



Transformative Leadership And Inclusive Development: A Critical Analysis Of Naveen Patnaik's Policies For Scheduled Castes And Scheduled Tribes In Odisha

Sappa Ranjita Rani

Asst. Professor of History, Govt. Science College, Chhatrapur

CMA Rajendra Gouda

Asst. Professor of Commerce, Model Degree College, Nabarangpur

Abstract

The visionary policies introduced by Shri Naveen Pattnaik played a crucial role in bridging the gap between the government and the common masses, especially among the marginalised communities. His initiatives helped in bridging the long-standing social cleavages among the tribal population of Odisha. Over the course of more than two decades in power, his government implemented a range of targeted tribal development programmes that not only uplifted the socio-economic conditions of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled tribes but also fostered a sense of inclusion and empowerment. This paper tries to analyse these transformative policies which were mainly focused the development of SC and ST communities and their impact on Odisha's journey towards inclusive Development. It also aims to explore how these populist Schemes influenced and reshaped the voting behaviour and political consciousness of the marginalised communities, ultimately consolidating his enduring political legacy.

KEY WORDS- Scheduled Caste, Scheduled Tribe, Inclusive growth, Marginalised communities, Populist scheme, Naveen Patnaik, Odisha.

Introduction:

Odisha, located on the eastern coast of India, has a diverse social structure with a large proportion of its population belonging to Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs). According to the Census of India, STs constitute over 22% of the state's population, while SCs account for nearly 17%. Historically, these communities have faced deep-rooted socio-economic disadvantages due to caste-based exclusion, geographic isolation, and limited access to education, healthcare, and economic opportunities. Development policies in post-independence Odisha have therefore placed emphasis on welfare schemes and targeted interventions for these groups, though the results have been uneven.

Odisha has a rich tribal heritage and as per the data of Census of 2011, it is home to 62 tribal communities including 13 particularly vulnerable tribal groups (PVTGs), making up over 22% of the state's population. For decades, the tribal communities had remained aloof of governance, neglected by the government machinery and successive administration. But the scenario started changing under Naveen Patnaik's leadership; he was brought into the mainstream narrative of progress and empowerment. A series of transformative welfare schemes that profoundly impacted the lives of Odisha's most vulnerable

communities—particularly women and tribal population. Before the year 2000, various state governments in Odisha attempted to implement measures for the upliftment of SCs and STs, such as land reforms, tribal development programmes, and reservations in education and public employment. However, persistent challenges such as land alienation, high poverty rates, malnutrition, health service and limited political empowerment continued to affect these communities. In tribal-dominated districts, infrastructural gaps and administrative neglect often hindered the delivery of welfare benefits. This situation provided the context in which Naveen Patnaik assumed office as Chief Minister in 2000, promising political stability, administrative reform, and a governance model with a focus on the poor and marginalized.

Naveen Patnaik's leadership over the past two decades has been marked by continuity, stability, and a carefully crafted image of pro-people governance. His government has launched and expanded a number of schemes targeted specifically towards SCs and STs, aiming at both social protection and economic empowerment. Initiatives such as the *Biju Pucca Ghar Yojana*, *Mission Shakti* for women's self-help groups, *KALIA* for small and marginal farmers, and special scholarships for tribal students have been presented as steps towards inclusive development. Furthermore, the state has invested in expanding tribal residential schools, strengthening the Odisha Tribal Empowerment and Livelihood Programme (OTELP), and implementing the Forest Rights Act to secure land titles for tribal households.

Despite these initiatives, debates continue regarding the real impact of these policies on structural inequalities. While official statistics show improvements in literacy rates, health indicators, and rural infrastructure, critical voices point out that many SC and ST communities still face systemic barriers such as lack of access to higher education, proper health care facilities, underemployment, displacement due to mining and industrial projects, and ongoing social discrimination. Questions also arise about whether these welfare measures are leading to sustainable empowerment or merely serving as political tools to consolidate electoral support among marginalized communities.

In this context, it becomes necessary to undertake a critical analysis of Naveen Patnaik's policies from the perspective of both transformative leadership and inclusive development. This study aims to assess whether his governance has brought about long-term structural change for SCs and STs in Odisha or whether progress has been largely incremental and symbolic. By examining policy frameworks, implementation strategies, and ground-level outcomes, the research will contribute to understanding the complex relationship between political leadership and social justice in a state where marginalized communities form a significant portion of the electorate and the social fabric.

