



# Aitihya

January - December, 2020

## Editor's Note

Dear Members,

Hope you all are well.

Aitihya is again in your hands. The delay is due to the Pandemic.

Lets talk of heritage.

There must be many lesser known Fairs and Festivals in your region, which are not only colourful and interesting but also a part of our Heritage. From this issue we will have a series for all the Chapters of INTACH as a whole. So, please contribute brief articles with photographs on such events of your region.

Let the New Year-2021 bring good health and smile for everyone.

Editor-Aitihya  
9437229420 (WhatsApp)

## Message

Welcome to 2021.

A year woebegone and woe ridden by a minuscule virus that spread its tentacles all through the globe killing and bruising millions of people has gone. India was one of the worst affected by the Corona pandemic, so was our state. At the end of the year HOPE surged as the dreaded disease showed signs of decline and in considerable measure. We entered the dawn of 2021 with the hope of resurrecting ourselves and are in the process of renewal.

Work came to a standstill everywhere and INTACH was no exception. But our members have shown their grit and have done whatever was possible. Kudos to them. Our major listing projects, Mahanadi and Koraput received setback distancing the milepost of completion. However work has been revived and is in full swing. Speaking about listing, the projects taken up by some chapters are pending for a long time which, it is hoped will be completed sooner than later.

In the field of Architectural Heritage our Conservation Centre had a busy time. Rani Mahal at Sambalpur was completed and handed over to the Government. The project has earned laurels from one and all. By the end of the year the State Culture dept has entrusted INTACH with execution of creation of several galleries in the State Museum. One noteworthy development was a project to restore and conserve a grand colonial structure used as library at Balangir entrusted to INTACH at the initiative of the Balangir Chapter. Thanks are due to them. There are several such buildings in other places whose conservation can be taken up by INTACH.

Let us look forward to a productive and meaningful year ahead and pray the Almighty to put an end to the pandemic scourge that has devastated humankind.

Amiya Bhusan Tripathy  
State Convenor

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# News

## Odisha Culture and Heritage to find place in Textbooks.

People are now becoming more conscious about their Culture and Heritage. Even Governments are coming forward to incorporate these topics in the text books of the school students.

The history of heritage of Odisha and life history of great sons of the soil – from ancient times to the modern times – will find place in text books and additional textbooks. Many great personalities of Odisha have made significant contribution to various epoch making event in our history starting from the Paika Bidroha to the Freedom Movement, to the formation of Separate Province of Odisha and the development of modern Odisha

Selected topics from the above field will be incorporated in the text books for students of class VII, VIII and IX. This decision was taken by the Cabinet on 29th December 2020.

## INTACH has begun the groundwork to pitch Mysuru as a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

The process is elaborate and could take years to even reach the nomination stage as the number of monuments from India under the 'tentative list' is long. However, the Convenor of Mysuru Chapter said this is one of the long-term objectives of the chapter, as it shares lot of similarities with Jaipur which was certified by UNESCO as a world heritage city last year.

Art historians have described Mysuru as an amalgam of different architectural styles as evident in the presence of nearly 250 buildings that have been identified as heritage structures and many of them have been converted to public offices.

The city and the region has an unbroken history of encouraging art and culture since historical times and these traditions including folk arts continue to be a part of the live heritage of the people of the region.

# Current Affairs

## Climate change now top threat to natural World Heritage – IUCN report

Climate change is now the biggest threat to natural World Heritage, according to a report published by IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature). A third (33%) of natural World Heritage sites are threatened by climate change, including the world's largest coral reef, the Great Barrier Reef, assessed as having a "critical" outlook for the first time.



"Natural World Heritage sites are amongst the world's most precious places, and we owe it to future generations to protect them," said Bruno Oberle, IUCN Director General. "The IUCN World Heritage Outlook 3 reveals the damage climate change is wreaking on natural World Heritage, from shrinking glaciers to coral

bleaching to increasingly frequent and severe fires and droughts. As the international community defines new objectives to conserve biodiversity, this report signals the urgency with which we must tackle environmental challenges together at the planetary scale."

