general the coastal districts of Orissa are much more developed than non-coastal districts (See Tab 5-I HDI for 30 Districts) . These non-coastal districts have lower per capita income, lower literacy rate, higher infant mortality rate, less infrastructures - like roads, colleges and hospitals. People who resides out side - Bhubaneswar - Cuttack corridor feel that all the resources of the state is being spent in this corridor and no significant development is occurring in other parts of the state. There is tremendous resentment by the people against Bhubaneswar. The people of Western Orissa are already demanding a separate state (Koshal Movement). The people of Southern and Northern Orissa districts are demanding their own Development Council. Why? People of these district feel left out. They feel helpless. That is how the Chattisgarh and Jharkhand movements started. The Telengana movement in Andhra Pradesh is still very active. In spite of large amount of central funds spent in old KBK districts, starting from early 1980's, there is not much improvement in the lives of the people living in those districts. The Infant Mortality Rate is still very high. There is not one good hospital or University in those districts.

The old ways of resources allocation has created very uneven development in Orissa. Non-coastal districts have been left behind. All the poorer blocks in the state, should be given extra resources, so that they can come to the mid levels of the developed blocks, as measured by Human Poverty Indicators.

Table 5-1
HDI for 30 Districts of Orissa

District	IMR(1999)	Health Index	DDP per Capita in 1998-99 (in Rs.) (at 1993-94 prices)	Income Index	Overall literacy rate (2001)
Angul	95	0.481	10,877	0.748	69.4
Balasore	101	0.442	3,961	0.466	70.94
Bargarh	100	0.449	4,765	0.517	64.13
Bhadrak	65	0.673	3,916	0.463	74.64
Balangir	97	0.468	4,538	0.504	54.93
Boudh	104	0.423	4,436	0.497	58.43
Cuttack	63	0.686	6,116	0.587	76.13
Deogarh	49	0.776	5,022	0.532	60.78
Dhenkanal	97	0.468	5,046	0.534	70.11
Gajapati	143	0.173	5,498	0.558	41.73
Ganjam	107	0.404	5,013	0.532	62.94
Jagatsinghpur	125	0.288	5,340	0.549	79.61
Jajpur	118	0.333	4,468	0.499	72.19
Jharsuguda	71	0.635	11,210	0.757	71.47
Kalahandi	51	0.763	4,043	0.471	46.2
Kandhamal	169	0.006	4,743	0.516	52.95
Kendrapara	77	0.596	3,964	0.466	77.33
Keonjhar	117	0.340	5,286	0.547	59.75
Khurda	57	0.724	7,353	0.639	80.19
Koraput	136	0.218	5,148	0.539	36.2
Malkangiri	151	0.122	4,436	0.497	31.26
Mayurbhanj	48	0.782	4,297	0.489	52.43
Nabarangpur	117	0.340	3,787	0.453	34.26
Nayagarh	98	0.462	4,236	0.485	71.02
Nuapada	62	0.692	4,018	0.470	42.29
Puri	73	0.622	4,933	0.527	78.4
Rayagada	131	0.250	5,300	0.547	35.61
Sambalpur	102	0.436	6,171	0.590	67.01
Sonepur	96	0.474	4,353	0.492	64.07
Sundargarh	62	0.692	6,823	0.618	65.22
Orissa	97	0.468	5,264	0.545	63.61

Source : Orissa Human Development Report 2004, Govt. of Orissa. Table 8-1, Page No.194

Conclusion:-

The main job of the state government is to maintain law and order. Developmental and resource allocation decision should be moved to the Panchayat level. The state should provide only the most essential services like elementary, middle and secondary education, basic health care, construction and maintenance of infrastructure. It should privatize most other services or be a partner with other private companies to provide those services. It should help small businesses in creating more jobs. The state should encourage non-profit organization (trusts) and NGO's to be involved in eradication of poverty, illiteracy and discriminations of various kinds. It should vigorously implement all the centrally funded schemes like "Sarva Shiksha Abhiyab", "National Rural Health Mission" and "Bharat Nirman." It should also see to it that the less developed areas of the state, catch up with the more developed area soon. Special emphasis should be given to SC and ST population, as they lag farther behind in all the Human Development Indicators.

Ref : Human Development Report 2004, Govt. of Orissa.

Chapter – 6

CORRUPTION

“About 20 percent of the judges in the courts are corrupt: corruption among public servants has reached monstrous dimensions in India. Its tentacles have started grasping even the institutions created for the protection of the public.”

S.P.Barucha, 2001

Chief Justice of India.

“Out of every Rs.100 crores allocated to anti-poverty project, only about Rs.15 crores reaches the people. The remainder is gobbled up by the middle men, power brokers, contractors and the corrupt.”

Rajiv Gandhi,

Former P.M of India.

According to Transparency International, out of 133 countries surveyed, Finland is the least corrupt country in the world. India’s position is 83, that means there will 50 countries more corrupt and 82 countries less corrupt than India. (2004 Report).

Corruption in India and in Orissa, is not just limited to politicians and bureaucrats. It is widespread among the small business owners, professionals (doctors, engineers and accountants), bankers, contractors and even owners of food stores. Corruption is not just a moral issue. It is a developmental issue. A 50% reduction in corruption in a highly corrupt country like India has a potential to increase the GDP

growth rate by 1.5 percent. In a poor state like Orissa, it is the poor who bear the most burden of corruption. Generally, most development project are intended to bring education, healthcare, water and the roads to the poor. Large scale corruption in ill-built schools and roads, absence or unqualified teachers and adulterated food stuff primarily affects the poor. The middle class and the rich do not depend on such services. Hence as Indian economist Jalan has observed, **“Corruption aggravates inequality in an already unequal society.”**

Similarly, corruption affects small business enterprises the most. The big businesses can afford to pay the necessary bribe to create monopoly and increase market share and increase profit. The small businesses neither have the necessary contacts or resources to do so.

Widespread corruption is a symptom that the state is functioning poorly. Perceived corruption retards economic growth, lower investment, decreases private savings and hampers political stability. People who engage in corruption (both public officials and private persons) gain until they are caught and penalized (which is rare in Orissa). They accumulate power and wealth. Their gains are made at someone else’s expense (mostly the poor) although the losers may never realize they have been denied what should have been theirs. All corruption is a deceit, a lie that sacrifices common good or the public interest for something much less.

Corruption contaminates. It sets the wrong kind of example for the future generation. The following is just a sample of its adverse effects -

1. Undermines Political Decisions:-

Corruption undermines political decisions leading to inefficient or unwanted use of public resource.

2. Direct and Indirect Cost to Everybody:-

Corruption is like a hidden tax. It adds to the cost of doing business. Everybody pays for it either directly or indirectly.

3. Hampers Development:-

John Wolfersohn, the President of the World Bank Group, stated in 1996 that developing nations “needs to deal with the cancer of corruption, as corruption diverts resources from the poor to the rich, increases the cost of running businesses, distorts public expenditures and deter foreign investors.”

4. Immunity to Criminals:-

Corruption allows immunity for criminal acts so that law is for sale to the highest bidder.

5. Softness of State:-

Corruption leads to “softness of state” and prevents effective governance.