Demographic Profile of SCs and STs in Odisha:

According to the Census of India 2011, Odisha recorded a total population of 41,974,218. Within this population, Scheduled Castes (SC) numbered about 7.19 million, constituting 17.13 percent of the state's residents, while Scheduled Tribes (ST) numbered roughly 9.59 million, making up 22.85 percent. Together these two groups account for nearly two-fifths of Odisha's people, underscoring the state's distinctive social composition and the importance of inclusive policies.

The Scheduled Tribe population is distributed across sixty-two recognized tribal communities, including thirteen groups classified as Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs). Their settlement is predominantly rural, with dense concentrations in the southern and western districts such as Koraput, Malkangiri, Nabarangpur, Rayagada, Mayurbhanj and Sundargarh, most of which are notified as Scheduled Areas. Scheduled Caste communities, in contrast, are spread more evenly across the state, with relatively higher proportions in districts like Subarnapur and parts of coastal Odisha.

Sex-ratio figures highlight a notable contrast. The overall sex ratio of Odisha in 2011 stood at 978 females per 1,000 males. Among the Scheduled Tribes the ratio was higher—about 1,029 females per 1,000

males—suggesting a relatively balanced gender distribution in tribal societies. The Scheduled Caste population recorded a sex ratio close to the state average.

Literacy data reveal sharper disparities. Odisha's overall literacy rate was 72.87 percent (81.59 percent for males and 64.01 percent for females). Scheduled Castes showed a literacy rate of 69.02 percent, with male literacy around 79.21 percent and female literacy about 58.76 percent. Scheduled Tribes lagged further behind: overall literacy was only 52.24 percent, with male literacy estimated at 63.70 percent and female literacy at just 41.20 percent. These figures point to a significant gender gap and a continuing need for targeted educational interventions.

Review of Literature:

There are various studies that have been carried out on populist schemes by Naveen Pattnaik and its impacts on the up-liftment of the tribal of Odisha. Existing studies often examine individual schemes or provide descriptive accounts without systematically linking leadership style to measurable improvements in SC/ST well-being. This gap creates uncertainty about the effectiveness, sustainability, and explicability of Odisha's policy approach, and limits the evidence base for future strategies. Few reviews are discussed here under:

Adarsh Tripathy, on his study on "A Comparative study of the rhetoric inclusion in Electoral campaigns and governance: case study of tribal inclusion" examine the politics of tribal inclusion in Odisha through a comparative study of electoral campaigns, narratives and governance outcomes. The paper tries to highlights that political messaging about inclusion varies across regions and groups, often reflecting selective and uneven commitments. Structural issues like bureaucracy, poor funding, and lack of political will hinder effective implementation of inclusive policies. It criticizes the tendency to treat tribal identity as uniform, overlooking internal differences such as gender and class. The study argues that inclusion often becomes a rhetorical tool rather than a genuine developmental practice, exposing deeper problems of accountability and governance. It calls for a rethinking of inclusion to make it more context-sensitive, equitable, and transformative, especially in regions like Odisha.

Bibhu Prasad Mohapatra, on his paper "Decentralised Governance in Tribal areas of Odisa- A critical" examine the status of the implementation of the PESA Act in the state and how the PRIs in the scheduled areas are functioning as per the provisions of this act. He highlights even after 18 years of PESA Act's implementation, tribal regions in Odisha continue to face misgovernance and underdevelopment. He points out that despite challenges, local self-governance through PRIs now plays a significant role in tribal development, alongside agencies like ITDAs and DRDAs. The post-PESA phase has opened avenues for tribal participation and empowerment in decision-making, highlighting the urgent need to strengthen Panchayats in line with PESA provisions.

Tanuja Mohapatra "Tribes of Odisha: Issues of social inclusion, exclusion and cultural assimilation" (2011) explores the dynamic nature of tribal societies in Odisha, focusing on their social inclusion and exclusion within the larger society and the processes of cultural assimilation. Tribal exclusion is largely a form of self-imposed separation distinct from exclusion experienced by Scheduled Castes. For nation-building, Scheduled Castes require upliftment within society, while tribal communities require meaningful integration without loss of identity. The article acknowledges the continuous cultural interchange between tribes and castes, advocating recognition of tribal contributions to Odisha's composite culture. It highlights the complex interactions between social inclusion, exclusion, identity, and cultural assimilation among the tribes of Odisha, emphasizing the need for nuanced, culturally aware development policies.

P. Viswanandha Gupta examine in his article "Political behavior of the tribal Youth: A study"(2016) the socio-economic challenges faced by tribal youth in India. It highlights how modernization has brought both progress and cultural disruption. It points out that empowering tribal youth through education, livelihood support and preservation of cultural heritage is key to achieving sustainable and equitable national development.

