



(From left sitting) Raj Chengappa, Group editorial director, India Today; Naveen Patnaik, Odisha chief minister; and Suresh Mahapatra, Chief secretary, Odisha government with the India Today State of the State Odisha 2022 best district winners

Photographs by CHANDRADEEP KUMAR and ARABINDA MAHAPATRA

THE BEST DISTRICTS OF ODISHA 2022		
CATEGORY	BEST PERFORMING DISTRICT	MOST IMPROVED DISTRICT
OVERALL	SAMBALPUR	KORAPUT
ECONOMY	KHORDHA	MAYURBHANJ
INFRASTRUCTURE	JHARSUGUDA	BARGARH
AGRICULTURE	BARGARH	KORAPUT
EDUCATION	KHORDHA	BALANGIR
HEALTH	SAMBALPUR	NABARANGPUR
LAW AND ORDER	GANJAM	KENDUJHAR
SOCIAL SECURITY	RAYAGADA	JAGATSINGHPUR
WOMEN'S EDUCATION	BHADRAK	MALKANGIRI
ENTREPRENEURSHIP	JHARSUGUDA	JAGATSINGHPUR
SKILL DEVELOPMENT	KHORDHA	SUNDARGARH
DIGITAL COVERAGE	SAMBALPUR	KORAPUT
SANITATION	KHORDHA	KALAHANDI



RISING FROM THE CHURN

The India Today State of the State Odisha awards were clear vindication of the transformative journey the state has undertaken

By Romita Datta



Odisha has come a long way from those harrowing days of the Super Cyclone in 1999 when a 25-year-old district collector of Cuttack, Pradip Jena (now 48 and additional chief secretary, revenue and disaster management), was running helter-skelter to arrange safe shelter for the people and restore power. Today, it is the first state in the country to have an independent Odisha Disaster Management Authority and its own rapid response team. Indeed, its expertise is such that it helps other states navigate storms and natural calamities. Odisha also now prides itself on having a GSDP growth of 10.1 per cent as against the national GDP growth of 8.8 per cent in 2021-22. From a BIMARU state, it has taken giant strides to emerge as a role model for others in sectors as diverse as disaster management, health, education, skill development, industry and women's empowerment.

Success has come after much sweat, labour and perseverance, and is that much sweeter for it. Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik flits past the unpleasant memories from when he first took over two decades ago. "Development had come to a halt and Odisha was hitting the news for all the wrong reasons," he reminisced with a faint smile playing on his face.

But the CM was committed to fulfilling the aspira-

tions of the people who had reposed faith in him, so he took up the daunting task with a single-minded focus and determination. The rest is history. After two decades at the helm, Patnaik's winning streak has only gotten better, leaving political opponents in the dust. The reasons for success are simple, he says: people-centric governance made to function on the principles of the five Ts—transparency, team work, timeliness, technology and transformation. India Today's Odisha State of the State 2022 report, prepared in association with premier market research organisation Marketing and Development Research Associates (MDRA), was a vindication of this transformative story.

On April 29, at the India Today State of the State Conclave Odisha 2022 held in Bhubaneswar, Group Editorial Director Raj Chengappa hailed Patnaik as "the calm who helped maintain the cosmos amid the chaos". He was referring to a time from the early noughties when Odisha's chaotic financial situation was made worse

"The reasons for our success are simple, people-centric governance focusing on the five Ts—team work, transparency, technology, timeliness, transformation"

NAVEEN PATNAIK
Odisha chief minister



by the natural calamities that kept battering the state. "Odisha's unique hands-on approach model to disaster management and purpose-driven approach in terms of social welfare and governance with the 5-T style of management helped script the turnaround," Chengappa added.

The best districts awards distributed at the conclave were calculated based on the key aspects that affect the lives of citizens and the development of the districts, with their performance evaluated in 12 key categories—overall, economy, infrastructure, agriculture, education, health, law and order, social security, women's education, entrepreneurship, skill development, digital coverage and sanitation. An extensive review of MDRA's database and potential sources of reliable data was conducted by an experienced team of researchers, sociologists, economists and statisticians. A total of 112 indicators were considered to evaluate the best performing districts



and 81 for the most improved districts, which was backed by expert inputs from academia, policymakers and policy influencers.