6. Loss of Moral Authority:-

Corruption involves the loss of moral authority. Without moral authority, it is perpetuated from one generation to the next and becomes a “way of life”.

WHAT CAN BE DONE TO REDUCE CORRUPTION IN ORISSA?

Even though corruption cannot be eliminated, it can be significantly reduced, by implementing the following steps:-

1. Decentralize Power & Decision Making:-

According Lord Acton “Power corrupts and absolute power tends to corrupt absolutely.” Lord Acton’s saying is true in every country of the world. It has also been proven by history. The way the things are now – all decision making power in the state, are in the hands of politicians and civil servants in Bhubaneswar. The decision to hire or fire a clerk, to fund or not to fund a development project, awarding of the government’s

contract of projects even at the village level, are made in Bhubaneswar. People have run to Bhubaneswar, grease the hands of various people, to get their file moving. Most of the development decisions should be transferred to the district, subdivision block and Panchayat level, depending upon its complexity. Every Panchayat should be given a block grant from the state based on its development indicators – like infant mortality, literacy, life expectancy, income etc., The less developed is the Panchayat more money it should get. The Panchayat members will decide the developmental priorities and spend the money, preferably by using local contractors. The state auditor general's office will audit their books at least once every two years and publish it in the internet and make its finding available to the local villagers. The information should include the name of the project and its location, name of the contractor, the amount of the contract and the time of completion of the project. If there is going to be leakage, at least it will happened at the local level and the villagers will know about it. Hopefully, during the next Panchayat election, they will not elect the culprit.

2. Transparency:-

Every government's decision from that of the Chief-Minister to that block development officer to the Panchayat members should be transparent. Sun shine is the best disinfectant. Who made the decision and why? Who got the contract and what was his bid etc, should be posted in government's website. The government website should list the salaries and assets of all the elected officials from Chief Minister to Panchayat member, all government's employee from secretary to the orderly. It should be updated once a year. All the ongoing developments projects and the breakdown of their expenditures should be available on the web. More the information, more sunshine and less is the corruption.

3. Privatize Non-Essential Government's Service:-

As economist John Meynard Keynes, said in 1926, government should do things which are not being done by others. The state government should privatize most of the non-essential services like transportation, marketing, higher education, manufacturing,

running stores, building houses etc. There is a big difference in the quality of services provided by a government bus services and a private bus services. The private buses are more luxurious but little more expensive, but tend to run on time. The same is true of banking or telephone or cable television, hotel and tourist industries. Wherever there is a profit motive, service improves.

4. Encourage Competition:-

Monopoly in goods and services leads to high price and poor service. Monopoly in power, leads to abuse of power. Competition is good for everybody, especially to the consumer. In all areas of goods and services, the state government should encourage competition. In the areas of tertiary healthcare, higher education, banking, transportation, housing and tourism, the state government should encourage and help multiple service providers. It will improve service and decrease price.

5. Prompt Investigations and Punishment:-

All the charges of corruption should be investigated by a 3 - members panel and their findings should be final. It should be made public. This 3- members panel should be set up at Pandhayat, Block, Sub divisional, District and the State level. They will investigate the allegations of corruption and promptly publish their findings. The guilty party should be punished according to the state or central law. If a politician is found guilty, he or she should lose the political post (Panchayat member, MLA or M.P). If a government official is found to have taken a bribe, he or she should be fired immediately. No appeal. The Whistle Blower Law of 2004 should be of some help in report of corruption in high places.

6. Disclosure of Political Contribution:-

All politicians need money to contest elections. Money is the mother's milk of politics. Without money an individual cannot become a politician and without

becoming a politician he cannot amass a fortune. Even in developed countries, political contribution is one of the major causes of corruption in higher places. Money and politics cannot be separated from one another, but they should be disclosed. All the political contributions to political parties and candidates, by an individual or a business, should be reported to appropriate Election Commission and fully disclosed in the website of the Election Commission. Banning of the political contribution has not worked and will not work. Disclosure is the key. It will be the sunshine, that will kill the germ of corruption. The Election Finance Law of 2003, which requires reporting of all political donations of more than Rs.20, 000.00, is a move in right direction.

7. A Vigilant Press:-

Here, I am referring to news papers, magazines, television, radio, internet and blogs, as press. The main job of the press is to “**afflict the comfortable and comfort the afflicted.**” In Orissa, as rest of India, the press is controlled mostly by the politicians and the business houses. Their main objectives are power and profit. Most of them are unlikely to expose the relationship between power and profit. A vigilant press can take advantage of the new freedom of information act, do investigative reporting and can and should expose corruption at all levels of Indian society.

Conclusion:-

Corruption is too wide spread in India and in Orissa. It has become a way of life. People have learned to live with it. Their attitude is “why bother?”. Play the game. Pay the bribe and get things done. This attitude is pervasive and it is too pessimistic. It is true that corruption cannot be eliminated entirely, but it can be significantly reduced. Corruption opportunities are high, when both the decision and the deliverer of the outcome of that decision rest with the same individual. Decentralization of the decision making power to the grass roots level is the key. Transparency in all developmental activities (who? whom? how? why?) is another key. The e-Seva centers implemented by Andhra Pradesh Government has brought transparency and speed to wide range of

state services, from the payment of utility bills to issue and renewal of certificates, permits and licenses. Orissa should implement similar plan. The state government should also privatize most of the non-essential services and encourage competition. That will improve service and lower prices. The investigation of the corruption charges should be prompt and the appeal process limited and the punishment harsh. It should also be well publicized. According to M.R.Narayana Murthy, Chairman Infosys, who wrote a guest column on corruption in India Today on January 23, 2006, "At the end of the day, leadership is what determines the success of a corporation, community or country. If leaders from all sections of the society come together to fight this scourge, I am certain that corruption will disappear like dew on a sunny morning." In Orissa, it will be the Chief Minister, who will have to show the leadership to fight corruption so that the developmental benefits will reach the people. The poor will benefit the most from reduction of systemic corruption in the state.

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Chapter - 7

ENDING ENDEMIC POVERTY IN ORISSA

“We talk of freedom, but today political freedom does not take us far unless there is economic freedom for a man who is starving or for a country who is poor. The poor, whether they are nations or individuals, have little place in this worlds. Therefore we have to produce in order to have sufficient wealth, distributed by proper economic planning so that it may go to the millions more especially, to the common man. Then not only the millions prosper, but the whole country becomes rich and prosperous and strong.”

Jawaharlal Nehru.

“Where there is no bread, there is no law, where there is no law, there is no bread.”

Rabbi Elezar Azarial. Mishna Avon.

“Poverty has various manifestations, of which lack of income is just one. Others are lack of productive resources sufficient to ensure sustainable livelihoods; hunger and malnutrition; ill-health; limited or no access to education, health and other basic services; increased morbidity and mortality; homelessness and inadequate housing unsafe living and working environment; social, economic political and cultural discrimination and exclusion.”

World Summit of Social Development 1995.

“First poverty in Orissa is overwhelmingly a rural phenomenon.”

“....Second, there are significant regional differences in the incidence of poverty in Orissa.”

“..... In the case of the rural ST population, the incidence of poverty in Orissa, at 71.51 percent (1993-94) was the highest among the 16 major states of India.”