Ashis Mohapatra in his paper “Economic and political empowerment of women in Tribal communities of Contemporary Odisha” examined the status of tribal women in Odisha. He points out that unlike non-tribal women of Odisha, the tribal women enjoy relatively higher status and freedom, reflected in agricultural work, economic enterprises and local governance. Despite progress, the article notes persistent challenges such as gender bias, wage gaps and limited participation in high level politics.

N.Barik and P.Sethy in their paper “c addressed the main challenge that hinders development in the Tribal areas. But it also shows positive trends in tribal education, empowerment and social awareness in recent years.

R. Dutta and M. Pati in their article “ Populist policies and voting behavior in Odisha since 1999: An Analysis”(2024) examine the electoral success of the regional party Biju Janata Dal (BJD) in Odisha since 1999, with a focus on Balasore district of Odisha. The article stresses the importance of focusing on long term benefits, effective implementation and economic stability for Odisha’s progress. It tries to evaluate economic sustainability of populist schemes and raises questions about the long term fiscal health, cautioning against policy announcements made mainly for electoral gains without adequate consideration for implementation and economic impact.

Statement of the Problem:

Despite Odisha’s substantial Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe population—together comprising nearly two-fifths of the state’s residents—deep socio-economic disparities persist in education, health, livelihood security, and political participation. Naveen Patnaik’s long tenure as Chief Minister has been marked by numerous welfare and rights-based initiatives aimed at transforming these conditions, yet the actual impact of such policies on inclusive development remains insufficiently documented and critically evaluated. A focused analysis of transformative leadership and its outcomes for marginalized communities is therefore essential to assess progress, identify persistent barriers, and guide more equitable development planning.

Importance of the study:

The importance of this study lies in its critical examination of how transformative leadership, as demonstrated by Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik, has influenced inclusive development policies for Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs) in Odisha. By analysing key initiatives in education, health, livelihood, and social empowerment, the study provides valuable insights into the extent to which governance strategies have translated into real socio-economic progress for marginalized communities. It highlights the relevance of visionary and people-centric leadership in addressing historical inequalities, ensuring social justice, and promoting participatory development. Furthermore, this study contributes to the broader discourse on inclusive governance models in India, offering policy implications for sustainable and equitable growth in other states as well.

Objectives of the Study:

1. To examine the impact of transformative leadership under Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik on the socio-economic development of Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs) in Odisha.
2. To evaluate how far the policies of a long-serving Chief Minister have translated constitutional commitments to social justice into measurable improvements for SC and ST communities.
3. To assess the effectiveness of key welfare programmes and policy measures such as Mission Suvidya, scholarship schemes, and reservation amendments, helping identify successes and gaps.
4. To enrich academic discourse on the link between political leadership style and inclusive development, a relatively underexplored area in state-level studies.
5. To highlight areas—such as education, land rights, and gender disparities—where targeted interventions are still needed, aiding policymakers in refining or scaling programmes.

Methodology of the study:

The study adopts a descriptive and analytical design based exclusively on secondary data. Published sources such as Census of India 2011, Odisha Economic Surveys, government policy documents, annual reports of the ST & SC Development Department, and reputable journal articles form the core dataset. Relevant quantitative indicators—literacy, enrolment, dropout rates, reservation statistics, budget allocations, and programme outcomes—were compiled for the period of Naveen Patnaik's tenure. Data were coded and entered into SPSS for statistical treatment, including descriptive statistics, trend analysis, and correlation tests, to identify patterns linking transformative leadership initiatives with inclusive development outcomes for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.

Historical Overview of SC/ST Policies in Odisha

The trajectory of policies for Scheduled Castes (SC) and Scheduled Tribes (ST) in Odisha reflects both the state's unique socio-cultural composition and the broader constitutional mandate of social justice in India. Odisha's population has consistently included one of the largest proportions of tribal communities in the country, alongside a significant Scheduled Caste population. Government interventions from the colonial era to the present reveal a gradual shift from protectionist measures to participatory development and rights-based approaches.

Colonial and Early Post-Independence Period (pre-1950s–1960s):

During the late colonial period, the princely states of Odisha witnessed limited administrative efforts to address the isolation and exploitation of tribal groups, mainly through indirect regulations on land alienation and forest use. After Independence, the Constitution of India (1950) provided the foundational framework for protective discrimination. Odisha's first elected governments under the Congress Party prioritized land reforms, tenancy rights, and the establishment of tribal development blocks (1956) aimed at integrating remote regions into the state economy.

