

Orissa : A Place for Aesthetic Experience

Endowed with nature's bounty, vast stretches of clean and virgin beaches, serpentine rivers, breath-taking water falls, rugged hills, miles and miles of rolling forests, lush green country sides, disparate wild life, colourful tribes and rural beauties, Orissa, the eastern state of India, is still richer by its great tradition of architecture, monuments and sculptural excellences. Famed in mythology and ancient history as Kalinga and in medieval history as Utkal, modern Orissa took its present form on April 1, 1936, the first State in the country to be formed on linguistic basis.

Orissa has been a repository of one of the world's finest cultural heritages. It has attracted saints, philosophers, pilgrims and invaders through the ages. They have left glowing impressions, which have shaped the mosaic texture of art and culture of this land much to the applause of international tourists and scholars.

Of all the States of India, Orissa, has the largest number of tribes, as many as 62

categories comprising 23 percent of the total population. There are large tribes like Santala, Munda, Oraon and Gond who have accepted many modern ideas while retaining their old culture and tradition whereas Juang and Bonda tribes are still hanging back to their culture and are recalcitrant to acculturation. But

Government intervention in this regard is gradually bringing about a change in their attitude and perception.

Orissa's culture is manifested by

number of festivals that are observed with pomp and gaiety. A great festival held at Puri is called the Car Festival or Rath Yatra of Lord Jagannath. Three richly decorated wooden Chariot carrying Lord Jagannath, Balabhadra and Devi Subhadra come out of the temple to give Darshan to a concourse of national and international audience and devotees of all sort, who come from various part of the country and even from abroad. Apart from this, the Raja-Sankranti is observed with traditional fervour. So also the Dola yatra, Dasahara, Kumar Purnima, Makarsankranti and Nuakhai and the



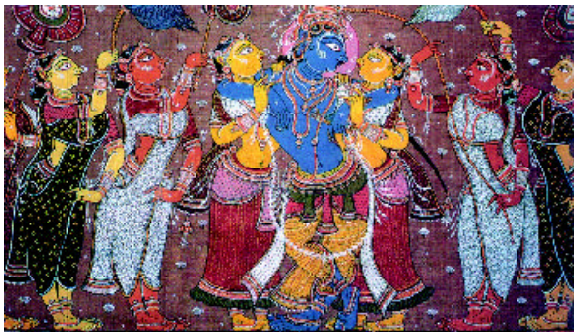


h i s t o r i c
Dhanuyatra in
the western
Orissa.

T h e
O r i s s a
architecture
enjoys a unique
position in
view of its
richness. The
temple of

Mukteswara, Konark, Rajarani, Lingaraj and Jagannath are a testimony to the skills of the indigenous artisans who built these temples of stone and adorned its walls with striking sculptural motifs.

The traditional Patachitra has ever been hailed as an exquisite expression of consummate craftsmanship.



The filigree work of Cuttack, the stone carving work of Puri, the Horn work of Paralakhemundi, the handloom fabric of Sambalpur can entice anyone with a penchant for art and craft. Similarly the applique work of Pipli is indeed a masterpiece.

Orissa enjoys a leading position in the country in respect of places of tourist attraction. Orissa has plenty of forests, minerals, rivers and monuments of historical, religious and

architectural importance. It is full of mountains, valleys, gorges, lakes and a long coastline dotted with fine seaside resorts and golden beaches. It also presents a social and cultural harmony of remarkable nature and is aptly



called the “epitome of India”. Orissa is a land that snatches away your heart once you get acquainted with the gentle and deeply religious character of its people, a region which fascinates your eyes by the richness and supreme beauty of its sculptural and architectural inheritance. The golden triangle of Bhubaneswar-Puri-Konark has attracted tourists for magnificent temple architecture and exotic beaches, but many more tourists spots such as Similipal Tiger Reserve with stately Sal Forests, beautiful waterfalls, grassy valleys and rich wildlife consisting of elephants, cheetal, tiger, leopard, pythons provide ample scope for eco-tourism. Asia’s largest brackish water lake ‘Chilika’ attracts large number of migratory birds. It is also home to the Dolphins which many people may not be aware of. The Nandankanan Zoo in Bhubaneswar is one of the finest of its kind in India. It has Safaries of White Tigers and Lions. The Chandka, Ushakothi, Similipal Wild Life Sanctuaries are



must for any one who loves nature and wild life. The Tikarpara Sanctuary on river Mahanadi and the Bhitarkanika Sanctuary in the deltaic estuaries preserve rare species of crocodiles. Dhauligiri, Ratnagiri and Lalitagiri can attract Buddhist Tourists for their Buddhist heritage.