Human Development Report 2004

Govt. of Orissa, P.21-22

Orissa is blessed with rich natural resources – mines and forest, long coast line and fertile river valleys. The population density of Orissa is relatively low 236 persons per sq.kilometer compared to 820 for kerala and 900 for West Bengal. It's poverty rank in India is 31 out 32 states and Union Territories (2001). The state's per capita domestic product in 1999 was Rs.5300.00 compared to Rs.9600.00 for India. The percentage of the state's population below the poverty line (1999-2000) was 47 compared 26 for India. The percentage of people below the poverty line was only 13 for kerala. The poverty statistic for Orissa is outrageously bad.

WHY ORIYAS ARE SO POOR?

The causes of such large scale poverty in Orissa, are many, some of them are:-

1. Mass Poverty is a Rural Problem:-

Mass poverty is over whelming a rural affliction. The urban poor are usually better off than the rural poor. The children of the urban poor have access to better education, healthcare, jobs and escape the abject poverty of their grand parents.

Orissa with a population of 367 lakhs (3.67 crores) has 47,000 villages, 39,000 of them have a population of less than 1,000 per village (2001 census). Contrast that with the state of Kerala, with similar population (318 lakhs) has only 1384 villages. West Bengal with a population of two and half times of Orissa (802 lakhs) has 38,000 villages.

Rural poverty is a universal problem. It has always been. Even during the peak of Greek and Roman civilization, the rural people were much poorer than the city people. Even in the twenty first century, that equation has not changed. That is why, every where in the world, whether to Kolkata or to Islamabad or to Cairo, people from villages are moving to the cities in very large numbers. They have no job in the villages. Many of them starve half the time. They migrate to the cities for a better life for themselves and especially for their children.

2. Intractable Nature of Rural Poverty:-

Rural poverty is intractable. Here people have lived at or near the minimum necessary for survival for a long time; for practical purpose always. Since life is near the bare level of existence, there is no savings. Without savings and external capital, there is minimal or no investment in improved agricultural technology, like irrigation, hybrid seeds, pesticides and fertilizers. Without such investment there can be no improvement in income that allows saving and further investment (Galbraith).

3. Lack of Ownership of Land:-

The vast majority of the rural poor, even though they work in the land, they do not own it. Those who have the land with rare exception, have small holdings. Land reforms in Orissa, like rest of Indian states, (except West Bengal and Kerala), has mostly been on paper. Most land holding families own the same amount of land after the land-reform act as they held before the act was passed. Only the names of the title holders have changed. Instead of the grandfather being the title holder; now sons, daughters, grandsons and granddaughters are the title holders. As a result, farmers who had no land before the land-reform act, have no land after the act. Without ownership of the means of production (i.e. land) a farmer can never create any wealth. He is bound to stay as a village laborers rest of his life, unless he migrates to a town.

4. Lack of Regular Source of Water:-

Orissa gets sufficient amount of rain, but only 3-4 months a year during the rainy season. After December-January, most of the non-coastal areas are dry. Droughts are common. Farmers grow only one crop:rice. The price of paddy varies from season to season. The present system of procurement, places the farmer at the mercy of the middlemen. It is also difficult for a farmer with a small holding to get rich, just by producing rice. Farmers in Orissa have to diversify. They have to grow more cash crop like sugarcane, cashews, peanuts, soybeans, fruits, vegetables and flowers. All these crops will need extra investment and reliable source of water supply. Without irrigation a second or a third crop for extra cash is not feasible.

5. Accommodation to the Culture of Poverty:-

People, who have lived for centuries in the relative isolation of villages of Orissa, have come to term with their poverty. They have accepted it as a part of life, what Professor John K.Galbraith called - "accommodation to the culture of poverty." Our religions also have urged acceptance. It is my "Karma" to be poor, to have many children, to be sick and to die prematurely. Unless the attitude of accommodation can be changed, no amount of external investment will make much of a difference.

6. Social Exclusion and Powerlessness:-

The poor suffer from social exclusion and powerlessness. They are unable to participate in decisions that affect their lives. In Orissa, 38.4% of the population belong to Schedule Tribes and Schedule Castes (2001 census). They are most behind in all criteria of development. They live in remote villages. Their literacy rate is very low. They have no political power. All the decisions involving their welfare are being made in Delhi or in Bhubaneswar. Unless they are given priorities in all developmental schemes, the status of Orissa, as the poorest state in India is not going to change.

SOME SUGGESTIONS TO REDUCE ENDEMIC POVERTY IN ORISSA

1. Combat Accommodation:-

The equilibrium of rural poverty owes its intractability to the relationship of people to the land. There is no other job opportunity in most villages of Orissa. The villages do not have industries and too many villagers depend on the land. If crops fail, they starve. They may starve but they are reluctant to move out of the village. Those who move to small town or a big city, improve their lives even by pulling a rickshaw. Their children get an education and escape the equilibrium of poverty. The best proven method to combat this attitude of accommodation is education. Educated people do not want to stay in the village. They move. Mass communication like television is helping. When the villagers see that there is a better world outside their village, they are no longer afraid. Many of them are trying to educate their children and letting them leave their villages. Many of them are also migrating to other states. Migration is good. It usually improves the economic status of the migrant.

2. Education:-

The literacy rate for Orissa is 64% compared 91% for the state of Kerala. The male literacy rate for Orissa is 76, but the female literacy rate is only 51% compared to 88% for Kerala (2001 census). In regard to female education, Orissa has a long way to go. Girls' education, as indicated in Chapter-2 of this book has multiple benefits. Unless Orissa educate most of its girls, it cannot eradicate poverty. Girls' education is an absolute necessity.

3. Basic Health Care:-

There is a two-way relation between health and development. Healthy children learn better. Healthy workers lose less work time from disease and are more productive. When family members are healthy, the family does not spend its meager

savings on medical care. It is a win-win situation for all. As a part of an effort to reduce poverty, the state government must provide free basic healthcare to all. It should also facilitate insurance schemes for secondary and tertiary care.

4. Provide Irrigation:-

If a farmer has to prosper, he needs a reliable source of water for his crops. Without reliable water supply, he will be facing unending cycles of flood and drought. The government also has to provide (not free) hybrid seeds, fertilizers and teach new farming techniques. Punjab and Haryana have done it for 40 years. Orissa can learn from them.

Provision of water for irrigation is a major infrastructure problem. The private sector will not do it. The state government will have to do it. Each village's situation may be slightly different from the next – but the basic solutions are usually the same - improve the existing water tanks in the village, construct new ones, dam small rivers and streams (forget another Hirakud Dam) dig tube wells, and recharge the existing wells. All these water harvesting schemes are low tech solutions to unpredictable drought faced by the farmers. If water is available, farmers will plant more than one crop; spend their limited resources on hybrid seeds and fertilizer to improve their yield. It has already happened in parts of Sambalpur and Bargarh districts. Irrigated villages between Sambalpur and Baragrh are lot more prosperous than the non-irrigated ones. It has happened because of reliable supply of water from Hirakud Dam. The long term solution for the state is to increase significantly the amount of land covered by various irrigation schemes.

