

# LORD JAGANNATHA OF PURI IN EASTERN INDIA: A UNIQUE DEITY OF THE HINDU SOCIETY OF THE WORLD

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**ABSTRACT**--Lord Jagannath of Puri is famous in India as a Lord of Universe and its temple is considered by millions of Hindus as an important Vaishnava shrine of world. The celebrated temple of Lord Jagannatha is also well-known throughout the world for its religious sanctity. In fact, Lord Jagannatha occupies a vital position in the religious history of Odisha. The cult of Jagannatha has a distinct message for the whole of Indian people. Lord Jagannath was initially named as Nilamadhava, Paramesvara, Purusottama and in later as the present name. The place of Lord Purusottama (Jagannatha) of Puri is one of the important cultural centers of Odisha and it is also famous throughout India as a place of pilgrimage. The spot of Ratnasimhasana of Lord Jagannatha of Puri has been considered by pilgrims as the holiest place of Eastern India from time immemorial. The daily rituals of Lord Jagannatha are as old as the temple itself. Navakalevara ceremony of Lord Jagannatha of Puri is the symbolic of traditional Vedic worship mixed with the tribal worship of Daitas. The annual Car festival of Lord Jagannatha of Puri is enthusiastically celebrated, for which, a large numbers of pilgrims arrive to this place and such type of huge crowded chaotic festival has justified the word 'Jagannatha'. The celebrated temple of Lord Jagannatha possesses a pivotal position in the religious history of Odisha. The aim of this paper is to study briefly all the aspects of Lord Jagannatha of Puri as far as practicable on the part of present author. Methodologically, both the primary and secondary sources have been used here to access Lord Jagannatha of Puri as a unique deity of the Hindu society of the world.

**Keywords**--Lord, Jagannatha, religion, culture, festival, Puri, Odisha, India, world.

## I. INTRODUCTION

Puri is well known throughout the world for Lord Jagannatha, whose shrine stands on a prominent place near the sea shore (the Bay of Bengal). The exact geographical location of the temple of Lord Jagannatha is Latitude  $19^{\circ} 18^{\text{m}} 17^{\text{s}}$  North and Longitude  $85^{\circ} 51^{\text{m}} 39^{\text{s}}$  East, about 59 kms. to the south-east of Bhubaneswar, the capital city of Odisha.<sup>1</sup> Before the 13<sup>th</sup> century A.D., Lord Jagannatha was being worshipped by people in the name of Lord Purusottama. Hence, the place of Puri was initially called as Purusottama Kshetra as evidenced by both the literary and epigraphical sources. The most stupendous architectural undertaking during the Ganga period was the construction of the Jagannatha temple at Puri. The temple of Lord Jagannatha of Puri is not only the largest but also the tallest surviving Vaishnava temple at present. From the religious point of view, Lord Jagannatha of Puri is considered as the most important Vaishnavadeity of India. The place of Lord Purusottama (Jagannatha) of Puri

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is one of the important cultural centers of Odisha and it is also well known throughout India as a place of pilgrimage from the time of Yore.<sup>2</sup> Some indigenous speculations have been hazarded upon the origin and meaning of the worship of Jagannatha and the causes of the peculiar sanctity of the place. The accounts given in the writings of Hindus, *Kapila Samhita* and *Kshetra Mahatmyam* of the temple, from the beginning of the first half of the age of Brahma, Paramesvara (Jagannatha) dwelt on the Nilachala Hill in Utkal Desa, in the form of Nilamadhava.<sup>3</sup> Originally in the Golden age Puri was a forest having a Blue Hill in the centre. The Blue image has derived its name from the colour of Sapphirestone as Nilamadhava.<sup>4</sup> In subsequent period, it was named as Paramesvara, Purusottama and later as Jagannatha. Though the origin of Lord Jagannatha is a matter of debate among scholars, still almost all the scholars agree that Lord Sri Krishna has been worshipping at Puri as Lord Jagannatha in the form of 'Daru Devata'. For the millions of devotees, Jagannatha is not merely a local deity of Odisha, He is considered as a manifestation of the Supreme Being.<sup>5</sup> Lord Jagannatha occupies a pivotal position in the religious history of Odisha in Eastern India. The cult of Jagannatha has a distinct message for the whole people of India as well as world. Generally, the term Jagannatha means "Lord of the Universe" and this expression has been used by the different religions to refer to their Supreme Divinity.<sup>6</sup>

## II. METHODOLOGY

Both the primary and secondary sources have been used in the writing of the present article. The primary data have been collected through Gazetteers, *Puranas*, Texts, unpublished thesis, the practical observation, public opinions, hearsay accounts and interview methods during the period of experimental field survey. The collected data with regard to the dates of temple is based on practical observations and the earlier sources. The secondary data relating to the present piece of work are *Books, Magazines, Reviews, Journals, Periodicals, Proceedings, Manuscripts, Encyclopaedias, Antiquities, Records, Reports*, and published theses, which are available at the different educational institutions. These secondary data are merely the contribution of the earlier scholars, researchers, readers, historians and archaeologists. At first, the footsteps of these previous research works have been followed in the present piece of work. The data collected from both the primary as well as secondary sources are critically analysed and applied in the writing of this article.