The IUCN Outlook assesses the prospects for World Heritage site values – the unique features which have earned them their World Heritage status – based on threats, and how good protection and management is. It assesses 63% of sites as either "good" or "good with some concerns", while 30% are of "significant concern" and 7% are "critical". Half of the sites are found to have "effective" or "highly effective" protection and management, with the sustainability of the sites' funding being the most common issue rated as a "serious concern". The Outlook finds that 16 natural World Heritage sites have deteriorated since 2017, while only eight have improved.

The report also finds early evidence of the effects of the turmoil caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. While lower tourist numbers may ease pressure on some ecosystems, in more cases impacts appear negative. Closing sites to tourism causes significant revenue loss, and illegal activities are on the rise with fewer staff deployed to prevent them.



## Chapter Activities

### Bhubaneswar Chapter

On 27th January a seminar on “ Lesser known Festivals and Practices of Odisha “ was held at Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan. ‘As experts Dr. Manindra Kumar Meher, ( the great grandson of Nature Poet of Odisha Swabhaba Kabi Gangadhar Meher ) Head of the Department of Odiya Language and Literature, Utkal University, Vani Vihar and Shri Manmath Kumar Satpathy, Odisha Sangeeta Natak Academy Award winner participated. Both the experts were welcomed by the State Convenor Shri A.B.Tripathy.

In the beginning of the programme the quarterly Newsletter -Aitihya was released by the State Co-Convenor Shri Japani and Dr. Priyambada Hejmadi Mohanty a senior member of the Chapter.



*(Release of the Newsletter Oct. - Dec. 2019)*

Dr. Manindra Meher started his discourse by citing an example of how his great grandfather Poet Ganagadhar Meher celebrated Nuakhai, the most prominent festival of Western Odisha with the people of Bijepur since he was working there and could not say no to them on being requested, asking his son Bhagaban Meher to celebrate the Festival at Barpali, his native place thus, giving a message to everybody that the festival encourages brotherhood and Basudhayeba Kutumbakam( the whole world is one family ) Festivals like Pura-Uansa, Gundikhai, Karamsani, Puspuni, Bhai jointiya, Puro Jointia etc. of western Odisha were highlighted. He also stated as to how these festivals keep the society united and together everybody celebrates respecting each other’s religion and practices. Shri Manmatha Kumar Satpathy narrated how Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan and Infosys Foundation jointly preserving the dying Folk Art Forms for posterity. He narrated how from 12th Century



*( Dr Manindra Meher addressing the members )*



*( The captive audience )*

onwards festivals and practices were organised in every house/village celebrating every occasion. He described how Prahallad Natak was being staged for more than 12 hours at a stretch.

There was a question answer session followed by the deliberations.



*( Sri Manmatha Satpathy addressing the members )*



Shri Baikuntha Panigrahi, Convenor conducted the seminar and offered the vote of thanks. Almost all the senior members attended the Seminar.

## Balasore Chapter

On the 150th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi, a painting and essay competition was held on 5th January for School children from class VII to IX standard as a part of the Head Quarter's programme at Balasore Law College. 97 students from 11 Schools participated in the competition of which 41 students participated in the Essay Competition and 56 students participated in the Painting Competition. Dr. Prahallad Mohanty, an eminent scholar and Professor addressed the participants, parents and INTACH members present. He spoke on the philosophy of Gandhiji and it's relevance on the present day Society. The Chapter Convenor Shri Himanshu Das inaugurated the competition. More that 150 persons were present in the event including students, parents and members of the Chapter.



*( Students participating in the Competition )*

On 23rd February a Pitha Exhibition cum Competition was held in the Town Hall to boost the old tradition of Pitha making by women. This was the third such activity by the Chapter. More than 50 participants displayed their recipes at the Exhibition. There were 20 types of Pitha and the number of entries were 35. Cash prizes and certificates were awarded to the top three contestants and 10 consolation prizes also were given to motivate them for the next competition. Chief Guest of The prize giving ceremony was the Collector and District Magistrate Shri K. Sudarshan Chakraborty and guest of honour was Shri Harihar Jena, General Manager, District Industries Centre. Both the Chief Guest and the guest of honour in their deliberations requested the participants to share their expertise with their neighbours to popularise the art of Pitha making. Shri Himanshu Das presided over the meeting while

Shri Udaya Ranjan Das presented a brief note on the importance of the event.