1970s–1980s: Expansion of Welfare and Protective Legislation:

The 1970s marked a significant expansion of welfare schemes under successive Congress governments, with the creation of the Tribal Sub-Plan (TSP) and Special Component Plan (SCP) to ensure earmarked funds for SC/ST communities. The Odisha Scheduled Areas Transfer of Immovable Property (by Scheduled Tribes) Regulation, 1956 was strengthened in these decades to curb land alienation. The state also began implementing the Forest Rights-related safeguards provided by national legislation, alongside focused educational and hostel facilities for SC/ST students.

1990s: Decentralization and Rights-Based Measures:

With the rise of the Janata Dal and coalition governments in the 1990s, emphasis shifted toward participatory governance. Implementation of the Panchayats (Extension to Scheduled Areas) Act, 1996 (PESA) provided Gram Sabhas in Scheduled Areas with greater control over natural resources and local planning. Welfare departments were reorganized to integrate livelihood programs with micro-credit and self-help initiatives.

2000s to 2024: Biju Janata Dal (BJD) Era and Contemporary Reforms:

Since 2000, continuous BJD administrations under the hon'ble Ex-Chief Minister of Sri Naveen Patanaik have combined welfare delivery with infrastructure development. Key initiatives include the Odisha Reservation of Vacancies in Posts and Services Act amendments to maintain representation in government employment, strengthened enforcement of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, and proactive implementation of the Forest Rights Act, 2006. Recent policies emphasize education (e.g., Ekalavya Model Residential Schools), health outreach in tribal districts, and market linkages for minor forest produce. The state has also focused on skill development and entrepreneurship

among SC/ST youth while addressing displacement and rehabilitation issues in mining and industrial corridors.

Naveen Patnaik's Leadership and Governance Model

SC/ST Polices and Administrative Reforms

Naveen Patnaik's tenure (beginning 2000) has seen the Biju Janata Dal (BJD) government introduce and expand a number of policies and programmes targeted toward Scheduled Castes (SC) and Scheduled Tribes (ST) in Odisha. Many of these are in education, scholarships, reservation in employment, welfare amenities, land rights etc. Below are some of the main policies and their features, along with critical observations where available

Key Programmes & Policy Measures

1. Scholarships and Financial Support

- In March 2021, the Government sanctioned **₹101 crore** for post-matric scholarships for about 50,000 SC/ST students. The amount was transferred directly into their bank accounts via the Odisha State Scholarship Portal.
- Along with the scholarship money, 3 "Akankhya" hostels (for SC/ST students) were inaugurated in Berhampur, Sambalpur and Rourkela; 68 other general hostels were also opened.
- "Mo Chhatrabasa" cards were introduced for SC/ST students in hostels: about 5.75 lakh students are (or were) beneficiaries.

2. Hostel Facilities / Accommodation

- A significant expansion: 100 more hostels for SC/ST students announced in December 2022, to be completed by December 2023.
- Under educational infrastructure, the SC/ST department runs over **6,500 residential hostels** catering to more than 5.7 lakh SC/ST students, as of recent data.

3. Mission Suvidya

- Launched in December 2019. The programme aims to upgrade quality in ST/SC residential schools (hostels included). Areas of focus include infrastructure (toilets, safe drinking water, kitchens), safety, hygiene, food facilities. The target is to raise standards to attain ISO certification for hostels & schools.
- Under Mission Suvidya, about 2 lakh primary-section students in ST/SC department schools were to be benefitted in the first phase.

4. Subsidized Food / Ration / Residential Schools

- Since about 2008, residential schools under SC/ST departments have been receiving rice at **Re 1 per kg** for students. Patnaik reaffirmed that his government would continue to bear the cost of providing subsidised rice to SC/ST residential schools even when the NFSA provisions did not clearly cover them.

5. Reservation in Posts & Services

- The government has moved to amend the **Odisha Reservation of Vacancies in Posts and Services (for SCs and STs) Act, 1975** (often abbreviated ORV Act). Among changes: inclusion of reservation in contractual/schematic posts, making certain SC/ST reserved posts non-transferable, filling base level SC/ST posts especially where vacancies persist.
- In 2023, an amendment (Odisha Act 10 of 2023) made reservation applicable to all tenure posts or contractual posts or schematic posts which are to be regularized against sanctioned posts.

6. Education Infrastructure & Schools

- Under the ST & SC Development Department, a large network of educational institutions has been developed: for example, the establishment of Ashram schools, Sevashrams, higher secondary schools, educational complexes, Ekalavya Model Residential Schools, etc. Free amenities are often provided (uniforms, writing materials, exemption from some exam fees, etc.).
- Quality, access, and residential facility improvements are recurring themes, especially in remote tribal and ST dominated areas.