## III. DISCUSSION AND RESULT ANALYSIS

### 3. Lord Jagannatha of Puri

The present Puri town is well known in all the parts of India and abroad as the holy place of Lord Jagannatha. In the earlier literary and epigraphic sources, the name Purusottama is clearly mentioned as the presiding deity of the *kshetra* (Puri). On the evidence of the *Vishnudharana*, it seems to be presumed here that deity Purusottama had achieved celebrity in India by the third century A.D. After the construction of great temple for Lord Purusottama at Puri, the place became famous as the abode of Lord Purusottama or Purusottama *kshetra*. In the *Nagari Copper plate charter* of Anangabhima Deva-III dated *Saka* year 1152 i.e. corresponding to 1230 A.D., the place is recorded as Purusottama *kshetra*.<sup>7</sup> For the first time, during the reign of Anangabhima Deva III (1211 to 1238 A.D.) the presiding deity Purusottama was called by people as Jagannatha, the Lord of the world. The *Kurmesvara temple inscription* (dated 1230 A.D.) is the first record (so far known to us) to refer Jagannatha as the

presiding deity of the *kshetra*.<sup>8</sup> This inscription also clearly refers to Sri Jagannatha as the real king of Ganga kingdom and Anangabhima Deva-III as the *Rout* or deputy of Lord Jagannatha. The name was changed from Purusottama to Jagannatha to suit the different sections of religious beliefs such as Buddhists, Jainas, Shaivas, Vaisnavas and Shaktas. Really, the construction of grant temple for Lord Purusottama (Jagannatha) by Ganga ruler / rulers and the different literary works of poet-philosophers of Odisha paved the way for the popularity of Jagannatha.<sup>9</sup>

### 3.1. Temple of Lord Jagannatha

The earliest reference to the construction of present temple of Lord Purusottama(Jagannatha) is found mentioned in the *Dasagoba copper plate charter* of Rajaraja III issued in the *Shaka* year 1120 i.e. corresponding to 1198 A.D.<sup>10</sup> It makes us believe that *Gangeshvara* i.e. Ananta Varman Chodaganga Deva initiated the construction work of the present temple. On the basis of the *KendupatnaCopper Plate* of Narasimha Deva-II dated 1296 A.D., M.M. Chakravarti has identified *Gangeshvara* with Ananta Varmana Chodaganga Deva, the founder of the Ganga dynasty in Utkal territory of ancient Odisha.<sup>11</sup> The *Dasagoba Copper Plate inscription* distinctly states that the temple was caused to be completed and not restored by Anangabhima Deva in the *Shaka* year 1119 i.e. corresponding to 1197 A.D.<sup>12</sup> According to *Katakarajavamsvaliking* Anangabhima Deva-II possibly constructed the incomplete portions of the new temple of Lord Purusottama in *Shakavda* 1119 (i.e. corresponding to 1197A.D.).<sup>13</sup> One hundred years after the initiation of the construction work of the present great temple, Anangabhima Deva-III (1211-1238 A.D.), the Ganga ruler consecrated the newly constructed great temple of Lord Purusottama (Jagannatha) at Puri.<sup>14</sup> It is clearly known that the construction work of the present temple of Lord Jagannatha was being carried on slowly.

The temple of Lord Jagannatha consists of four structures such as *vimana* (main *deula*), *jagamohana* or *mukhashala* (the porch), *natamandapa* (dancing hall) and *bhogamandapa*. All the structures of temple are built in sand stones and aligned in the same axis. As now the extreme length of these four structures in a line is 310 feet, with a width of 80 feet.<sup>15</sup> The temple of Lord Jagannatha faces to east. The *vimana* of the Jagannatha temple is a *pancharatha rekhadeula* and its height is about 214 feet 8 inches from the road level.<sup>16</sup> It is the tallest extant temple of Odisha at present. The central niches of three sides i.e. north, west and south of the *bada* of *vimana* are housed with *parshvadevata* images of Vamana (Trivikrama), Narasimha and Varaha respectively. These three images are made of black chlorite and very exquisitely carved. The *mastaka* of the *vimana* consists of *beki* (neck), *amalakashila* (ribbed stone like an *amalaka* fruit), *khapuri*(skull), *kalasa* (jar), *ayudha* (*Nilachakra*) and *dhvaja* (*Patita pavan bana*). On the top of the temple, the famous *Nilachakra* is placed and it is made of *asta dhatu*. Its circumference is about 36 feet and height is 11 feet 8 inches.<sup>17</sup> It is so designed that there is a wheel within the wheel. The present *Nilachakra* of Jagannatha temple of Puri built by king Divyasingha Deva (1692-1715 A.D.), because the earlier *Nilachakra* was destroyed by super cyclone in 1693 A.D.<sup>18</sup> Observing the height of the temple, Robert Dunbar has remarked that the tower of the temple of Lord Jagannatha is not only one of the familiar sights of Puri but the 'sign' looked forward to the pilgrim when nearing his goal.<sup>19</sup>

The *jagamohana* or *mukhashala* of the Jagannatha temple is a *pancharatha pidhadeula* and its height is about 120 feet from the road level.<sup>20</sup> Then *natamandapa* of the Jagannatha temple is a flat roof shaped *deula* and its height is about 60 feet from the road level. The *bhogamandapa* of the Jagannatha temple stands immediately to the east

of the *natamandapa*. It is a *pancharathapidha deula* like the *jagamohana* and it is made of yellowish sand stones rendered red-ochre painting. The *natamandapa* and *bhogamandapa* of the Jagannatha temple are of the later addition of the main temple.