Odisha is now not just the fastest growing state in the country but is also aiming at a Rs 6 trillion economy in the not so distant future. And this looks possible because of a politically stable and consistent government, robust infrastructure, market-oriented policies and availability of rich natural resources. Value addition on raw natural resources has led to a 300 per cent increase in mining revenues. The consistent development of human resources through skill development and upgradation has enhanced the employability of youth, who constitute 50 per cent of the state population.

Enhancing skills for a total human transformation is what the Odisha Skill Development Authority strives for. It now has a high-tech World Skill Center to hone vocational skills. Odisha today contributes around 11 per cent of the country's skilled workforce. By setting up model degree colleges in backward areas and government-run English medium schools in each block, Odisha is now aiming to bridge the demographic divide as well.

In terms of law and order and women's empowerment, Odisha got accolades from Ambika Satapathy, founder of start-up ZooFresh Foods. Needless to say, many of the start-ups in Odisha have women founders. The Patnaik government's focus on women through Mission Shakti is well known and now efforts are on to upgrade the skills of more and more of them so that they can ride the growth wave of the state.

Of course, despite all the positivity, Odisha is far from being the finished article. The numbers with Niti Aayog suggest that 30 per cent of the people are still in the BPL category, 60 per cent do not have access to clean fuel and sanitation levels are bad in many places. The irony is that the state's richest districts in terms of mineral resources are also the poorest in terms of poverty. Keonjhar contributes 21 per cent to the country's pool of minerals but poverty is a high 62 per cent. In terms of providing safe drinking water to the urban poor, Odisha has drawn up an ambitious



(From L) **Dr Omkar Rai**, Chairman, O-Hub; **Debiprasad Sarangi**, CEO, IserveU Technology Pvt Ltd; **Binayak Acharya**, Founder, ThinkZone; **Ambika Satapathy**, Founder, Zoofresh Foods

▲ BHUBANESWAR AS A START-UP DESTINATION: ACHIEVEMENTS AND CHALLENGES

TAKEAWAYS

- 1 The Odisha government launched the 'O-hub' start-up programme in December 2021 and aims to facilitate 5,000 start-ups by 2025
- 2 Women show the way in Odisha. Of the total start-ups, a substantial section is led by women
- 3 The state has good infrastructure and law and order to support the growth of start-ups
- 4 Odisha is ahead of many states in implementation of policies, clearance time for projects and availability of talent—the state produces 900,000 graduates every year
- 5 The state is working towards providing access to capital for start-ups to scale up. This includes tapping the Odia diaspora across the world



Hemant Sharma, Principal secretary, industries department, Odisha; **Ranjan Nayak**, COO, JSW Utkal Steel; **Rajib Sekhar Sahoo**, Economist; **Sachin R. Jadhav**, Director, Odisha Tourism

THE EMERGING B-TOWN: WHAT MAKES BHUBANESWAR THE GO-TO PLACE FOR INDUSTRIES?

TAKEAWAYS

- 1 Growth model based on welfare-oriented governance, robust infrastructure, value addition to raw materials and natural resources, and market-friendly policies
- 2 Around 11 per cent of India's highly skilled workforce is from the state
- 3 Odisha eased land availability for projects along with support infrastructure, such as the four-lane road network in the iron ore mining belt in Jagatsinghpur
- 4 Revenue from mining rose from Rs 14,000 crore in 2020-21 to Rs 40,000 crore in 2021-22. GST collections in 2021-22 are the highest yet
- 5 Tourism projects fast-tracked; 60 projects worth Rs 2,400 crore cleared in past three years



Pradeep Kumar Jena, Development commissioner-cum-additional chief secretary, revenue & disaster management; **Shri Jagadananda**, Social activist and Member secretary, Centre for Youth and Social Development; **Basanta Kumar Kar**, Development expert

▲ THE ODISHA WAY OF DISASTER MANAGEMENT: CAN IT BE A LESSON FOR OTHER STATES?