5. Create New Land and Distribute it to the Landless:-

The old land reform laws have not worked and are not going to work. Nobody is going to handover his or her ancestral property, no matter how small or large it may be. Everybody will find a way to bypass the land reform laws. Most village farmers in Orissa do not have any surplus land to share. In most cases, a farmer's holding is barely

few hectares. The only solution is to create new cultivable land. At present, most of the land surrounding a village (especially in Tribal areas) is owned by the state government under the category of forest land – but there is no forest. These lands are deforested and usually are used by the villagers for grazing of the cattle or goat or to grow kendu leaves. The state government should sub divide these lands and handovers (sell it at concessional price) it to the landless villagers. The government should handover the titles (ownership) to the new owners and not lease it to them. As discussed in Chapter-4 the title or the property right is as important as the actual land itself. The ownership of the land is the key to this scheme's future success. The state of West Bengal has successfully implemented this plan.

In town and cities, people have been living in “basti” or “juggies” for more than 50 years. These people have settled on unauthorized government lands which were vacant. In all these “basti” family have built houses or huts. All of them have commerce within the community. Government is providing drinking water to many of these communities. The state government is just pretending that, these unauthorized settlements can be demolished, but has never demolished one because they need their votes. People who are living in these “basti” should be given “title” or “ownership” to their little house or hut as suggested by the Peruvian economist, Hernado De Sato. This scheme has worked well in Cairo and in Brazil. It will work in Orissa.

6. Availability of Rural Credit:-

The poor people in the village live hand-to-mouth. They have no spare capital to buy fertilizer or hybrid seeds or dig a bore well. Most of them borrow capital from money lenders at exorbitant interest rates. Many of them mortgage their land or houses or gold ornaments to borrow money. Many of them cannot pay back the loan and lose the meager saving they have had. Hence the availability of rural credit is quite important. The state government itself should not be in the banking business, but it

should do everything possible to make rural credit available at reasonable terms. Some of the modalities may be -

- A. Chartering of many rural micro finance bank where the state government is a minority partner.
- B. Adopt the Grameen Bank System in each village of Orissa. The Grameen Bank operation in Bangladesh has been quite successful over last 3 decades in alleviating abject poverty. It has given ownership to illiterate woman and has empowered them. The children of these women are now all literate, and most of them are escaping poverty trap of the rural Bangladesh. Orissa government should take the help of the Grameen Bank and help them to implement their scheme in Orissa. The state government should not reinvent the wheel by starting its own self Help Group Scheme. Other NGOs in Orissa, should be given help in starting their own micro finance scheme. The state government can be a minority equity partner but not run any of these programs.

7. Implement All Central Schemes:-

The government of India at Delhi, has woken up to the rural poverty problems. The central government is allocating more and more resources in its annual budget for rural development. Some of these schemes are 100 percent funded by the center and some schemes have to be partially fund by the states. The government of Orissa should be proactive, and extract as much resources out of the center and never, never, return central money because the state government was incapable of implementing a particular scheme. Some of these schemes are:-

- A. Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGYS) - 100% centrally funded.
- B. Rural Water Supply Programm.
- C. Central Rural Sanitation Programme (CRSP).

- D. Indira Awaas Yojana and Pradhan Mantri Gramodaya Yojana (GRAMIN AWAAS).
- E. Drought - Prone Areas Programme.
- F. National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (NREGS).
- G. National Rural Health Mission (NRHM)

8. Job Creation in the Village:-

Most of the jobs in the villages are related to agriculture or to forestry. In tribal areas, they are more related to collection and selling of forest products - like Kendu leaves, bamboo and wood. These jobs are seasonal and part time and do not pay enough to support a family. The Rural National Employment Guarantee Scheme (NREGS) which is being funded by the center, should be extended to all the poor districts of Orissa. Orissa is so poor that, most likely all the 30 districts will be eligible for the scheme. Under this scheme, the villagers should improve the existing village water tanks, schools, roads, temples and other village infrastructure.

9. Creation Regional Small Scale Industries Hubs:-

Most industries, small or big do not want to locate their factories in the rural areas because of poor rural infrastructure. It may be easier to entice smaller industries to locate near smaller towns of 10,000 to 20,000 people. Workers from nearby villages will commute daily to these factories for work. This system will benefit both the industries and the workers. The industries will find cheap labor and the unemployed villagers will find jobs. For this scheme to succeed, the state government will have to provide land, water, electricity, phone at concessional rate to the industries. These industries should not be taxed at least for 10 years - even if they are profitable. This will be a strong incentive for the small to medium business is to relocate or start a new business in these regional village hubs. For this program to succeed, infrastructure development will be the key.

10. Integrated Rural Development Programs:-

There are many programs for rural development, but they are fragmented. The irrigation, health, power, forest, education and other departments have their own schemes for rural development. The state has some programs and the center has some. They are implemented by different departments and agencies. The World Bank, The International Monetary Fund, and many NGOs have their own programs. All these programs should be integrated with one another. The state government should not refuse help from the various International Development Agencies and NGOs, including the missionaries. The missionaries have increased the literacy rate in Nagaland to over 80%. In remote tribal areas in Orissa, they are the only one, who are providing some education and healthcare. The state has failed miserably to improve the lives of the tribal people. Something is better than nothing. As much as possible, most of the village development programs should be from the bottom to the top and not be imposed from the top. Development approach, around the globe has shown that top-down approach (socialist and communist kind) does not work. The local people have to have a stake in it for the project to succeed.

12. Involve NGOs and Trusts:-

Extreme poverty is a common problem in many developing countries. Orissa is not alone. There are hundreds of NGOs working all over the world on poverty alleviation. They have (co-operatively) the knowledge and the know how, on what works and what does not work. The state government can take advantage of that knowledge. The state government may not give money to these NGOs, but it should facilitate their working in the state. It should not hinder their work. The missionaries are a prime example. The missionaries were the first persons who opened schools and hospitals in the tribal areas, when the state government was nowhere near. They have provided great services to our tribal people. The Eka Vidyalaya movement is another example. They should be welcome to open many schools in Orissa.

Even though the numbers are small, there are many charitable Trusts working in Orissa. Many of them are doing good work. The state should encourage the formation of more trusts and help them in every way possible to expand their development related works. The state government should also invite International Charitable Organization (CARE, OXFARM etc.) Missionaries and NGOs to work in Orissa.

13. Migration:-

Migration is the oldest action against poverty. It selects those who want to help themselves. Oriyas have been migrating to Kolkota and Jamesdeshpur for more than 50 years. Recently, large numbers of them have migrated to Gujrat and to the Southern states. They migrate, because there is no work in Orissa and they find work in those states. The educated class from Orissa are now migrating to Bangalore, Pune, Bombay and Delhi. There is nothing wrong with migration. Many illiterate Indian peasants migrated to East Africa, South Africa, Fiji and prospered. People who leave the villages of Orissa for Jamesdpur, Kolkota or Surat, escape the grinding poverty of their villages. Their sons and daughters get an education and almost always do better than their parents.

14. A Vigilant Press & Right to Information Act (RTI):-

“If many nations outside the west suffer poverty in shame it is because they have freedom of expression but because they don’t.”

Orham Pamuk,

Turkish Writer Winner of Nobel Prize in Literature.