### 3.2. *Ratnasimhasana of Lord Jagannatha*

The raised platform, on which the wooden images of Lord Jagannatha, Balabhadra, Subhadra and the emblem of Sudarshana are installed in the *garbhagriha* of Lord Jagannatha temple of Puri, is called *Ratnasimhasana*.<sup>21</sup> This raised platform of Lord Jagannatha is also known as *Ratnavedi*.<sup>22</sup> Besides the *Chaturdha murtis*, other images are also installed on the *Ratnasimhasana*. They are Madhava (a small image of Vishnu), Sridevi (a golden image of Lakshmi) and Bhudevi (a silver image of Sarasvati). The entire throne is adorned with seven deities including Jagannatha Trinity. Hence the spot of *Ratnasimhasana* of Lord Jagannatha is also called as *Saptavarna Pitha*.<sup>23</sup> It is said that various precious stones and jewels have been buried inside the throne of Lord Jagannatha of Puri. On the basis of legend, a few scholars say that there are one lakh of *Salagrama silas* (stones) deposited inside the *Ratnavedi*.<sup>24</sup> We have no authentic historical evidence regarding the exact amount of *silas* buried inside the *simhasana* of Lords. Possibly, some *Salagrama silas* might have been buried inside the *Ratnasimhasana* and this traditional belief can not be completely denied. Sadashiva Rathasharma opines that *Sila* of Lord Vishnu i.e. *Vishnusila* is buried inside the *Ratnasimhasana*, so it should not be touched by foot.<sup>25</sup> Surya Narayana Das refers to that *Vairabhi Chakra* is depicted under the *Ratnasimhasana* of Lord Jagannatha and both Sri Jagannatha as well as His *simhasana* is installed on this *Chakra*.<sup>26</sup> That is why, Puri is also considered as one of the *Vairavipithas* of India.

The *Ratnasimhasana* of Lord Jagannatha is made of black chlorite like a blooming lotus. The *Ratnasimhasana* of Lord Jagannatha measures approximately 16 feet in length 13 feet in width and 4 feet high respectively.<sup>27</sup> This *simhasana* also contains three well-polished separate rounded stones or *Chakas* for the installation of images of Lord Jagannatha, Balabhadra and Subhadra. In the *garbhagriha* of *Bada Deula (vimana)*, there is a narrow gap of 3 feet left (between the western wall and *Ratnasimhasana*) for pilgrims to perform the circumambulatory prayer.<sup>28</sup> The spot of *Ratnasimhasana* of Lord Jagannatha has been considered by pilgrims as the holiest place of Puri from time immemorial.<sup>29</sup> On the basis of Sanskrit texts, the raised platform on which Lord Jagannatha is installed, that place is called “*Antarvedi*”, which is very rare sacred place in the world.<sup>30</sup> So the *Ratnavedi* or *Ratnasimhasana* of Lord Jagannatha temple is revered by Hindus/devotees as equal in sanctity to the image itself.<sup>31</sup> It can be presumed that *Pancha devatas* are being worshipped on the *Ratnasimhasana* of Lord Jagannatha temple of Puri. They are viz. Lord Jagannatha in the form of Vishnu, Trilochana in the form of Balabhadra, Yogamaya in the form of Devi Subhadra, ‘Ganadevata’ in the form of Madhava and rising Sun in the form of *Sudarsana Chakra* respectively.<sup>32</sup> At certain specified hours of the day, the devotees are allowed inside the inner sanctuary for a close view of the *Ratnasimhasana* as well as its installed seven deities including Jagannatha ‘Trinity’.<sup>33</sup> Due to neglect of native rulers and constant attacks by Muslim invaders in different periods, the *Ratnasimhasana* of Lord Jagannatha temple was in dilapidated condition. So the *simhasana* of Lords required complete renovation. The dilapidated *Ratnasimhasana* of Lord Jagannatha temple of Puri was subsequently rebuilt by King Virakishore Deva of Khurda.<sup>34</sup> As per the inscription on the bottom part of *Ratnasimhasana*, it is clearly known that the present *Ratnasimhasana* of Lord Jagannatha had been completely remodelled by King Virakishore

Deva (1737–1793AD) at the instance of his *Thakuramaa* (grandmother), the queen of Gopinatha Deva.<sup>35</sup> King Virakishore Deva of Khurda had possibly rebuilt the present *Ratnasimhasana* of Lord Jagannatha temple in circa 1760 A.D.<sup>36</sup>