*( Pithas on the display )*

Shri Rabi Narayan Das, a life member of the Chapter passed away on 3rd December, 2019 at Kolkata. He was taking keen interest in all the programmes of the Chapter and was considered as an adviser of the Chapter by all the members.

## Documentation Of The Heritage Of The Mahanadi Valley

The Mahanadi Valley Project was flagged off by INTACH's Chairman Maj Gen L.K.Gupta (Retd) and State Convener Shri A.B.Tripathy on the 15th January 2018 at Sambalpur. The scope of the project was to document the tangible and intangible heritage along the river. It was the first of its type to be undertaken by INTACH, with the intent that the document would be a road map for conservation workers, historians, students and researchers. The project was to be completed within 24 months and the report should have been out in Jan 2020. However due to the prevailing Corona conditions, it was delayed by nearly a year.

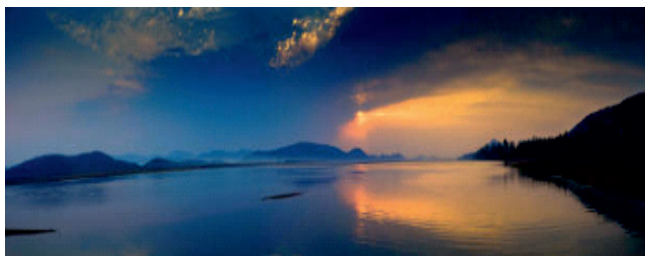
Seven teams of INTACH members from five chapters were originally earmarked in the 1200 kms stretch of the project, but finally only three teams from Sambalpur, Sonapur and Boudh were involved. The balance of the region was covered by Project Co-ordinator Anil Dhir. The project report is in its final stage and will be ready by the end of January 2021. It will be a five volume report with 800 listings, 3000 photographs, 820 maps and a detailed reference bibliography.

The Mahanadi is the lifeline of Odisha and major settlements in the state have come up along the banks



of the river. There are numerous tangible monuments like temples, palaces and forts, besides the intangible heritage of folklore, songs and dances, tribal art and craft. As the most-active silt-depositing rivers in the Indian subcontinent, it originates from the Siwaha range of Chhattisgarh and enters Odisha at Pujaripali. The name of the river is referred to in ancient literature like the Mahabharata, Brihadsamhita and Kapilasamhita and on the medieval inscriptions of the Samaramsis and Telugu Chodas, the rulers of Kosala. Recent excavations in the middle of Mahanadi Valley at place like Hirakud, Burla, Khejriapali, Hikudi, Khambeswaripali and Nuagada have yielded artifacts of early human settlement ranging from Paleolithic to the iron-age periods. Mesolithic rock-art site is also traced in the Aung-Mahanadi valley. The Mahanadi facilitated in land riverine trade throughout the late medieval period till independence, thereby contributing to the growth of overseas trade and commerce.

The Mahanadi plays a major role in the lives of the people of the districts through which it flows. The river has religious significance as there are many temples nestled either on its bank or the nearby. Rich archaeological evidence has been unearthed of a glorious and rich past. The major cities and towns on the embankments are Rajim, Sambalpur, Bhalupali, Binka, Birmaharajpur, Sonapur, Athamalik, Badamba, Subalya, Boudh, Kantilo, Banki, Katak, Tirtol and Kujanga. The river basin is one of the most heavily populated areas of the State, with 1,85,37,378



( The scenic beauty of Mahanadi )

people living on the river banks as per the 2011 Census.

The Mahanadi stretches for 600 Kms in Odisha. The project covered both the banks; hence its scope was 1200 Kms. The Project envisaged the documenting of the natural, tangible and intangible heritage. This included the life style, cultural traits, folk dance, and music, lyrics, folklores, folk-tales traditions etc. of the people inhabiting on both the banks. Mahanadi in Odia literary texts, both ancient and modern too was a part of the project.