7. Land Rights & Community Inclusion

- The State government has proposed a **Corpus Fund** to protect land rights of SCs and STs. The idea is to enable purchase of land sold under distress, hold it for 2–3 years, allow original owners to repurchase at the same price. If not reclaimed, the land may be auctioned but only to community members.
- There are also persistent demand and proposals for inclusion of more communities (169 communities) in the ST list of Odisha. In 2024, Naveen Patnaik reiterated that proposals had been submitted to the Centre for this inclusion.

Under Naveen Patnaik, the SC/ST policy framework in Odisha has shifted from mere welfare (food, minimal educational access) to broader rights, infrastructure, quality, and legal inclusion. Programmes like *Mission Suvidya*, expansion of hostels, scholarship disbursements, as well as legal amendments expanding reservation coverage, mark a more systemic and structural approach.

• Decision-Making Style and Public Perception

Naveen Patnaik's decision-making style is widely characterized as transformative, pragmatic, and consultative, blending administrative efficiency with political foresight. His approach toward SC and ST development emphasizes policy continuity, targeted welfare, and participatory governance. Key decisions—such as expanding scholarships, upgrading residential schools through *Mission Suvidya*, increasing reservation coverage in posts, and safeguarding tribal land rights—reflect a strategy of inclusive policy-making where both structural reforms and immediate welfare are prioritized. From the perspective of public perception, SC/ST communities in Odisha generally view Patnaik's leadership positively. Surveys and media reports indicate high approval ratings for initiatives that directly improve education, livelihood, and health access for marginalized groups. The direct disbursements of scholarships, expansion of hostels and investment in infrastructure have created a visible impact, fostering trust in the government.

Policy Analysis: Welfare and Development Schemes for SCs and STs

1. Education Policies (Hostels, Scholarships, Residential Schools)

Scheme/Initiative	Description	Coverage & Outcomes	Evidence/Remarks
Hostels for ST/SC Students	1,524 hostels constructed (₹857 crore), mostly for girls, to improve retention and female literacy	1,471 functional hostels as of 2022	Dropout rates reduced, gender focus
Scholarships (Pre, Post-Matric)	State and central scholarships, direct payment via portal	All eligible SC/ST students	Enhanced higher education access
Residential Schools (Ashram, EMRS, Sevashrams)	705 Ashram schools, 19 EMRS, Kalinga & other models	4 lakh+ ST/SC students	School amenities, improved retention

ANWESHA	Urban partnership for quality education from 2015, slots via lottery	5,000 SC/ST students annually	Tuition and expenses fully covered
AKANSHYA (Urban Hostels)	Urban hostels in key cities for higher education	Seats for 500+, expansion after 2017	Reduced urban education dropouts

(Source: Activity Report of SC&ST Department, Odisha Govt)

Hostel and Residential facilities

Scheme/Facility	Number Established	Female Share (%)	No. of Beneficiaries
ST/SC Hostels (Govt.)	1,471 (2022)	55%	2.2 lakh+
Urban AKANSHYA Hostels	24 (2022)	48%	1,820
ANWESHA Project	107 (2019)	40%	5,000 annually

Scholarship and Direct Support

Scheme/Type	Beneficiaries/Year	Amount/Student (₹)	Mode of Disbursement	Targeted Group & Coverage
Pre-Matric (SC/ST)	3.2 lakh (2022)	950–4,500	Direct Benefit Transfer	9th–10th grade, national
Post-Matric (SC/ST)	1.1 lakh+ (2022)	3,800–13,500	Bank-Linked, Online Portal	Higher secondary, UG, PG
Merit/Higher Edu.	17,000+ (annual)	Variable	Merit-based, annual review	SC/ST college, professional
Top-Class/Eklavya	1,200+ (annual)	Full fee	National/state nomination	Elite SC/ST, selected

Residential School and Special Institution

School Type	Number (2023)	Enrolled (2022)	Achievements/Features
Ashram Schools (ST/SC)	705	2.2 lakh	Bridge learning, multi-level
Eklavya Model Schools	19	10,000+	Competitive, STEM focus
Sevashrams, Kalinga	57	15,000+	Remedial, bridge to higher EDU
Urban ANWESHA	107	5,000	Top-tier urban education access