### 3.3. Iconography of Jagannatha Trinity

The sanctum of the Jagannatha temple preserves *daru* images of Jagannatha, Balabhadra and Subhadra as the presiding deities of the temple. The *garbhagriha* is generally called as sanctum of the temple. In the *garbhagriha*, there is a raised platform known as *Ratnavedi* or *Ratnasimhasana* on which the images of the Lords have been installed. The images of Jagannatha, Balabhadra and Subhadra are carved out of the *Nim* wood, which is best wood available for the purpose in Odisha. It is hard, close grained, susceptible of high polish and not liable to warp or crack, while its bitter taste makes it proof against the ravages of worms and insects.<sup>37</sup> The images of ‘Trinity’ are made each of one solid block, the hands being formed of separate pieces. These images look like human heads, eyes, resting on a pedestal. There is no carving or painting of any kind to indicate the ears. The images of Jagannatha and Balabhadra have arms projected horizontally forward whereas the image of sister Subhadra is entirely devoid of Human form.<sup>38</sup> According to *Niladri Mahodaya* the image of Jagannatha is based on ‘Chakrayantra’. The significance of prescribing the ‘*Chakrayantra*’ for Jagannatha is evident from the colour of *Chakra* as well as that of the deity and the title *Chakradharigiven* to Lord Jagannatha. The image of Jagannatha has circular eyes, a straight headline, a square knob on the head and black colour. Its nose is large and very much hooked and the mouth is crescent shaped.<sup>39</sup> The size is slightly shorter than that of Balabhadra and its height is 84 *yavas*.<sup>40</sup> The word *Yava* is used as to imply the breadth of a grain of barley. The image of Balabhadra is based on *Shankhayantra* according to which he is shown in the colour of the *shankha* (conch-shell) i.e. white.<sup>41</sup> The image of Balabhadra should have a total length of 85 *pavas* or a little above 7 feet.<sup>42</sup> One *pava* is used as equal to one inch. His mouth is indicated by paint in the shape of crescent. The nose is large and hooked as that of Jagannatha. Two red spots indicate the nostrils of Lord Balabhadra. The eyes, which are oval, placed on the inclined surface, look as if they were obliquely set, the outer corners rising upwards. There is no carving or painting of any kind to indicate the ears. The arms project laterally and horizontally in a line with the mouth and the forearms project forward, ending in stumps without any hands. The image of Sudarshana is based on the *Gadayantra*.<sup>43</sup> The Sudarshana *Chakra* is a mere stump, 84 *yavas* long and 21 *yavas* in thickness.<sup>44</sup> The whole of its surface is carved in a check pattern. There is no any sign of wheel mark on any part of this staff. Generally the priests of the temple say that a wheel mark is stamped on the top of it. The image of Subhadra differs from the images of Jagannatha as well as Balabhadra and having a rounded head. Apparently the image has no arms. The eyes are oval and nose is not as distinctly indicated as in the other two images of the ‘Trinity’. Its total height is 52 *pavas*.<sup>45</sup> Seven deities have been installed on the *Ratnasimhasana*, so it is known as ‘*Sapta varna Pitha*’.<sup>46</sup> The presiding deities are painted every year during the fortnight preceding the Car-festival, which period is called as *Anasara*. The *daru* (wooden) images are renewed every 12-19 years when there are two months of *Asadha*.

### 3.4. Daily Rituals of Lord Jagannatha

The daily rituals of Lord Jagannatha of Puri are as old as the temple itself. The *Utkala Khanda* of the *Skanda Purana*, the *Niladri Mohodaya*, *Vamadeva Samhita*, *Niladrinatha Pujavidhi* and many such other texts contain the

details of rituals of Lord Jagannath. The daily rituals of Lord Jagannatha commence very early in the morning, with the braking of the seals and opening the main gate of the temple in the presence of priests of high order. From the 11<sup>th</sup> day of the bright fortnight of *Asvina* to the full moon day of *Kartika*, the doors are opened much before sunrise. Similar is the case in the month of *Dhanu*, according to Solar calculation, when the doors are opened quite very early. The details of the rituals of the Jagannatha temple of Puri are recorded in the Record of Right prepared at the time of passing a special Act for the Jagannatha temple. The daily rituals performed in the temple of Jagannatha are briefly given as follows:

The rituals of the Jagannatha of Puri start with the opening of the door at 5 A.M. in the early morning. The daily rituals of Jagannatha temple are viz: - 1. *Mangala arati* (lamp offering), 2. *Mailam lagi* (change of dress) 6 A.M., 3. *Abakasha* i.e. cleaning of the teeth, bathing. 6 to 6.30 A.M., 4. *Mailama* (dressing of deities) 6.15 AM, 5. *Sahana mela* (opening for *darsana*) 7.00 to 8.00 A.M., 6. *Mailama* i.e. change of dress 8 to 8.30 A.M., 7. Fire sacrifice in the kitchen 8.30 A.M., 8. *Gopala ballava bhoga* (breakfast) 9. A.M., 9. *Sakala dhupa* (morning meal) 10.00 A.M., 10. *Mailama* 11.00 A.M., 11. *bhogamandapa bhoga* (*bhoga* for all) 11.00A.M., 12. *Mailama* (change of dress), 13. *Madhyahna dhupa* (mid day meal) -12.30 P.M. to 1.00 P.M., 14. *Pahuda* (closing of the door), 15. *Sandhyaarati* (evening lamp offering) 6.00 P.M., 16. Evening *bhoga* (*sandhya dhupa*) – 7.00 to 8.00 P.M., 17. *Mailama* (change of dress), 18. *Chandana lagi* (sandal paste offering), 19. *Bada simhar vasha* (night dress)–10.00 to 10.30 P.M., 20. *Bada simhara dhupa* (night meal) –11.15 P.M., 21. *Sayana* of the Lord 11.45 to 12.00 P.M. and sealing of the door and premises.<sup>47</sup>