TAKEAWAYS

- 1 Odisha set up India's first Disaster Management Authority. It has its own disaster response force and even a disaster management app
- 2 A pocketbook of guidelines, incorporating experiences from eight past cyclones for officials
- 3 Regular disaster-preparedness drills. Every natural disaster is followed by review and assessment
- 4 Malnutrition addressed as a silent emergency, helping curb cases of stunting
- 5 Exchange of disaster-related information and technology with other states

plan which will not only ensure piped water connection to every household, but also guarantee access to safe tap water as a fundamental right. Indeed, Puri has become the first city in India to provide 24-hour piped water supply to every household.

In the field of art and culture too, Odisha needs to reinvent itself. Repackaging, rebranding and robust marketing can help restore the state's lost glory. It took national award winning film director Nila Madhab Panda 10 years to recover the costs of his masterpiece, *I am Kalam*.

Steeped as it is in mythology, culture and its treasure trove of temple

architecture, Odisha has never been overzealous in its religious beliefs or ideals. Pluralism, respect and tolerance for the other are what make Odisha the *kalabhoomi* of a myriad emotions and ideas. The secular fabric is deeply entrenched in the ecosystem of the state.

As R. Balakrishnan, chief advisor at the chief minister's office (CMO) points out, Odisha is a tropical rain-forest, a happy amalgamation of forest cover, animals, birds, bees, insects and humans, an ecosystem where ideas and identities get enriched instead of getting lost in the proverbial melting pot. ■



Dr Silpi Sahoo, Chairperson, SAI International Education Group; **Dr. A.K. Das**, Vice-chairman, Odisha State Higher Education Council (OSHEC), Former vice-chancellor, Utkal University and distinguished scientist

▲ ODISHA: THE NEW HUB FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

TAKEAWAYS

- 1 Half the state's population is in the 20-25 age group. The gross enrolment ratio is 22.7 per cent less than the national average but growth since 2010 has been higher than in other states
- 2 Model degree colleges coming up in 10 aspirational districts and a central university in Koraput
- 3 Around 314 English medium Odisha Adarsha Vidyalayas being set up—one in each block
- 4 Procter-based mentoring in groups of 20-25, semester/year-wise doubt-clearing sessions and recorded lectures on portals helped bridge the digital divide
- 5 Odisha ready to embrace NEP as the consortium of 13-14 universities is working out curriculum reforms and has taken many of the suggestions onboard



Devdutt Pattanaik, Author and mythologist; **R. Balakrishnan**, Author, researcher and chief advisor, CMO

▲ ODISHA THE ESSENCE OF INDIA'S PLURALISM

TAKEAWAYS

- 1 India's pluralism based on philosophy that is thousands of years old embraces the idea of multiplicity, diversity and heterogeneity
- 2 Pluralism is about listening to each other's stories and respecting others' views. Mythology talks of plurality
- 3 India is not a melting pot where identities get lost. It is a rainforest of pluralism
- 4 The Sun Temple in Konark is a classic example of multi-layered cultures and practices that are at the same time Brahmanical, folk and tribal
- 5 The philosophy of development is embedded in dialogue. The spirit of dialogue embodies the essence of pluralism



V. Srinivas Chary, Director, Administrative Staff College of India, Hyderabad; **G. Mathi Vathanan**, Principal secretary, housing and urban development, government of Odisha

▲ DRINK FROM TAP: 24X7 WATER SUPPLY-A TRANSFORMATIVE STORY OF URBAN ODISHA

TAKEAWAYS

- 1 Focus on safe drinking water for the urban poor. Around 400,000 homes, covering 1.8 million people, in the urban slums have tap water connections
- 2 The right to tap water is like any other fundamental right. The poor should not be charged upfront any fee for water connections
- 3 The Naveen Patnaik government has targeted tap water connections to all houses in the cities by December 2022
- 4 Under the 'Drink from Tap' mission, Puri is being billed as the first Indian city to have achieved 24x7 quality drinking water supply
- 5 Odisha has strived for a sustainable water model by ensuring community participation in water management at the local level