2. Health Initiatives (Nutrition Programmes, Tribal Health Plans)

Scheme/Initiative	Description	Coverage & Outcomes	Evidence
Odisha Health Sector and Nutrition Plan (OHSNP)	Multi-sector, targeted convergence (MCH, nutrition, water, hygiene)	High tribal/SC coverage	Integrated approach
Nutrition Council/CMAM, Purna Aahara	Community-based malnutrition management, Take Home Ration	Uncomplicated SAM cases	Focus on cost-efficiency
AMLAN (Anaemia Mukta Lakshya Abhiyan)	Anaemia reduction in school/tribal children	All schools, regular testing	10% annual anaemia reduction

(Source: Activity Report of SC&ST Department, Odisha Govt)

Health Initiative and key Indicators (2013-23)

Programme/Scheme	Implementation Data (2013–2023)	Outcomes/Improvements	Focus Area/Remarks
Maternity Waiting Homes (Maa Gruha)	Dozens of homes established in remote tribal pockets for safe pre-delivery stays	Rise in institutional deliveries, maternal mortality reduction	Tribal & inaccessible regions
Tribal Health Camps	Bi-annual camps in hard-to-reach areas (PVTGs, SC/ST)	Improved malaria, TB, malnutrition, diarrhoea detection	Special focus on PVTG settlements
Nutrition Programmes	Purna Aahara (home-based SAM management), Take Home Ration	Reduced cost, improved recovery; malnutrition rates declining	0–5 years children, tribal blocks
Anaemia Mukta Lakshya Abhiyan (AMLAN)	Quarterly school tests, therapeutic IFA doses	10% annual anaemia reduction (targeted, ongoing)	Multi-departmental convergence
DAMaN (Malaria elimination in remote areas)	Intensive malaria screening, treatment, and vector control	Test Positivity Rate dropped from 5.95% (2017) to 1.24% (2021)	Tribal children and women
Mother & Baby Kits Distribution	Surakhya Kabacha distributed to all pregnant mothers in tribal belts	Step-up in hygiene, postnatal health indicators	Linked to infant/maternal survival
Ojan Utsaba (Growth Monitoring)	Biannual child weighing across Anganwadi centres	Stunting reduced: 48.2% (1993), 31% (2021); Underweight children: 53.3% (1993), 29.7% (2021)	NFHS survey confirms effectiveness
SAMMPurNA & MSPY	Comprehensive block/district nutrition action (hard-to-reach areas)	Coverage: 125 blocks, expanding to 338 ICDS projects	Adolescent girls, MAM and SAM focus
Odisha Millet Mission	Promotion in 19 tribal districts; 14x production rise (2017–2022)	Improved dietary diversity, food security	Nutrition security integration
Swabhimaan & FNHW	Nutrition, health, sanitation intervention with SHGs in 3	Diet diversity in pregnant women up: 33% → 48%, Napkin use: 47% → 85%	29,770 nutri-gardens established

	districts	
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3. Livelihood and Employment Schemes (*Mission Shakti, KALIA, Skill Development*)

Scheme/Initiative	Description	Outcomes/Impact	Remarks
Mission Shakti	Women's SHGs, microfinance, livelihoods	Economic/social empowerment	Thousands trained/empowered
KALIA	Direct financial transfers to small/marginal farmers (many ST/SC)	Improved rural incomes	Inclusive of sharecroppers
PRAYAS, Skill Odisha, DDU-GKY	Skill development for marginalized youth (special focus on SC/ST, women)	Training, job placement in diverse sectors	State and central synergy
Odisha Rural Livelihoods Mission (ORLM)	SHG, financial inclusion focus	Enhanced income for rural SC/ST families	

(Source: Activity Report of SC&ST Department, Odisha Govt)

4. Housing and Infrastructure Development (*Biju Pucca Ghar Yojana, Rural Roads*)

Scheme/Initiative	Description	Outcomes	Evidence
Biju Pucca Ghar Yojana	From 2014, free pucca housing to rural poor (priority: calamity relief, ST/SC)	31 lakh+ houses completed (2015-21)	Integrated with PMAY Rural
Rural Roads, Drinking Water	Focus in aspirational, tribal areas; synergy with national schemes	Increased last-mile connectivity, safe water	Rural development stats

(Source: Activity Report of SC&ST Department, Odisha Govt)

Rural Housing Implementation (2013-23)