On *Ekadasi* day sandal pastes are smeared on the entire body of the deities. After evening *puja* on this day a *Mahadipa* is placed at the top of the main temple by a *Sevayata* who is habituated in climbing the temple.<sup>48</sup> On each Wednesday the face of the deities are coloured with a local stuff made from herbal colour. During the time of painting devotees are not allowed to see the Lord. Special rituals are performed on the occasion of Solar and Lunar eclipses. During the time of eclipse, deities are bathed and special *bhoga* is offered to them.<sup>49</sup> Besides these, other important rituals are performed in the temple during the time of *Anabasara* (when deities are prepared for *Ratha Yatra*) and *Navakalevara* (when deities are changing their old body and appear in new body). From the daily rituals of the temple, it is seen that Lord Jagannatha is worshipped in the temple like a man but not like an ordinary man but like a Supreme Being i.e. Purushottama.

### 3.5. *Navakalevara of Lord Jagannatha*

Navakalevara is the most important ceremony / festival of Lord Jagannatha of Puri in India. The word 'Navakalevara', which literally means 'New Body' is made out of a newly cut Neem tree. In *Purusottama Kshetra* (Puri), the newly made wooden images of Lord Jagannatha, Balabhadra, Devi Subhadra and Sudarsana of the Jagannatha temple are traditionally celebrated by *Daitas* as Navakalevara. Particularly, the *suddha savaras* (*Daitas*) are permitted to perform some rituals in the Jagannatha temple mainly at the time of Navakalevara festival. The Navakalevara ceremony of Puri Jagannatha temple is the prominent and unique ritual, which is not found prevailed in any other Vishnu temples of India.<sup>50</sup> This ceremony is also not found mentioned in any old Texts. It is very curious that when and who initiated the Navakalevara ceremony at *Srikshetra* (Puri) is not clearly known to us as well as devotees, because the authentic evidence is not discovered by historians as yet. Similarly, there is no historical record with regard to the Navakalevara ceremony of Lord Jagannatha of Puri during the ancient period.

In Odisha, Sri Jagannatha temple of Puri is popularly known as *Srimandira*. The *Chaturdha murtis* on the 'Ratnasimhasana' of *Srimandira* i.e. Jagannatha, Balabhadra, Subhadra and Sudarsana are made out of Neem wood. As per the *Silpasastras*, the wooden images of Lord Jagannatha, Balabhadra, Subhadra and Sudarsana are required to be renewed from time to time. The Navakalevara ceremony is the periodical renewal of the *Daru Devatas* of the 'Chaturdha Murtis' of Puri *Srimandira*. On the basis of tradition, the Navakalevara (New Body) ceremony is observed like the life of human being's event of "death and re-birth" of Lord Jagannatha.<sup>51</sup> Generally, the Navakalevara ceremony of Lord Jagannatha of Puri is observed in every 12 to 19 years accordingly the astrological calculation. The astrologers must find a year with two full moons in the month of *Asadha* (*Yoda Asadha* or double *Asadha*), which is termed by learned men as *Purusottama Masa* or *Mala Masa*.<sup>52</sup> The Navakalevara ceremony of Lord Jagannatha of Puri is the symbolic of the traditional Vedic worship mixed with tribal worship.

Among the months, the 'Purusottama Masa' is the most important for the observation of Navakalevara ceremony. The 'Asadha Purusottama Masa' is also known as 'Guhya Purusottama Masa' a very secret month in which Lord Jagannatha exhibits His *golakalila*.<sup>53</sup> According to the *Mahabharata*, Lord Krishna was died on such a *tithi* and on that memorial tradition the Navakalevara ritual of Lord Jagannatha (Krishna) has been observing at Puri *Srimandira*.<sup>54</sup> The servitors of Lord Jagannatha called *Daitas* play a prominent role in searching for the Neem tree (*Daru*), transporting the logs to the temple, carving new images out of the logs with the help of carpenters, putting the *Brahma pradarnya* inside the image, burial of old deities and sprucing the new images up for the worship.<sup>55</sup> The entire process is called Navakalevara, which covers a period of about 110 days i.e. from the day of Vasantika Durgapuja Dasahara to the 'Nava Yauvana Darsana Day'. Particularly, the year in which the two *Asadha* months occur, that year the Navakalevara ceremony is held at Puri.<sup>56</sup> This period is popularly known as *Adhimasa* in Odisha. The religious scriptures describe this *Adhimasa* as the most auspicious time for spiritual attainment.<sup>57</sup> On the day of 'Vasantika Durga Puja Dasahara', the day after 'Rama Navami' the sanctum-sanctorum of the Jagannatha temple is cleaned after *Madhyana dhupa*, then all the *Daitas* and Pati Mohapatra get together along with the *Badagrahis* (heads of groups) in front of Lord Jagannatha at the *Ratnasimhasana*. The Pati Mohapatra ascends the *Ratnasimhasana* and gets the *Ajnamala* from the *Bada Thakura* (Balabhadra), then offers it to the *Badagrahis*. He then goes to Subhadra and Jagannatha and does the same thing and holding the *Ajnamala* from the Sudarsana, he descends the *Ratnasimhasana* among the sounds of the bugles.