Approximately 1400 heritage sites distributed on both the banks were visited of which 750 have been documented. The teams traversed the entire length of the river, on either bank. They had to travel on foot, motorcycles, bicycles and country boats. The river was surveyed both during the summer and the flood seasons. Many first time discoveries, hitherto unreported, were made. This included 75 submerged and sunken temples, archaeological sites, caves etc. The teams had to face many difficulties and perils while surveying the inaccessible stretches of the river.

The Report will be a comprehensive document and will have the entire mapping of the heritage of the river. Special fold out maps of the entire river and for each districts have been made. A comprehensive introduction and foreword too will be included.

Nevertheless, the documentation will only be complete after the Chhattisgarh stretch has been done. This was to have been completed by the Chhattisgarh Intach team, but like the Bengal stretch of the Jagannath Sadak, I am sure that it will be INTACH Odisha who will do the work.

*( A report by Anil Dhir )*

## **Documentation of Intangible Culture and Heritage of Kandh and Gadaba tribe of Koraput**

A project on intangible culture and heritage of Kandha and Gadaba tribes of Koraput region is taken up under the supervision of Sanjib Chandra Hota and the Koraput Chapter of INTACH has been assigned with the task. Two retired Professors of Economics based at Koraput have written all the chapters except one on Cultural life of both the tribes. Sri Hota has fine tuned almost all the chapters. The draft is under final compilation by Anil Dhir. It is expected to be completed very soon.



*(Gadaba Tribe women)*



*(Kandha Tribe lady)*

*(A report by Sanjib Chandra Hota)*

## Need For A Heritage Law

A.B.Tripathy

The laws on Municipal administration, Town and Country planning in independent India curiously have either omitted a critical sector or made cursory reference to it. This is Conservation and Protection of our rich Heritage, both tangible and intangible. While these laws have been mostly modelled on the British system in which conservation of heritage is an important component, the first laws after independence on municipal administration are generally silent on this. This will be evident from the Odisha Municipality Act 1950. A small country like England has 5 lakh listed buildings backed by law for care and protection. Even the USA with little history (300 years) has 1 million heritage sites in its National Registry. Compare this

with India where the ASI and State Archaeology may be looking after not more than 12000 monuments.

Awareness on Heritage conservation gathered momentum in the early seventies with Article 51 inserted in the Constitution which made the care and protection of our rich heritage a fundamental duty of the citizens. However, heritage conservation appeared in official documents through the Report of the National Commission on Urbanisation in 1988. The principal recommendations of the Commission were

- 1) Conservation as integral part of Town planning process
- 2) In Conservation areas encourage repair and upkeep of Heritage structures.
- 3) Retention of original streetscape and pedestrian paths
- 4) Sensitive Traffic arrangement
- 5) Involvement of Government agencies in care and protection of Heritage buildings
- 6) Tourism to be judiciously used for promoting conservation
- 7) Transfer of Development rights as an incentive to promote conservation
- 8) Formation of Urban Heritage Committees.

Emergence of the Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage in 1984 and the NCU report are two significant influences on Heritage Conservation in the subsequent years. Heritage laws and rules and regulations in the initial years were urban centric, understandably so as most of the heritage structures, Temples and places of worship, Forts and Palaces and the colonial buildings were located in urban conglomerations. In Odisha 2 acts, the Town Planning and Development Trust Act and the Orissa Municipal Corporation Act incorporated Preservation and Conservation of Heritage in their charter of functions. There is yet another, Development Authority Act.

Bombay, now Mumbai was the first city /area to formulate and put in place Heritage Regulations for Greater Bombay in 1995. The Regulations which were later endorsed by Govt Of India in 2000 had components as follows.

- 1) Listing—Consisting of heritage sites a) buildings, precincts and open spaces b) gardens c) natural features



- 2) Grading of Heritage sites like Grade-1, 11A, 11B, 111.
- 3) Constitution of Heritage Conservation Authority. Majority members are non government. This is vital.
- 4) Incentives to private stake holders like transferrable Development Rights, Waiver of building rules, waiver of Master plan reservations, peripheral development.