Here, I am referring to newspaper, magazine, televison, radio, internet blog as press. Professor Amartya Sen, proved many years ago that in a society with free press, famine does not occur, as the power holders and politicians, respond quickly and divert food to

the shortage areas. Part of the problem of Orissa's persistent poverty is a timid press. The press is mostly controlled by the political class or the business class. They all operate out of Bhubaneswar or Cuttack. They have minimal presence outside the Cuttack-Bhubaneswar corridor. Most of the news papers survive on the advertisement revenue generated from various departments of the state government. Hence, they are afraid to bite the hands that feed them. They are not doing investigating reporting because of self interest. They are not taking proper advantage of the new right to information act (RIA), which has a great scope in exposing government's inefficiencies and corruption.

The job of the press is to inform, entertain and investigate. It should also "afflict the comforted and comfort the afflicted." The Oriya press is not doing enough of investigating reporting. It needs to investigate the working of the state government, NGOs, and the business houses. It should examine and expose the deficiency of various government schemes. The recent incidence of wide scale corruption in the World Bank's health scheme in Orissa, was exposed by World Bank and not by the Oriya press. The press should not a mouth piece of the government, or the politician or the industry, but be independent.

Conclusion:-

The economic liberalization of 1990s has not helped the poorer of the poor in Orissa. People are still dying from bad water and malnutrition or starvation. Bonded laborers are still there in the villages. Tribals and vulnerable groups are being displaced by mines and factories. Many poor Oriya's are leaving the states for work in Gujarat and other Southern States. Better run states like Gujarat, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka have improved their quality of infrastructure and business, and have surged ahead. In spite of its rich mineral resources, Orissa has lagged far behind. Most Oriyas are poor. Most of them live in remote villages. They are living hand to mouth. No matter how hard they work, they will not be able to escape extreme poverty, unless the state and the central

government provide a helping hand. Fortunately the central government at Delhi is now aware of the problem and providing significant amount of resources. However, the implementation of the various poverty alleviation schemes fall on the state government. It is the state government which is not doing its job. The lack of implementation of various schemes are not due to lack of money, but due to lack of priorities, lack of proper execution and corruption.

Endemic poverty in Orissa cannot be eliminated overnight. It will take decades. However, Orissa has already lost 5 decades without significant reduction in its poverty rate. The solutions to the problems are known. Other states like Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, West Bengal and Kerala, all of whom had significant percentage of poor people have shown that it can be done. The game of blaming the center, the previous government, on the drought, on the cyclone or on the flood will not take us anywhere. The responsibility of reducing poverty in Orissa is ours –all Oriyas, government and non-government organizations and each of us as individual. Each of us should at least help one other poor Oriya.

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Chapter – 8

SUSTAINABLE RURAL DEVELOPMENT

“Firstly poverty in Orissa is overwhelmingly a rural problem.”

Human Development Report 2004,
Govt. of Orissa

Some three quarters of Orissa’s poor live in rural areas. Their livelihoods are most often linked to agriculture. Agriculture has a major impact on the environment and is closely connected to water, health and nutrition, and education. Thus reducing poverty in rural areas and hunger in both rural and urban areas, will depend heavily on the sustainable development of agriculture. But rural development is about more than growing food. As the main user of natural resources such as water, land and fertilizer, agriculture is intimately linked with environmental sustainability. It also touches health and education: a well-nourished child is more likely to be healthy and able to concentrate in school. Finally, since agriculture is the largest segment of the private sector in Orissa, it offers the best prospects for the poor to escape poverty.

Some of the steps which the state government can take to promote sustainable rural development are:-

1. Empowerment of Women:-

The majority of poor farm workers are women who don’t own the land. Women contribute substantially as casual laborers and unpaid family workers in agriculture, including live stocks and fishing. They also provide the basic family need: child care, collection and transportation of fuel and water. They do all the cooking. They waste lots of time in very low productivity efforts like collection of water and wood for fuel. The task of the government should be to make drinkable water available close to home and provide alternate source of fuel for cooking. Wide spread use of wood as the main

source of cooking fuel is having a tremendous impact on deforestation. The present rate of deforestation cannot be reduced unless the state government provides alternate source of fuel at reasonable price (like coal, methane gas from cow dung etc). Government should also provide clean drinking water to all the villages-big or small. This one project will save lots of time and labor for the rural women. It will also save lives, because of clean drinking water.

The poorest of the village women should be given priority in the government's land distribution schemes, housing schemes and all the microfinance schemes (like SHG). Property rights will empower women and will promote gender equality. Gender equality (i.e. decision making equality) has other benefits like reduction of under five child mortality rate and fertility rate.

2. Water Management:-

Water is an indispensable resources for agriculture. Agriculture is the largest user of water. Even though Orissa is getting 120-140 cm of rain every year, many parts of the state face drought almost every other year. Water shortage is a big problem both in rural and urban areas. Building of Hirakud type of mega dam is not a solution. The solution is old fashioned and low tech. Most Oriya villages have more than one water tank (bandha). Most of them are full in rainy season but have little or no water in summer months. It will be the job of the state government, working through the village Panchayat to improve and enlarge all these existing water tanks. Some village water streams can be damed to feed these tanks. Government should also build new mini water reservoirs and harvest as much rain water as possible. These water reservoirs will help in recharging the wells which are drying up all over the state. Every village, depending upon the population will need more than one bore well. The water from the bore well can be used for drinking and irrigation Farmers should be given low interest loan to dig bore wells for irrigation purpose. Our village of Mulbar which had no tube well 20 years ago, has more than 60 of them now. Farmers are doing well and growing

multiple crops. Even there is a labor shortage. Labor shortage at the village level is a good sign, as it leads to better wages for the poor casual laborers. It is a question of demand and supply. However bore wells are short-term solution. Ultimately water table will go down and they will have to be charged.

3. Forest Management:-

Forests have historically provided shelter, food, fuel, medicine and building materials to the nearby villagers. Only about 30 years ago, more than 50% of land mass in Orissa was forest. According to 1998 census, that percentage is down to 37%. Most people feel that the true figure is less than 20%. All the past state governments have used the state's forest as a source of revenue. Trees are being cut but not replaced. Most of Orissa's wild lives are gone. The rapid rate of deforestation continues. The reforestation scheme of the forest department has been just on papers.

The solution to the rapid deforestation problem is to give the ownership of the state's forest to the nearby villagers. This program has worked well for last 25 years in East Midinapur district of West Bengal. The state of West Bengal, handed over nearby forest land to 3300 village committees. It involved 350,000 families. A smaller part of the state owned wastelands was given to the landless peasants to plant tree. The state government, with loaned money from World Bank, expanded the state's forestry service, opened local tree nurseries and trained the villagers about forestry. To tide over the villagers while trees grew, the state allowed them to harvest as much other forest produce as they like: bamboo, cashews, bidi leaves and berries. Then, once the trees were mature enough for cutting, the village was allowed to cut up to 10 percent of the forest every year, in perpetuity. This scheme has added Rs.5000.00 extra income to each family of the village.

At present, all the forest land is owned by the state government. There is no private forest in Orissa. Government has a reforestation scheme, but it has not worked.