*Vanayaga yatra* is one of the most important aspects of the Navakalevara ceremony of Lord Jagannatha of Puri and it starts on the day a party of priests go in search of *Daru* i.e. the Neem wood to make the deities anew. The journey for *Darus* is popularly known as *Vanayaga Yatra*. The party which went out consisted of *Daitas* (*Savara Sevakas*), Pati Mohapatra (Vidyapati), Brahmin Priests, Viswakarmas (carpenters), members of the temple administration like Lenka carrying the 'Sudarsana Chakra', *Kahalia* (bugler), Behera, Khuntia, *Padia Karana*, *Deula Karana* (accountant) and the Temple Police.<sup>58</sup> They have to carry lots of materials for the ceremonies, which they have to perform at every *Daru*. After taking initial permission from Puri king and spending the first night at the Jagannatha Vallabha Matha of Puri, the members of the search party go towards the Goddess Mangala temple of Kakatpur and stayed at Deuli Matha, situated on the bank of river Prachi. In the next day, the main priest of Mangala temple is informed the arrival of the *Vanayaga Yatris*, as soon as he gets the news he makes arrangement to receive them with great pomp and takes them into the temple. Goddess Mangala attains great celebrity during

the Navakalevara festival of the Jagannatha 'Trinity' when the *Daitapatis* in search of the *Daru* take shelter in the temple premises and offer *Puja* for perfect guidance.<sup>59</sup>Hence, Goddess Mangala is closely associated with Lord Jagannatha through her role in the Navakalevara ritual whereby the old wooden idols are renewed in the year in which *Adhimasa* occurs.<sup>60</sup>The priests of the Mangala temple then perform the worship of the goddess and offer the garments as well as the 'Mahaprasada' of Lord Jagannath and agarment that has been brought for Goddess Mangala along with the flower garlands in the presence of the *Daitas* and the 'Pati Mohapatras'.<sup>61</sup> On the basis of tradition, Goddess Mangala herself indicates the spot or the direction where the Neem tree is to be found. Goddess Mangala usually appears in a dream to the *Daitapatis*.<sup>62</sup>For the blessing of Goddess Mangala, the *Daitas* and the Acharyas sit inside the temple and settle there for the night.<sup>63</sup>At mid night the Goddess comes to them in a dream and gives direction for searching Neem trees. In the next morning, the party splits into four groups (*badas*) consists of equal number of *Daitas*, *Acharyas*, *Viswakarmas* and *Karanas*.<sup>64</sup>Each group goes to search for one particular Neem tree(*Daru*) in the indicated area.The head of each group is called *Badagrahi* and the four *Badagrahis* are responsible for bringing the *Darus* to Puri Jagannatha temple.

The selection of *Darus* for making of the new images of Jagannatha, Balabhadra, Subhadra and Sudarsana is a very strict process of the Navakalevara ceremony. *Vamadeva Samhita* and *Vabishya Purana* mention that Neem tree is considered as the best among all the trees for worship as well as image making.<sup>65</sup>Sri Jagannatha being the Lord of highest worship, His image should be made out of Neem wood as per rule of *sastras*. The Neem wood is especially selected for the new images of "Chaturdhamurtis" for Navakalevara ceremony.<sup>66</sup> In fact, Navakalevara is the most important ceremony of Lord Jagannatha of Puri in India.

### **3.6. Netrotsava of Lord Jagannatha**

After the completion of *Anavasara* time, the grooming of new "Chaturdha Murtis" then takes place in the same manner as in *Anavasara*. The images become suitable for worship only after the performance of the rite of opening of the eyes.<sup>67</sup>The Netrotsava or painting of the eyes is performed by the Brahmana priests (*Puja Pandas*) and then the new images of Lords are made ready for public visit.<sup>68</sup>The festival of first appearance of Jagannatha to His devotees after *anavasara* is called *Navayauvana*, which literally means fresh/new youth.Thus, the new images of *Chaturdha murtis* being purified by Rigvedic hymns and make their first public appearance on the 'Nava Yauvana Darsana Day', which is also known as *Ubha Amabasya*.<sup>69</sup>This is an occasion of seeing the youth of the Holy Trinity of Puri. Hence, a large number of devotees from the different parts of India come to Puri for visit of new bodies of the *Chaturdha murtis* of Jagannatha temple.<sup>70</sup>

### **3.7. Car Festival of Lord Jagannatha**

The *Navayauvana* festival just precedes the Car Festival of Lords. Thereafter, the regular rituals of Lord Jagannatha begin again and the traditional *Ratha Yatra* celebration is held at Puri. The world famous Car festival (*Ratha Yatra*) or 'Sri Gundicha Yatra' of Lord Jagannatha takes place on *Asadha Sukla Dwitiya* i.e. the second day of the bright fortnight of the month of *Asadha*(June-July) of each year.<sup>71</sup> chariots of Jagannatha, Balabhadra, and Subhadra are dragged along the *Badadanda* to the Sri Gundicha temple where the *Chaturdha murtis* stay for a period of one week. The 'Bahuda Yatra' is held on *Asadha Sukla Dasami* i.e. the 10th day of the bright fortnight. Jagannath , Balabhadra and Subhadra ride in chariots (*rathas*) with brightly coloured canopies, majestically