In 2000 the Government of India prepared a draft compendium of best practices in Heritage conservation and circulated the same to all State Governments and Chief Ministers.

Some notable developments in the evolution of Heritage laws / Regulations are indicated below.

Next to Bombay, Hyderabad in the undivided Andhra Pradesh took the lead to identify Heritage structures for their preservation by 1999. In 2017 Telangana Heritage Protection, Preservation and Conservation Act was passed covering the entire state and a State Heritage Authority has been formed.

In 2000 Statutory heritage protection was introduced in Nagpur followed by Pune.

Delhi constituted its Heritage Conservation Committee by notifying 800 monuments.

West Bengal enacted the West Bengal Heritage Commission Act in 2001. A Commission is in place with majority non government members.

Tamil Nadu constituted the Heritage Commission in 2012.

Bihar passed the Heritage Commission Act in 2019. Currently its constitution, mostly membered by officials is facing flak.

Assam has enacted a law on Heritage protection recently.

Shyam Chainani (now no more) who was instrumental in formulation of the Greater Bombay Heritage regulations in the nineties and a passionate Heritage lover had prepared a Draft Heritage Conservation Bill which was sent to all Chapters in the early part of the second decade. Conservation of our Architectural Heritage is increasingly assuming significant dimensions.

I think it is high time that we pay attention to care and protection of our valued Heritage including the built structures which abound in Odisha. Centuries old monuments in the state of Odisha call for serious and

studied attention from all concerned, particularly the Government which is the custodian of overwhelming majority of these monuments.

Now an informed and considered view will have to be taken on the future course. To my mind there are two ways of going about it, one, preparation of a broad Heritage policy and two, formulation and enactment of Heritage laws as States have done and are doing. Enactment of a law will be more action and goal oriented where as the provisions in the Policy document will be more in the nature of declaring the intentions of the Government. If we opt for the former, we cannot get a better document than the one prepared by the indomitable Shyam Chainani which can be suitably modified to suit the conditions of Odisha to deliver effective and equitable dispensation in the field of Heritage preservation. After studying the document and the Acts and Rules of different states my considered views are given below.

- 1) We should keep the draft of Shyam as the basis on which to formulate the proposed legislation.
- 2) The best practices of the West Bengal Act should be incorporated to make the text more concise and simple. Shyam's draft is very detailed and some can be omitted.
- 3) The constitution of a Heritage Commission as provided in the WB Act should be adopted. Both the documents provide for a Heritage Corpus Fund with initial and annual grant by the Government to be supplemented by donations from other sources both public and private.

## Meeting of the Chapter Convenors, Odisha

A meeting of all the chapters of Odisha was held on 14.02.2020 at Bhubaneswar. Welcoming the Chapters Convenors and Members of the State Advisory Committee, the State Convenor briefed the participants about the highlights of INTACH activities in the State. Apart from the listing and documentation of River Mahanadi and Tribal life in the undivided Koraput district, he made a mention of the following

- 1) 150 years of Gandhiji-its celebration at Puri, Bhadrak and concluding seminar at Bhubaneswar on 2-10-19.
- 2) Resolution submitted to Government expressing concern at the demolition of heritage buildings at



Puri including Raghunandan Library urging the Govt to retain the heritage character of Puri and take up conservation of the old books and documents of the Raghunandan library

- 3) India Heritage Quiz- Odisha Chapter became National Champion-19.
- 4) Creation of public opinion against the demolition of Tagore House at Puri and successfully stopping it.
- 5) Persistent advocacy of proper conservation of the Sun Temple at Konark.



*( The State Convenor addressing the Participants )*

He also gave a gist of the discussion of the State Convenors conference in Delhi held in the first week of February. He informed that as per the Annual Administration Report 2019, 3 Chapters from Odisha, Ganjam, Sambalpur and Sonepur have not submitted their Audit reports and requested all Chapters to ensure that Audit reports for 2019-20 be sent to Head office in time

A review of the 2 listing projects Koraput and Mahanadi was taken up. Shri Sanjib Hota who is guiding the project in Koraput stated that of the 8 main heads, the chapters on Language, Social customs, Economy and Religion are yet to be completed in all respects. These chapters will be written for each tribe. He advised the Co-Convenor to complete the drafts by the end of February. In March he will visit Koraput along with the State Convenor and Shri Anil Dhir to edit these chapters. Efforts should be made to complete by end of May.