The limited numbers of trees planted by the forest department are not able to mature, as they are being illegally cut by the local villagers for fuel. As the villagers do not own the forests, they have no hesitation in cutting the trees in those forests. Government's property is nobody's property. East Midnapur district type forest ownership scheme should be implemented in all districts in Orissa. It is a win-win situation. Deforestation is prevented and the local villagers earn extra income.

4. Oceans and Fisheries:-

Orissa has long coast-line. Almost every village has one or more water tank, which is owned by the village. Like dairying, aquaculture can provide an all-year harvest and income stream for the rural poor. They can also improve their diet by adding fish, which is a rich source of protein. Modadugu Gupta, who received the 2005 World Food Prize, has shown that poor farmers, even landless farmers can become fish farmers and add significantly to their income. Fish like Tilapia can be grown in a 3-5 months in mini ponds, found in all village during the rainy season in Orissa. Tilapia does not need expensive fish feed to grow. Coastal farmers can also grow shrimps and frogs for export. Kerala has been successful in growing and exporting both.

5. Animal Husbandry:-

The milk revolution (Amul) which started in Gujrat can easily be replicated in many villages in Orissa. With the help of microfinance loan, many landless villagers can own cow, pig, goat, sheep, chicken, and rabbit and supplement their diet with animal protein and earn some extra cash. The pigs will also eat the garbage and help in keeping the village cleaner. Women self help groups should be encouraged to participate in animal husbandry.

6. Organizing Village into Community Group:-

The purpose of a group formation is to target the poorer members of the communities, so that they can gain advantage in economies of scale in purchase and marketing. The group can also have a bigger voice in decisions involving their village's

development. Community groups can be formed by the farmers, the weavers, the craftsmen etc for better marketing of their products and services.

7. Mineral Wealth Management:-

Orissa is blessed with plenty of coals, iron ores, graphite, bauxite, manganese. Indian and foreign companies are signing of MOUs right and left with the state government to mine these products. The past and the present administrations have sold these minerals as a source of revenue. Besides some coal and mineral related plants, Orissa has few manufacturing industries. Surplus power is a sign of under use of power by industries and people. Orissa is under industrialized in spite of plenty of mineral resource and surplus power. It is time, for the state to stop selling raw materials. It should insist that as a condition of mining lease, the company has to build its factory in Orissa and provide employment to the local people. Part of the royalty payment should go back to the Panchayat level, where the mineral is being mined. Rather than Bhubaneswar, the village Panchayat should decide how the royalty money should be spent. Orissa's industrial development should not depend on just mining related industries. It should diversify into light manufacturing and service industries. We should also leave some mineral wealth to the next generation, rather than exhausting them in next few years.

Conclusion:-

Most people in Orissa live in the villages. Their livelihoods are linked to agriculture. Without improvement in agriculture productivity rural poverty cannot be eliminated. Agriculture has major impact on the environment, health, nutrition, education and income. Animal husbandry, fisheries, forest, water and mineral resource management will have significant impact in improving the lives of the poor in Orissa. The state and the central governments have significant roles to play in sustainable rural development. Short term goal is not the answer. A particular development scheme has to be sustainable over a long period of time. It should also be environmentally friendly.

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Chapter – 9

ORGANIZING FOR CHANGE

“There is no magic key for change. Educational programs, organizing, and activism. That is the way things change. Magic key does not exist.”

NOAM CHOMSY

“Do not mourn organize”.

Mary “Mother Jones”
Magazine.

Nobody wants to give up power, whether he is a politician, a bureaucrat or a business man. Less than 2% of government employees control all the power in Orissa. All the state’s revenue is spent on their salaries and pensions. The Chief Minister does not want to delegate important decision to his cabinet colleagues. The department secretaries at Bhubaneswar do not want to delegate some of their decision making power to the district or sub divisional level. The Panchayat system is not working. Without the power of the purse, the Panchayat system is not going to be effective. Pandit Nehru, pointed out more than five decades ago, **“that the poor whether they are nations or individuals, have little place in this world”**. Since then, things have not changed much. Only the time the poor have some power is during the election. After the election, the politicians conveniently forget them. The poor have come to accept the system. Even though they know that very little of the development money is reaching them, they are helpless to do anything about it. Politicians and bureaucrats come and go, make promises, but their lot does not change. More than 50% of people who live in

villages are still quite poor. They do not own the land. They have no permanent job. They have no healthcare to speak up. They face drought almost every other year. They sell their crop at the peak of the season at very low price to middle man, as there is no storage facilities in the villages. The villagers do not have a all-weather road to take their products to the market. They have minimal access or no access to capital or to newer technology. Every rupee that comes to Bhubaneswar from Delhi or from the World Banks for development, they get less than 10 paisa. How can the current system be changed? There are few solutions -

1. Strengthen the Panchayat System:-

The Panchayat Institutions offer marginal groups a genuine opportunity to participant in direct democracy at the village level. 30% of the seats are reserved for women, Schedule Castes and Schedule Tribes, which is good. However, the Panchayats have very little money; they cannot hire or fire a teacher or a clerk. The village Panchayats need more power, resource and responsibility. All the developmental, educational and primary healthcare money should be given directly to the Panchayats based on a formula. The less developed Panchayats should get proportionally more resources like the Finance Commission at Delhi does for the states. Management of the primary and secondary schools, primary health centers, villages irrigation and roads, and the village forests should be transferred to the Panchayats. The village Panchayat should have the power to hire and fire all the employees of the above mentioned departments. The books of the Panchayats should be audited by the state auditor general office once a year. Salaries of all employees, including the Panchayat members, should be posted in the village Panchayat's bulletin and on the internet. The same way, the names of all the developmental grant contractors and the amount of the contract should be posted in the local Panchayat's bulletin and on its website.

2. Organizing the Farmers:-

Most people who live in the villages are either farmers or work for a farmer. Their livelihood is tied to the land. Farmer's income is subject to amount of production,

and market price. Production amount, whether it is rice or tomato, depends in quality of seed, water supply, fertilizer and other technology. The market price depends on amount of production (more the supply less is the price), access to market and government's guaranteed price for a crop. Farmers in rural areas, without access to bigger market are forced to sell their products at a lower price to brokers (dalal), as they are unable to take their products to a bigger markets. Farmers also do not have access to cheap capitals to expand their operation. They pay high interest to the money lenders. They are in perpetual debt. The problems facing the farmers are many but the major problem is the lack of influence. Farmers in the developed countries like USA, Japan, France are well organized even though their numbers are relatively few. In USA less than 2% of the population work in the farms, but no politician will vote against the farmers' interest. In the United States corn, wheat, rice, cotton, tobacco, sugar and diary farmers, all get subsidy from Washington. Same is true in France, U.K and Japan. Farm subsidy is a form of wealth transfer from urban to rural areas.

Farmers in Orissa should be organized under one or two associations. These associations should be politically active. Their interests should be to push for the welfare of the farmers. If farmers prosper, villages will prosper.