moving down the road to the sound of conches, bells, drums, and chanting of *mantras*.<sup>72</sup> Large numbers of pilgrims from different parts of India and abroad arrive and this huge crowded chaotic festival has justified the word 'Jagannatha'. At the time of *Ratha Yatra*, non-Hindus can see the images of Jagannatha Trinity. Jagannath's chariot is named *Nandighosh*, which is canopied by the wheel of the *Sudarsana Chakra*. Balabhadra's chariot is said *Taladhvaja*. Devi Subhadra travels in the 12 wheeled *Padmadhvaja (Devadalana) ratha* with a red and black canopy. The duration of the *Ratha Yatra* festival is for 10 days starting from the 2<sup>nd</sup> to the 10<sup>th</sup> day of the *shukla paksha*, the bright fortnight of *Ashadha*, in June/ July. Lakhs of devotees, irrespective of caste and colour from all over India and also a few tourists of foreign countries come to Puri with pious mind to see the famous *Ratha Yatra* of Lord Jagannatha.<sup>73</sup>

### 3.8. Veshas of Lord Jagannatha

The three wooden images of Jagannatha, Balabhadra and Subhadra wear different types of robes and ornaments of both floral as well as of gold on different days. Three deities in the Jagannatha temple are adorned with specific ceremonial costumes on various occasions. They are called as *veshas* (festive dresses) of the Lord Jagannatha. There are 36 *veshas* of the deities out of which important 18 are viz. 1. Ganesha vesha (on the full moon day of *Jyestha*) - June, 2. *Sunavesha* (on the 11<sup>th</sup> day of the bright fortnight of *Asadha* (June-July)), 3. *Bana Bhoji vesha* (on the 10<sup>th</sup> day of dark fortnight of *Bhadra*) - August-September, 4. *Kaliyadalana vesha* (11<sup>th</sup> day of dark fortnight), 5. *Vamana vesha* (on the 12<sup>th</sup> day of bright fortnight) - September, 6. *Rajavesha* (10<sup>th</sup> day of bright fortnight of *Ashvina*) - September, 7. *Radha Damodar vesha* from 10<sup>th</sup> bright fortnight day of *Ashvina* to 10<sup>th</sup> bright day of *Kartika* (October), 8. *Nagarjuna vesha* (on 13<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup> day of bright fortnight of *Kartika* (October-November)), 9. *Ghodalagi vesha* (6<sup>th</sup> day of bright fortnight of *Margashira* to *Basanta Pancami* - 5<sup>th</sup> day of bright fortnight of *Magha*) - November-December, 10. *Padma vesha* (on the second day of bright fortnight of *Magha*) - January-February, 11. *Gaja-Udharana vesha* (full moon day of *Magha*) - February, 11. *Chacheri vesha* (from the 9<sup>th</sup> day of the bright fortnight to full moon day of *Falguna*) - March, 12. *Rama Rajavesha* (9<sup>th</sup> day of the bright fortnight) - March 13. *Chandalalagi vesha* (on the 3<sup>rd</sup> day of the bright fortnight of *Baisakha* (May)), etc. These are the *veshas* of Lord Jagannatha of Puri throughout the year.

### 3.9. Festivals of Lord Jagannatha

The *Brahma* and *Skanda Puranas* contain prescriptions about the observance of twelve festivals in the temple of Lord Jagannatha throughout the year. There is a saying in Odisha that there are 13 festivals in the 12 months of the year. But there are more than 65 festivals of festive *nitis* during the year found in the temple of Lord Jagannatha. Out of these, some of them are being given here. They are such as 1. *Akshaya Trutiya (Chandan Yatra)*; on the 3<sup>rd</sup> day of the bright fortnight of the month of *Baisakha* and lasts for 21 days April-May, 2. The *Snana Yatra* (Bathing ceremony); on the full moon day of the month of *Jyestha* or towards the first part of June, 3. Car Festival (*Ratha Yatra*); from 2<sup>nd</sup> day of bright fortnight of *Asadha* to the 10<sup>th</sup> day of bright fortnight for 9 days (June-July), 4. *Navakalevara* festival (interval of nineteen years), 5. *Sayana Ekadashi*; on the 11<sup>th</sup> day of the bright fortnight of the month of *Asadha* (July), 6. *Chitalagi Amabasya*; on the day of *Shravana Amabasya*, 7. *Jhulana Yatra*; from the 10<sup>th</sup> day of the bright fortnight of the month of *Sravana* and continues for 7 days (August), 8. *Parshva Paribartana* (on the 11<sup>th</sup> day of the bright fortnight of *Bhadra*) ; August, 9. *Vijaya Dasami*; on the 10<sup>th</sup> day of bright fortnight

(September), 10. *Hari Uthapana*; on the 11<sup>th</sup> day of the bright fortnight of *Kartika*(October), 11. *Pausa Abhisheka*; on the full moon day in the month of December, 12. *Makara Saikraiti*, 13. *Dola Yatra*; on the 14<sup>th</sup> day of the bright fortnight of the month of *Chaitra*(March-April),etc.