As regards Mahanadi Shri Anil Dhir who is receiving reports from various sectors stated that reports from Sambalpur, Sonepur and Boudh have been received. He has sent his comments on Sonepur and will send on Boudh. The Nayagarh sector which has to be covered by Anil Dhir is yet to commence. Work in the



*(The State Convenor reviewing the Chapters activities and Projects work)*

undivided Cuttack sector is proceeding satisfactorily. The State Convenor highlighted the need to complete the listing by April so that draft for the total report can be started. Activities of the Chapters were then discussed.

### **Koraput chapter**

Shri Ch Santakar, Co-Convenor explained the progress of documentation of Tribal life in Koraput which has been indicated above.



*(presentation of Shantakar, Koraput Chapter)*

### **Ganjam**

Convenor Dr S. Pati stated that they have taken up awareness programmes among School and College students. They are trying to rename the Bay of Bengal as Kalinga Sagar. They are also working to save the old port-Potagarh. The State Convenor urged Dr Pati to complete the listing project for which they have received funds from Head Office. As regards ,the conservation of Potagarh port, it is being taken up on piecemeal basis. There is no integrated plan. The Chapter can play a crucial role in preparation of an





integrated DPR and propose to Govt for funds.

### **Bhadrak**

They have already published 7 Books. Another Book they are planning to publish on the listing of Mulim/Islamic heritage sites of Bhadrak He also requested the State Convenor to request HQ to allot Rs. 25,000/- for awareness programme without waiting for request from Chapter as was being done in past. He highlighted the menace of idol thefts.

### **Balasure**

Chapter will be organising a Teachers training programme so that they in turn can make the children aware about the rich heritage we have. They could not send the best team for the State round. In future they will take part. They will also initiate action to preserve the Lal Girija of Balasure.

### **Balangir**

Chapter members have been visiting Schools and other institutions for making people aware of the importance of Heritage. They will also make a Tribal Institution Project. State Convenor has been requested for preparation of DPR for conservation of the Jubilee Building. Publications on Freedom Fighters and prominent women of the area are proposed to be undertaken. The State Convenor assured that DPR for the Jubilee building will be prepared soon.



(Presentation of Balangir Chapter)

### **Sonepur**

Chapter has been conducting awareness programme in Schools and Colleges. Idols from different temples are being stolen for which active response from Police is

called for. They need more cooperation from the HQ. They will prepare the Bhima Bhoi Project and submit at the earliest. Intangible Heritage of Handloom is to be preserved. The State Convenor requested the Convenor to complete the listing of ancient monuments for which HO has sanctioned funds long back. The issue of idol thefts was also highlighted by Shri Anil Dhir. It was decided to bring this problem to the notice of D. G Police and the Government

### **Sambalpur**

Awareness programmes in Schools and Colleges should be taken up. Rani Mahal project should be completed as early as possible. Sambalpur wanted to work for the Statue of Veer Surendra Sai at Aseer Garh Fort. They will prepare a DPR and submit. The progress of Bejbarua residence was discussed. Shri Deepak Panda was requested to organise inputs in the building in consultation with the concerned persons in Assam.

### **Jajpur**

Chapter has been participating in the Book Fair being held and different quiz programmes are conducted. They have already listed 535 sites and the effort is going on satisfactorily. State Convenor suggested that the Chapter may bring out a publication of selected important monuments of Jajpur.

### **Cuttack**

Important project proposals like Mission School and Freedom fighters museum in the old Jail compound are pending. Similarly Gora Kabar project is waiting for funds. The State Convenor informed that the Jail project may come through in view of strong public demand. He also suggested that since Cuttack has many colonial structures, a broad based project for conservation of these buildings may be initiated by the Chapter.