► SKILLED IN ODISHA: HOW TO MAKE ODISHA A STATE OF SKILLED HUMAN RESOURCES

TAKEAWAYS

- 1 State developing 'Skilled in Odisha' brand for its workforce. Blueprint for 'Odisha Skill Vision 2030' ready
- 2 In partnership with Tata STRIVE, skilled trainees are offered two-year fellowships to augment technical knowledge
- 3 Odisha has built the ITI brand as a badge of honour. The state has focused on changing mindsets on vocational training
- 4 Many ITIs now have girl student enrolment of 20 per cent as against 6 per cent in 2016; the target is 33 per cent
- 5 Skilled workforce being used for outreach in disaster-prone areas for fixing electricity wiring, gadgets and even houses



Amar Patnaik, MP, Biju Janata Dal; **Sangaran Gopal**, Principal, World Skill Center

▼ **FROM POVERTY TO PROSPERITY:
MAPPING ODISHA'S FUTURE**

TAKEAWAYS

- 1** The per capita income of farmers, who constitute 55 per cent of the workforce, is just Rs 5,112. How can this be inclusive growth?
- 2** Thirty per cent of the population is in the BPL category. Some 500,000 people from Ganjam district have migrated to Surat in search of jobs
- 3** Of the 2.2 million people who registered as unemployed in the past three years, only 26,000, or 1 per cent, secured jobs
- 4** The mineral-rich districts are poverty-stricken. Keonjhar is a steel hub but has 62 per cent of the BPL population
- 5** Over 90 per cent of Odisha's population being Hindu, the BJP will highlight the backwardness of districts like Kalahandi and Bolangir to take on the ruling BJD



Kalikesb Narayan Singh Deo, Former Lok Sabha member, BJD; **Bhakta Charan Das**, Former Lok Sabha member, Congress; **Bhrugu Baxipatra**, Vice-president, Odisha BJP



Nila Madhab Panda, Filmmaker; **Aruna Mohanty**, Dancer; **Satyabrata Rout**, Author, director, scenographer

▲ **KALINGA THE KALABHOOMI:
HOW THE POWERHOUSE OF ART
AND CULTURE CAN BE MARKETED**

TAKEAWAYS

- 1** Making art contemporary will attract a newer generation audience. Stories of Sita and Draupadi on stage need to be rounded off with that of 'Nirbhaya'
- 2** A professional approach is required for art to be treated on par with other professions
- 3** Artistes have to double up as marketing agents. Director Nila Madhab Panda went door to door with his film *I am Kalam* for 10 years
- 4** The government must bring in policy to declare art as a creative industry and ensure that artistes get their due
- 5** Create a strong leadership in the art world to project and propagate Odisha's vibrant art forms

► **CHAK DE ODISHA: INDIA'S NEW SPORTS DESTINATION**

TAKEAWAYS

- 1** Incorporating sports as a compulsory subject in the school curriculum will help create a competitive atmosphere
- 2** Odisha to sign MoU with IOC to create Olympic value certification programme for children
- 3** Focus on sports not just for health and fitness but as a means for overall transformation of children's personality
- 4** The government and federations must ensure that sports with great potential, such as kabaddi, are marketed well
- 5** Create more success stories to build conviction in sports, Odisha's tryst with hockey being one example



R. Vineel Krishna, Special secretary to CM and commissioner-cum-secretary, sports and youth services; **Manisha Malhotra**, Head of sports excellence & scouting, JSW; **Dilip Tirkey**, Former hockey player



SIDELIGHTS



Raj Chengappa, CM **Naveen Patnaik** and **Sur-esh Mahapatra** release the Odisha SOTS report

Bhaktacharan Das (Congress) with **Kalikesb Singh Deo** (BJD) and advisor to CMO **R. Balakrishnan**

Darwin Group CMD **Ajay Harinath Singh** presents a memento to **CM Patnaik**

Dr Achyuta Samanta, founder of KIIT and KISS greets **CM Patnaik** at the venue