3. Organizing the Craftsmen and Small Businesses:

Several lakhs of craftsmen work in handicraft industries in Orissa. Most of them live in villages and make a meager living. Orissa's handicrafts are world famous, but they are not being marketed properly. The state government has few stores in Bhubaneswar, Puri, Cuttack, Kolkota and Delhi. That is not enough. All these craftsmen are operating as small a business. They may be working for themselves or may be employing 1-10 assistants. Like farmers, they also need cheap capital and easy access to bigger markets. Like the farmers, they sell their product cheaply to a middleman. They get very little for their skilled works.

There are many others small businesses operating in Orissa. They are pan-walas, the dhaba walas, and the small shopkeepers or vegetables sellers. All these people are operating small businesses. All the government's subsidy is now going to the big boys like the steel, aluminum, coal or mining companies. Governments build roads for them and sell them government's land at concession rate. It subsidizes their water and power. In return, they promise to create few thousands jobs. The small businesses are employing lakhs of peoples. Not only they do not get any government's subsidy, they are constantly harassed by the government's machineries. Even for small things the owners of the small businesses have to pay the government's babus or the policemen just to stay in business.

Small businesses of all kinds should be organized. Without organization, there is no power.

4. Organizing the Casual Labourers:-

Many workers who work in a factory, or work for the government have their unions. Even the IAS officers have their union. The union fights for the welfare of the IAS officers. The advantages offer by a union are many – better wages, better working condition, job security etc. The casual workers who are migrating from the poor villages to town and cities of Orissa are on their own. They are not unionized. They have no collective voice. They are taken advantage by their employers – who are small or big contractors. Many of them do not even get their promised pay on time. Without unionization, they will have no voice and their condition is not going to improve.

5. Organize the Women:-

Women are the backbone of a society but in Orissa they are the most oppressed. They have higher illiteracy rate than men. They are poorer than men. They have no

asset. The land or the house is usually owned by their husbands. In a family, they have less decision making power. If their husbands drink away their joint earnings, they are powerless to stop. They work as casual laborers and are paid less than men. They marry at younger age, bear many children (especially till they give birth to a male child). However, they are 50% of the voters. They should be organized. The Grameen Bank movement in Bangladesh is one example. SEWA (Self-Employed Women Association) movement organized by Elaben Bhatt in Gujrat is another example. By organizing the women's labor sector, SEWA not only trained the poor women to earn, but also taught them to live with dignity. SEWA also like the Grameen Bank started a SEWA bank, which has been successful. Jnanpeeth award winning Bengali writer, Mahasheweta Devi, has been an organizer and champion of India's tribal communities. There are many more people like them all over India, who are organizing women; from prostitutes to day laborers. Without organization there is no power, whether one is a political party or a casual laborer or a coal miner or a housewife.

6. Organizing Students for Change:-

Students are a great source of change in any society. They are young and idealistic. They have lots of energy. They have to be educated on the plight of Orissa. Why such a natural resource state with low population density is so poor? Why there are no jobs for them? Why, do they have to move to Bangalore or Delhi for good jobs? Why, their teachers in government colleges are not teaching and they have to take tutution to pass? Why, the road sides are full of garbage? Why, they can get sick from eating or drinking water in a restaurant? Why there are no roads to many of their villages? Why their farmer's fathers are so poor?

Every issue which affects the ordinary Oriya, also affects the students. Farmers, government workers or workers employed in the private sectors are not in a position to take risk like-going on strike. They have families to support. However, the students are being supported by their families. They are the sons and daughters of "the Haves" and

“the Have Nots.” They can and they should take the risk. Students everywhere in the world have been a major force in bringing change to a society. United States withdrew from Vietnam because of persistent students protest. Czech Republic threw off communist rule because of students protest. Jaya Prakash Narayan’s movement against Indira Gandhi’s emergency rule was basically a student’s protest movement. Mr.Lalu Prasad Yadav came to power in Bihar on the back of the students’ movement and reduced the uppercaste domination of Bihar’s politics.

It is only the students, who can bring about dramatic changes in the state’s administration. They should be educated to know that their interests and the interests of the poor and the powerless Oriyas are interlinked. If the state government becomes more efficient and less corrupt, it benefits all – students, farmers, shopkeepers and laborers. If Oriya students get good education and decent jobs they uplift their families. When their families are uplifted, it benefits with the whole state.

At present, most colleges in Orissa have students unions. These unions are controlled by the politicians of different parties. The agenda for the most college student unions are very narrow: keep the elected students and their political supporters in power. They have no wider vision for the state. They are not looking for the greater good of the society. The poor developmental status of Orissa is not in their radar screen. This will have to change. These students unions have to have a bigger and wider agenda, than just their own interests. The students of Orissa have to unite, protest and fight, and go to jail if necessary. They can be the salvation for Orissa’s future.

Principles of Direct Action:-

There are different methods of organizing or ways of making social change. All have their use. All direct actions should be organized for a specific problem or a specific location. There are three fundamental principles of direct action:

1. Win concrete improvements in people's lives;
2. Make people aware of their own power (by winning victories, even small ones);
3. Alter the relations of power between people and the decision makers (government and other institutions) by building strong permanent local, state and national organizations.

When I say that I want to "alter the relations of power," I mean building strong organizations so that those in power, at all levels of government will always have to worry about. When ever the power holders decide to do anything that has a impact on a particular group, they are going to say "wait a minute", how will our decision will affect such and such organization? Hence building a grass-root organization is as important as winning a particular issue.

Conclusion:-

As suggested by Professor Noam Chomsky of Massachusetts Institute of Technology, there is no magic key to change. It needs educational programs, organizing and activism. Nobody gives off power and privilege voluntarily. The politicians and the civil servants are not going to be the exception. People without organization have no voice - whether they are farmers, students, teachers, doctors or sweepers.

Power from Bhubaneswar will have to be shifted to the Panchayat level. The Panchayats should get all rural developmental funds and should have power to spend it, subject to annual audit. All their expenditures should be disclosed at the villages' levels. Farmers, small business owners, handicraft workers, casual laborers, women and students have to be organized. None of this is new. In other parts of Indian subcontinents different organizations, like the Grameen Bank in Bangladesh, SEWA in Gujrat have already been very successful. In Orissa, we do not have to reinvent the wheel; just follow the examples of these successful organizations. The students in Orissa

have been mute. They will have to organize and protest the pitiable condition of the state. They are our main hope. There is an enormous amount of human suffering and misery in Orissa. Orissa has rich natural and human resources. A productive, efficient government with pressure from various organized group will be able to alleviate the misery and suffering of large numbers (close to 50%) of Oriyas. It is time, it is done.

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Chapter - 10

CONCLUSION

Orissa had a rich past. Oriya people are proud of their arts and culture, but they are ashamed of their poverty. Orissa is blessed with all kinds of mineral resources. Its population density is relatively low. It has had relatively stable government over the last 50 years. Oriya people are as smart or as dumb as people of other parts of India or the world. Many of them are doing well in Orissa and other parts of India and abroad. However, majority of Oriyas are very poor. Since 1983, the poverty rate has dropped in all the Indian states except Orissa and Bihar. According to the Planning Commission's Human Development Index (HDI) and the Human Poverty Index (HPI), Orissa is at the bottom among the Indian states. When rest of India's per capital income has grown at 7-8 per cent a year, Orissa has grown only at 2-3% a year. The development in Orissa has been also quite uneven. The coastal districts have done little better than the rest of Orissa. District with higher percentage of Schedule Castes and Schedule Tribes population have fallen far far behind. They have higher infant mortality rate, lower literacy rate and poorer infrastructure, compared to the coastal districts. Orissa is predominantly a rural state. People in the villages are much worse off than the towns' people. Not only they are poor, they do not have the power to make meaningful changes in their lives. All the power resides in Bhubaneswar - in the hands of the politicians and civil servants.