### **Bhubaneswar**

3 School Quiz programmes and 10 Heritage awareness programme were held, These programmes were conducted in association with other reputed organisations. Prachi Valley Project has been completed and released. 11 New members were inducted and 14 AL members converted to Life Member Category. Project on the different names of the streets and squares of the Old City of Bhubaneswar shall be taken up. Nayagarh Project needed some up gradation which will be done while working for the Mahanadi Project.



## Aitihya

All the Convenors were requested to contribute articles and report their activities for publication in Aitihya

## Advisors' note

Advisors took interest and appreciated work done by Chapters. They also advised to induct young members who will carry forward the mission of INTACH

Shri Baikuntha Panigrahi, Convenor, Bhubaneswar Chapter offered a vote of Thanks

## Executive Body meeting of Bhubaneswar Chapter

An Executive Body meeting was held through WEBINAR on 16th November, 2020. The Convenor, Bhubaneswar Chapter was the organiser of the meeting who welcomed all the executive members to the first ever webinar meeting.

The followings were discussed and decided.

1. It was informed by the Convenor that The Heritage Quiz Programme which is conducted by the HECS could not be conducted by the Chapter since all the Schools are closed till 31-12-2020 in Odisha as the last date of conducting the Quiz was 15-10-2020 extended up to 15-11-2020. Few Chairmen and Principals expressed their helplessness. The Cheque of Rs. 10.000/- which was sent by HECS was returned to them.
2. The Painting Competition which is supposed to be held before 31-3-2021 is being planned. However, it depends upon the availability of desired number of student from the participating Schools and the scenario then.
3. The State Convenor suggested to print "Aitihya" which may contain the activities of Chapters of Odisha along with reports of Mahanadi Project, Koraput Project, works by the ICI. The impact of Kovid on heritage sites like Puri Temple, Lingaraj Temple, Ekamra Khsetra should also be incorporated in the Newsletter, Shri Anil Dhir was requested by the Convenor to present an article on this. Shri Sanjib Hota opined that Koraput Chapter will be able to submit the Project by the end of November. Shri Anil Dhir also said that the Mahanadi Project will be submitted by that time.
4. Aitihya will be a e-Newsletter with only 50 digitally printed copies

The meeting ended with a vote of thanks to all the participating members.

The meeting ended with thanks to all the members.

## Architectural Heritage Conservation Projects Of ICI, Bhubaneswar

### Conservation Of Rani Mahal, Sambalpur

- Rani Mahal, also known as Rani Bakhri and Jemadei Mahal, is one of the most important heritage structures of Sambalpur. Once part of the fort complex, it was built in late seventeenth century under the rule of Chauhan dynasty to serve as the palace for the queen. Rani Mahal is located close to the River Mahanadi. The palace is set in an open area, 50m east of Pataneswari Temple and 400m east of the famous Samleswari Temple.
- Rani Mahal showcases the features of Mogul period architecture with local and Rajasthani influence.
- Striking features of the building include different types of ornamental arched openings and niches, decorative capitals and brackets, tapered walls, vaulted roofs, Rajasthani paintings, etc.
- Rani Mahal is a three-storied structure having a rectangular plan, The ground floor plan consists of 6 rooms arranged linearly along the three sides of a verandah.



(Before Conservation)



(After Conservation)



## Restoration Of VSS Town Hall in Sambalpur

The Town Hall was constructed by the British in 1902, in the memory of Queen Victoria. The building, which was inaugurated in 1904 by the then Chief Commissioner of Central Province JP Hewety, was renovated about a decade back. It was designed by the then Superintending Engineer of Central Province JB Leven Thorpey and named Victoria Hall. Constructed with the funds provided by the British Government, kings, landlords and businessmen of the region, the building was renamed after Independence in the memory of martyr Veer Surendra Sai as Veer Surendra Sai Town Hall in 1908.

- The Building is set in an open ground covering an area of about 1.6 acres, in front of office of Sambalpur Municipal Corporation.
- Built in Indo-Saracenic style of architecture, it is a single storey structure adorned with pointed and semi-circular arches, clerestory windows having stained glass panels.
- It is one of the most significant heritage structures of the town and hence it was imperative to restore it back to its original glory.
- Once restored, it can be used as a museum .