The dance forms of Orissa have always occupied pride of place in the evolution of Orissan art and culture. The Odissi dance, a highly evolved classical dance form of Orissa, has earned international acclaim for its lyrical exuberance. Besides, the Chhau dance of Mayurbhanj is a popular form of folk martial art performed through dances and physical gestures.

It is a matter of crowning glory that Orissa has played a pioneering role in Information Technology Revolution in the whole country. In conceptualising the IT vision, the Government of Orissa is in the process of developing an appropriate IT architecture in the state to effect qualitative changes in all walks of life and society, resulting therewith ease and convenience in transaction, creating more employment opportunities and accelerating higher economic growth within a specific time-frame. Extensive application of IT would establish a system where the citizens

will receive good governance ensuring speed of decisions from a transparent Government through an effective e-Governance system.

Orissa has made a perceptible progress in terms of ameliorating the living standard of the people despite recurrence of terrible natural tragedies. The state is in the process of evolving an appropriate strategy to increase agricultural production as agriculture is the mainstay of the people. A sketch of achievements caused as a result of consistent effort of the State Government broadly encompasses following impressions :

- * A number of programmes and projects have been implemented under Revised Long Term Action Plan (RLTAP) with an outlay of Rs.569.03 cr. for all-around development of KBK districts.
- * Development of Micro Watersheds in drought-prone areas of the state for drought proofing and improving the moisture regime has been taken up. 1,712 watersheds with a total treatable area of 9.52 lakh hectares are being developed for this purpose.
- * To tackle the problem of distress sale of paddy steps are being taken to open up paddy procurement centers in different districts.
- * 10,600 Pani Panchayats have been formed



all over the State to promote farmers' participation in the system of Water management covering an area of 8.79 lakh hectares.

- * Under Biju Krushak Vikash Yojana, Rs.47.96 cr. have been released for 785 Lift Irrigation Projects in the KBK area and Rs.14.12 cr. in non-KBK area for 257 LIPs.
- * During last 4 years, 52 bridges have been completed and 800 km. of State roads have been improved under Rural Infrastructure Development Fund (RIDF), Central Road Fund (CRF), Revised Long-Term Action Plan (RLTAP) and other State Plan Schemes.
- * Government has provided 54,809 tube wells, 2,250 sanitary wells and 395 piped water supply projects to ensure safe drinking water in rural areas. Besides this, 700 drinking water projects are under execution under "Swajaladhara".
- * To meet the requirement of primary school teachers 17,000 Swachhasevi Sikhya Sahayak (SSS) have been employed so far. The Government has provided contractual appointment in 1,078 vacancies in the High Schools.
- * 18.21 lakh Kissan Credit Cards, 59,077 Kalinga Kissan Gold Cards and 67,798 Kaling Kissan Silver Cards have been distributed to farmers through Co-operative Banks.
- * 1000 Information Kiosks in urban and semi-urban areas are being made operational to promote self-employment in IT sector.
- * Orissa Tribal Empowerment and Livelihood Project has been launched with an outlay of Rs.430 cr. for socio-economic development of the tribals in 7 districts.
- * 2.50 lakh Swarojagaries assisted under SGSY by utilisation of Rs.289.00 Cr.
- * A total number of 1.86 lakh new houses and 0.56 lakh upgraded houses have been constructed under IAY with an expenditure of 403.32 crores till August 2004. After the Supercyclone of 1999, 6.69 lakh Additional IAY new houses have been constructed with an expenditure of 1464.83 cr.
- * 1383.33 lakh mandays generated and 61267 projects completed utilising 8.30 lakh MT food-grains under SGRY Scheme.
- * In order to utilise iron ore and mineral resources of the state, State Government has signed MoUs with 14 companies.
- * During the period from 2001-2004, 127062 Women Self -Help Groups have been formed under Mission Shakti Programme, generating savings to a tune of Rs.78.29 cr. and a total number of 93207 groups have been provided with Rs.196.76 cr. of credit support.