Category	Key Data and Metrics	Notes and Observations
Total Houses Built	31,08,471 houses completed in six years (2015–21)	Covers multiple schemes (Biju Pucca Ghar Yojana, PMAY, etc.)
Ongoing Construction	1,75,960 houses in various construction stages	Significant continued effort
Scheme Focus	Priority to SC/ST, calamity-affected, other vulnerable groups	Robust integration with central schemes
Special Features	Women's ownership, disaster-resilience, functional assets	Successfully improved rural living standards
Mission Shakti	Women's Self-Help Groups (SHGs), microfinance, entrepreneurship & collective action	Thousands of SC/ST women; broader rural outreach
PRAYAS (ST/SC Skill)	Skill development for SC/ST, OBC, Minority youth—job-linkage, entrepreneurship, upskilling	Statewide, annually thousands trained
Odisha Skill Development	Sector-wide skill development, global employability focus, "Skilled-in-Odisha" branding	2 million+ youth upskilled (2016–2022 est.)
DDU-GKY, PMKVY	Central schemes, state implementation, focused on high-migration and vulnerable districts	100,000+ placed annually (state/country mix)

KALIA	Direct benefit transfer (farmers, sharecroppers, SC/ST high share among recipients)	43 lakh beneficiaries (70% small/marginal)
Odisha Rural Livelihoods Mission	Income diversification, SHG-strengthening, SC/ST priority	Lakhs of rural households impacted

5. Land Rights and Forest Rights Act Implementation

Aspect	Description	Status/Progress	Notes
Forest Rights Act Implementation	Recognition of community and individual forest rights (CFR, IFR) among ST/OTFD villages	3,393 CFR titles to 2022 (10% potential)	Slow, uneven regional implementation
Focused Interventions (NGOs, SHGs)	Partnerships for rights awareness, claims preparation	Improved capacity but many challenges	Need for stricter monitoring

(Source: Activity Report of SC&ST Department, Odisha Govt)

6. Cultural Preservation and Tribal Empowerment Programmes

Scheme/Initiative	Description	Outcomes/Impact	Evidence/Remarks
Special Development Councils (SDC)	Autonomy, cultural projects, language, tradition, sacred groves	Rs 387 crore (2017-23), tribal representation	Over 4,730 groves, 50+ resource centres
Odisha Tribal Empowerment Programme (OTELP)	Tribal food security, income, livelihoods, land access	Improved living standards in tribal blocks	Integration with state tribal policy

(Source: Activity Report of SC&ST Department, Odisha Govt)

Naveen Patnaik's policies for Scheduled Castes (SC) and Scheduled Tribes (ST) in Odisha from 2013 to 2023 reflect a focused, transformative, and inclusive developmental approach. Over this decade, his administration prioritized holistic upliftment of SC/ST communities through education, health, livelihood, housing, land rights, and cultural preservation initiatives.

A hallmark of Patnaik's leadership has been his emphasis on education as the foundation of reform. Large-scale investments in hostels, scholarships, residential schools (notably Ashram and Eklavya model schools), and programs such as ANWESHA have improved access and retention for marginalized SC/ST students, particularly girls. These were complemented by direct benefit transfers through robust digital portals and scholarship schemes, supporting tens of thousands annually. Alongside education, Odisha championed targeted health interventions including nutrition programs, malaria elimination (DAMaN), anemia reduction drives (AMLAN), and tribal health camps, leading to marked improvements in child and maternal health indicators in vulnerable districts.

Livelihood and employment schemes under Patnaik's government, notably Mission Shakti, PRAYAS, KALIA, and skill development programs, empowered tribal and scheduled caste youth and women with incomes, skills, and entrepreneurship opportunities. These schemes connected beneficiaries to financial inclusion, market access, and state-central programming synergy. Housing gained unprecedented focus

through the Biju Pucca Ghar Yojana, facilitating over 31 lakh pucca homes with emphasis on calamity-affected and marginalized communities, lifting rural living standards substantially.

However, despite these successes, land and forest rights under the Forest Rights Act saw uneven implementation. While thousands of Individual Forest Rights (IFR) and Community Forest Rights (CFR) titles were awarded, only a fraction of eligible forest villages and tribal reserves received full formal recognition, exposing gaps in government monitoring and speed of rights adjudication. Cultural preservation initiatives, such as strengthening Tribal Language Commissions and preserving sacred groves, enhanced tribal empowerment but require sustained support to foster identity and economic resilience.

Critically, Patnaik's policies are characterized by administrative continuity, digitalization via portals, and convergence of sectoral schemes under a pro-poor governance model. Yet challenges remain in ensuring legal rights delivery, expanding quality higher education access beyond initial schooling, and elevating tribal voices in policymaking processes. Overall, Patnaik's decade demonstrated visible progress in social inclusion and poverty reduction among Odisha's SC and ST populations, through a blend of welfare upliftment, capacity building, and structural development, creating a model acknowledged nationally for tribal development innovation.