(Before Conservation)



(During Conservation)

A project is sanctioned by Dept. of tourism, Odisha Govt. for development of interior for establishment of Tourist Interpretation Centre for western Odisha inside VSS Town Hall, Sambalpur. It is proposed to have a) Interpretation of History and Culture of Western Odisha b) Tradition, art and craft, fairs and festivals, cuisines of western Odisha and c) Performing Arts section: dance, folk songs and folk lores, literary creations, eminent personalities



(Proposed Interior View)

## Renovation Of House Of Sri Laxminath Bejbaruah (Assamese Poet, Novelist And Story Writer) Sambalpur

The eminent poet Sri Laxminath Bezbaruah was in Sambalpur to supervise family business of railway wooden sleepers then supplied to Bengal-Nagpur Railway (BNR) in the first two decades of 20th century, it was believed that the poet spent 20 years of his life from 1917 to 1937. The residence of Bezbaruah located at Kacheri Chhak in Sambalpur is being renovated.



(Before Conservation)



## 1. LESSER KNOWN FESTIVALS OF ODISHA

### Nuakhai

Man is bonded with the tradition of paying gratitude to the Lord, Gods and Goddesses or Nature for what he gets after performing his duties. This is the essence of “Bhagbat Gita” also which teaches us to do our duties selflessly and be happy with whatever God gives us. We get rice because of grace of God. So when we get the new food grain of a season we dedicate the first grain to the God or Goddess to whom we pray and then we take it for our use as Prasad .

Nuakhai is an old tradition which is being celebrated since ages. In the seventeenth century when 18 kingdoms came under Sambalpur as tributary states, Samleswari, the presiding deity of Sambalpur became the principal deity of the entire region and Nuakhai was celebrated throughout. But after the fall of Sambalpur Empire, the British divided and signed individual agreements with the kingdoms. With this “Nuakhai” was celebrated on different days as decided by the priests of the concerned Kingdom. The people of a kingdom were celebrating the festival on a suitable and auspicious time calculated on the basis of different presiding deities of that Kingdom..

In 1991, Odisha Sanskrutika Samaj, a socio-cultural organization of Sambalpur organized a meeting of eminent people & pundits of entire Western Odisha in which it was decided to celebrate the function on “Bhadra Suklapakhya Panchami” tithi or day i.e. the very next day of “Ganesh Chaturthi”, but the auspicious timing is to be decided separately according to the presiding deities of the different places. Since then “Nuakhai” is being celebrated on this specific day.

On this day the eldest person or the head of the family goes to the field and worship the land and the standing crop praying God for a good harvest. In every house

kheer (Kheeri) and different cakes (Pitha) and of course the new rice grain is offered to the presiding deity by the head of the family at the already fixed auspicious time. There after New rice is offered to other deities of the house. The village priest also offers the new rice grain to the principal deity of the village and then to other deities of all the temples of the village.

As the tradition goes, in every household the eldest member of the family after offering the new rice grain mixed with kheer and cakes to the family deity at home distributes Prasad to each and every member in the family. The younger seek blessings from the elders by touching his feet. This goes on within the family in a cyclic manner. Usually the members of a clan or larger family hold this festival at one place. All the members of the family wish and try to come and join the family for Nuakhai even if they have travel long distance. Normally new cloths are purchased or stitched for everybody. One very important aspect of Nuakhai is that the persons or families associated with the cultivation work of the Land Lord are given “Adhiya” or rice, dal, vegetables, ghee etc. along with new cloth so that there is ample food in every house and everyone celebrates. In the afternoon there would be different sporting events in which the married and unmarried, youngsters and aged compete with each other. Evening cultural performances are organized to rejoice. Mostly traditional Sambalpuri dances are performed. “Nuakhai Bhetghat” means salutation on this occasion to elders which has become a tradition by organizing Cultural functions. This has become an international event and people of western Odisha wherever they are do organise this function at a later date for exchanging goodwill and share their happiness.



(Paddy in the field and Supreme Deity of Sambalpur-Maa Samalai)