

Shri Biswanath Pattnaik

Recipient of Jamnalal Bajaj Award for Constructive Work-2008

Born: 11th November, 1916

Class 8th

Shri Biswanath Pattnaik has been involved in social welfare activities and rural development from the age of 17 when he started working as a non-formal teacher at his own village, Kumarada. He has drawn his inspiration from eminent Gandhian workers of Orissa, i.e., Shri Gopobandhu Choudary, Acharya Harihar Das, Nabakrushna Choudary and from Vinoba Bhave, Jayaprakash Narayan and Mahatma Gandhi. He has paid particular attention to the problem and development of handicapped persons of SC/STs. Most of the services performed by Shri Pattnaik are for children, women, the aged and the handicapped, particularly of SC/ST and down-trodden sections of society. He does all his work as a volunteer without accepting any remuneration. He fearlessly attacks social evils such as the dowry system, superstitions, etc. All his activities are undertaken by the Banabasi Seva Samiti, of which he is the moving spirit. The new initiatives taken by Shri Pattnaik include creating awareness among the community in the field of education, abolition of dowry system, rehabilitation of women in distress, eradication of illiteracy, prohibition, etc.

In the matter of child welfare, schools and vocational educational institutions for self reliance have been set up and 4 different centres are being maintained for the benefit of 300 children. Special hostels and orphanages have been provided for the children especially belonging to the ST and SC. As many as 14 creches are being run for the benefit of children upto 3 years. As regards education, Shri Pattnaik has taken the initiative to establishing primary and secondary as well as non-formal education centres in several villages in Balliguda in Orissa. A Nutritious Food Project is functioning at Balliguda, catering to the needs of malnourished children, pregnant and nursing mothers.

To promote economic activities, the Banbasi Seva Samiti has set up a printing press for teaching children printing and providing employment. The Samiti also runs an Agriculture and Kitchen Garden, a Dairy Farm and a Carpenter Unit.

As social welfare amenities, an old age home and special homes for women who are in moral danger or are victims of exploitation or suffer from family disorganization have been provided. In the field of health and sanitation, the Seva Samiti has taken special steps for the control of diarrhea and supply of pure drinking water.

The impact of Shri Pattnaik's work extends not merely to certain districts of Orissa such as Koraput and Kandhamal, but represents a model prescribed by the Central Government for social welfare schemes for other States. Motivated by Shri Pattnaik's persuasion and advocacy, a number of tribal youths have started work in voluntary spirit. Most of the villagers have given up liquor totally. These works have a good prospect of continuity for future development. Shri Pattnaik has introduced a number of income generating schemes like Agriculture Project, Mulberry plantation, Silk production unit, Nutrition food production packet unit, Dairy farm, Printing Press, Carpentry work, etc.

Shri Pattnaik is a dedicated, constructive Gandhian social worker, freedom fighter and Sarvodaya leader. He has spent his life for the well-being of poor tribals and rural people. He takes a simple diet, wears khadi clothes and leads a simple life. He likes to pray with children every morning and evening. He is a bachelor.

Shri Pattnaik received Best Social Worker Award from the Bharatiya Adimjati Sevak Sangh, New Delhi, in 1995 and 1996. He also received the Justice Rajkishore Das Award in 1996-97, and the 23rd Sarala Award 2002 for outstanding contribution in the field of social work for the year 2002. He received the Rajiv Gandhi Sadbhawana Award 2003 for outstanding dedicated social service. In 2006, the Orissa Sahitya Academy awarded a Biography sketch "Angya" to Shri Pattnaik.