Achievements and Impact Assessment

1. Statistical Trends in Literacy, Health, Poverty Reduction

During the Rule of Naven Pattanaik, the State has shown measurable improvement in literacy rates among both Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs). Notably, targeted investments in residential schooling, hostels (with an emphasis on girls), and scholarship coverage (benefiting over 19 lakh ST/SC students yearly) have directly contributed to increased enrollment and retention. Female literacy, a chronic challenge, has seen a gradual upward trend, supported by infrastructure and incentives like the Odisha Girls Incentive Programme. Health initiatives, including deployment of Auxiliary Nurse Midwives (ANMs) in residential facilities and school-based WASH (Water, Sanitation & Hygiene) programs, have improved basic health metrics such as nutrition and sanitation access.

2. Increase in Political Participation of SCs/STs

SCs and STs have seen escalating political participation, primarily through structured capacity-building and policy inclusion at grassroots levels (Panchayat, Gram Sabha, and SHG federations). The trend includes increasing representation of SC/ST youth in national, state and local governance and formal consultation through advisory bodies and welfare committees. State-sponsored empowerment programs and grievance redressal mechanisms have promoted responsive governance and local accountability.

3. Infrastructure Improvements in Tribal and SC-Dominated Regions

There has been steady expansion and upgrading of infrastructure in SC/tribal areas, focusing on inclusive education, healthcare, and connectivity. Over the years, there has been: Growth in the number of residential hostels and schools, especially for girls. Expansion of safe water, sanitation, electrification, and renewable energy via solar lighting and pumps. Creation of community halls, market yards, and production clusters supporting value addition and market linkages for local products. Use of convergence and mission-mode approaches (like Mission Suidya) for scaling impact.

Summary Table: Trend and Impact

Focus Area	Trends	Impact Assessment
Literacy/Health/Poverty	Rise in literacy rates; expansion of residential education and scholarships; improved WASH and nutrition; robust implementation of livelihood clusters	Higher school retention; better nutrition; income growth for targeted HHs; empowerment of women/girls
Political Participation	Increasing local/grassroots representation (SHGs, PRIs); more youth and women leadership; grievance systems	More inclusive decision-making; civic empowerment; responsive scheme delivery
Infrastructure Improvements	More and better hostels/schools; expanded safe water, solar energy projects, market infra; convergence approach	Improved access, academic outcomes, health, income, and community resilience

Conclusion:

The devastating super cyclone of 1999 left Odisha in ruins. After the collapse of state machinery, Odisha was plunged into turmoil and despair. There was a vacuum of leadership and a sense of hopelessness that gripped the people of Odisha. Amidst this chaos, a resolute figure emerged on the political scenario of Odisha. A figure who would go on to become one of the most admired leaders in the history of Odisha. He ruled over Odisha for the next 24 Years and transformed the political horizon of Odisha by his inclusive policies, welfare and populist schemes. Remarkably, his tenure remained untouched by anti-incumbency- a testament to the trust he earned through inclusive policies, transparent governance and unshakeable commitment to the welfare of the people. These two and half decades proved to be a new chapter in Odisha's political history, as his inclusive policies, progressive reforms and transformative vision uplifted millions and ignited a new sense of pride and hope in the hearts of every Odia.

The leadership of Shri Naveen Patnaik represents one of the most consistent and reform-oriented governance models in the history of Odisha's inclusive development. His transformative approach has combined welfare delivery with institutional reforms aimed at empowering Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs) both socially and economically. Over the past two decades, particularly from 2013 to 2023, Odisha witnessed a steady rise in literacy, health standards, livelihood opportunities, and infrastructural development in tribal and scheduled caste-dominated regions. Programmes such as **Mission Suvidya**, **KALIA**, **Mission Shakti**, **ANWESHA**, and the **Biju Pucca Ghar Yojana** have strengthened social inclusion and improved the quality of life of marginalized groups.

Patnaik's governance model stands out for its **administrative continuity, digital transparency, and participatory focus**. The use of direct benefit transfers, expansion of residential educational infrastructure, and women-led self-help movements reflect his government's commitment to human-centered development. However, persistent challenges—such as incomplete forest rights recognition, regional disparities in higher education access, and limited community participation in decision-making—indicate that the journey toward full inclusiveness remains ongoing.

Overall, the policies under Naveen Patnaik have redefined Odisha's approach to marginalized welfare by linking **visionary leadership with measurable social transformation**. His leadership has succeeded in turning social justice from a constitutional promise into visible progress, positioning Odisha as a model of balanced development where the voices of the most deprived are increasingly recognized within the framework of good governance.

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