People distant from Bhubaneswar - Cuttack corridor are restless, especially in Western, South East and North West Orissa. They have the mineral wealth but getting

very little benefits from them. Time is running out. The present government and the future governments should pay urgent attention to the following:-

1. Give Priority to Poverty Reduction:-

The top priority of the government of Orissa, (all departments) should be to reduce abject poverty. At present, 47% of its population is below poverty line. The poverty rate among the schedule tribes is astounding 71% - the highest among any population group in India. The immediate objective of the present government should be to reduce the poverty rate among all Oriyas to national average.

2. Get Out of the Way of the Middle Class:-

The state government as a broad policy, should get out of the way of the middle and upper class. They have the education and the means to do better. Government policies, procedures and corruptions are holding them back. What does, out of the way mean? It means that the state government should be a facilitator rather than an obstacle. It should guarantee and enforce property rights. It should maintain law and order. It should abolish the license - permit - registration raj. It should get out of the business of providing services which can be done by the private sector more efficiently - like running buses, hotels, stores, owning and operating industries, mines, building, factories etc. It should provide elementary and secondary education and primary health care to all. Like Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu, it should encourage and facilitate the opening of private colleges and universities, trade schools and hospitals. Eventhough many educated Oriyas will leave the state for better jobs outside, the state will benefit from their remittance and know how. Some of them will also come back later to start new businesses. In 2007, out of 1,200,000 information technology workers, who were working USA, 700,000 were from Andhra Pradesh alone. Think of their impact on the state. Even if each of these workers send \$1000.00 or \$2000.00 to their family a year, 700,000 families in Andhra Pradesh move up to middle or upper class.

Andhra has more than 100 nursing schools compared to 10 in Orissa. Similar statistic applies to medical, dental and engineering colleges.

3. Girls Education:-

All experts now agree that the potential benefit of elementary and middle school education, especial girl's education is enormous. The benefits of girls' education are many: reduction in under-5 child mortality rate, and decreased fertility rate, increased productivity and gender equality. There will be no improvement in Human Development Index, unless the literacy rate of girls in Orissa improves. It can be improved by compulsory enrollment, provision of midday meal, hiring of more female teachers, improving the school infrastructure and strict monitoring of the students who are dropping out of schools. The basic quality of schools and the curriculum should also be improved.

4. Basic Healthcare:-

There is direct correlation between health and poverty, health and nutrition, nutrition and learning, health and productivity, and health and fertility. The state's government's job should be to provide clean drinking water, sanitation, nutrition to infant and children (midday meals), immunization and primary healthcare to all its citizen. It should leave the secondary and tertiary healthcare to private sector. It should implement the National Rural Health Mission scheme vigorously in all districts. Like Andhra Pradesh, the state should provide health insurance to all the BPL families and make affordable health insurance available to all.

5. Private Property Rights:-

"Without property right there can be no sustainable development" - that is the opinion of the World Bank and most developmental economists. At present the state government owns most of the land, which is not being cultivated by farmers. Orissa is a

rural state. 75 percent of the villagers work in the field. Majority of the villagers who work in the land, don't own it. They work for a land owning farmer or an absentee land owner. The state government should create new land from the non-forest land surrounding the villages, and give it to the rural poor. It should not lease it, but give them the title. The same way, people who live in juggi or basti, should get title to their little property - even though the government considers them illegal occupant. If the government cannot evict them, it might as well give them the title, as suggested by Peruvian Economist Hernado De Sato. The state government should also implement the working of the Grameen Bank of Bangladesh and encourage the property ownership by women. The property may be goat, chicken or vegetable garden or roadside stand. They are still property.

6. Decentralize and Privatize:-

At present most decision making power in Orissa, resides in Bhubaneswar, among politicians and civil - servants. This decision making power and associated resources has to be shifted to the village and the Panchayat level. The village Panchayat should be in charge of the elementary, secondary schools, primary health centers and all the infrastructure development of the villages (cannal, roads, bridges, wells etc.,) All the central and state's development money should go to them and they should be audited by auditor general's office once a year. Most of the secretariat work should be moved to the district level. The state government should privatize most of its service except those required for law and order, primary health care and public health, and elementary and secondary education. What ever services the private sector can do well (like bus service, running tourist hotels) and is willing to do so, the government should get out of it.

7. Curbing of Corruption:-

Systemic corruption is a major problem in India and in Orissa. At present, less than 10 percent of the development money is reaching the target. Corruption has become a way of life. At present, it cannot be eradicated but can be significantly

reduced, by decentralization of power, privatization of non-essential government services, increased transparency, more use of freedom of information act by a vigilant press, prompt investigation and punishment of the offending party, full disclosure of all political contributions and annual disclosure of assets held by all elected politicians (Panchayat, MLAs to M.Ps) and civil – servants.

8. Mass Poverty is Rural Problem:-

Endemic poverty is mostly a rural phenomenon. The urban poor are better off than the rural poor. Rural poverty is also intractable. The causes are many – lack of land ownership, lack of water, lack of road to take the produce to the market and lack of capital to use newer technology, pesticide and hi-breed seed. The lack of education, lack of basic health care and lack of political power by the “Have Not”, also contribute to the intractable nature of rural poverty. There is not one solution but many well proven Indian and International solutions. Some of them are – girls’ education, provision of basic healthcare, harvesting of rain water, ownership of the asset of production (land, goat, pig or sheep) micro financing and technology.

Fortunately, the Central Government in Delhi is now aware of all these problems and has various centrally funded schemes to address all the above areas. The job of Orissa Government should be to take advantage of all the available Central (Delhi), World Bank’s and International Monetary Fund, and UNDP resources. It should also act as a facilitator for all the NGOs who are working in Orissa and not be a blocking wall for them. The pride of the state should not come on the way of any program or scheme even if it benefits one poor person in the state.

9. Organizing For Change:-

There is no magic key to change. People, who control power, do not give it off voluntarily. People who are deprived – the casual laborers, women, landless peasants, farmers, small business owners and the rural and urban poor must organize and

agitate. The college students should be the main body to organize and to protest. Young people, everywhere in the world, have been the agitators and the change makers. Students of Orissa should be no different. They have the potential to succeed among all the groups.

I have used the word “abject” in the title of the book. The word means “wretched or lacking all pride”. Orissa does have wretched poverty. Its poverty is depriving its people of their pride. Orissa or Utkal or Kalinga or Udra, had a glorious past, but we cannot live in the past. People who do not have a “present” always talk about the past. That is what all Oriyas are doing now. We are very proud of our past but what about the present? How can you have pride in your state, when it is one of the poorest or the poorest state in India. It time Orissa catches up with rest of India. Orissa cannot improve its poverty rate, unless the present and the future government pay attention to the rural poor and especially to its tribal people. It is high time, we get going.

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