Besides these *festivals*, a large number of other festivals and *nitis* are performed inside and outside of the temple premises. They are *Balabhadra Janma*, *Krishna Janma*, *Ganesh Caturthi*, *Rekha Panchami*, *Radhastami*, *Vamana Janma* or *Sunia*, *Ananta Caturdashi*, *Prathamastami*, *Bakula Amabasya*, *Rama Navami*, *Maha Visuba Sankranti*, *Kumara Purnima*, *Rasa Purnima*, *Pahili Bhoga*, *Shitala Sasti*, *Shiva ratri*, *Deva Dipavali*, *Durga Puja*, *Tila Saptamii*, *Niladri Mahodaya*, etc. This is in brief about the rituals & festivals of the Lord Jagannatha temple of Puri.

### 3. 10. *Chhatisa Niyogas of Lord Jagannatha*

In the local tradition of Puri, Lord Jagannatha is a mass deity i.e. 'Rastra Devata' or *Loka Devata* was being worshipped with deep reverence as the god of state. He was worshipped by the entire people of the state irrespective of caste, creed and colour. He is above all deities and also worshipped in the concept of a human being. That is why; He is a Great man or Purusottama (Jagannatha). This *Devata* required a large number of *sevakas* known as *Niyogas* (*sevakas*). According to *Madalapanji*, the temple chronicle of Lord Jagannatha written in Odia language, king Anangabhima Deva III of the Ganga dynasty had established 36 *Niyogas* known as *Chhatisa Niyoga*.<sup>74</sup> The term *Chhatisa-Niyoga* refers to thirty-six categories of servants (*sevakas*) employed in the service for Lord Purusottama (Jagannatha). Infact, at present Lord Jagannatha is being worshipped / served by the thirty-six categories of people (*Chhatisa Niyogas*) as it is assumed that there were 36 categories of people present in *Srikshetra* and its vicinity. People of the *Puri* town were divided into thirty-six categories as per their occupations. The names of all categories are such as *Rajguru* (*Brahmin*), *Purohita* (temple priest), *Mahajana*, *Khuntia* (who watches the deities), *Mekap* ( in charge of store), *Padhiari*(in charge of guarding the temple), *Daita* ( in charge of *Anabasara* and *Navakalevara*), *Paika* (soldier), *Sunari* (goldsmith), *Kachara* (bangler), *Gudia*(sweet man), *Teli* (oil man), *chitrakara* (painter), *Bauri*, *Bhandari* (barber), *Gauda* (milk man), *Mali* (florist), *Liari*, *Pandari*, *Kumbhara* (soil pot maker), *Patara*(maker of Silk cloth), *Keuta* (fisherman), *Kansari* (brazier), *Roul*, *Dhoba*(washer man), *Badhei*(carpenter), *Halua* (cultivator), *Sahukar* (shop keeper), *Matia* (labour), *Hadua* (salesman), *Gola* (preserver), *Bindhani* (blacksmith), *Khandayata* (soldier), *Nayak*(astrologer), *Bhoi* (lower caste) and *Dora*.<sup>75</sup>

## IV. CONCLUSION

It is known from the above discussion that Lord Jagannatha of Puri is not only enthusiastically worshipped by millions of Indians but also by the whole people of Hindu society of the world. Really, the shrine of Lord Jagannatha of Puri is an important cultural heritage site of India considering its religious significance. The temple of Lord Jagannatha represents the best specimen of the full-fledged *Kaliga Style* temple architecture of Orisha in Eastern India. Both from the architectural and sculptural point of view, the temple of Lord Jagannatha is a unique monument of Eastern India. The *Ratnasimhasana* of Lord Jagannatha is variously said as *Ratnavedi*, *Saptavarnapitha*, etc. and it is universally accepted by Hindus as a holy place of India through the ages. In the *Navakalevara* ceremony, we can find the mixture of Vedic traditional rituals and tribal culture of *Savaras* (*Daitas*)

of Odisha. So, the Navakalevara ceremony of Lord Jagannatha of Puri is the symbolic of traditional Vedic worship mixed with the tribal worship of *Daitas*. In fact, the *Daitas* and Pati-Mohapatras play a very vital role in this grand ceremony. The tribal forms of worship of Lord Jagannatha are also found to be prevailed in the Navakalevara ceremony, because Lord Purusottama (Jagannatha) was originally worshipped by the people of Savara tribe (*Daitas*) of this soil. Therefore, the initial tribal forms of rituals are continuing in the Navakalevara ceremony of Lord Jagannatha of Puri. From the daily rituals it is known that Lord Jagannatha is worshipped in the temple like a Supreme Being. Really, thirty-six categories of servants (*sevakas*) are found to be employed in the service for Lord Jagannatha. The wooden idols of 'Jagannatha Trinity' of Puri are marvellously decorated with specific *veshas* (festive dresses) on various occasions. There are more than 65 festivals found to be observed in the temple of Lord Jagannatha. Traditionally, Lord Jagannatha of Puri is famous throughout the world for His car festival. A large numbers of devotees from all over India and also a few tourists of foreign countries come to Puri to see the famous car festival of Lord Jagannatha. In fact, the Car festival of Lord Jagannatha is universally observed by the whole people of the Hindu society of the world. In *Kali-yuga* Lord Jagannatha is taking various kinds of delicious and sacred food (*Mahaprasada*). So, the site of Puri is the place of eating of Lord Jagannatha (Krishna). The *Ananda Bazar* of Lord Jagannatha temple complex has created a mass hotel, which is the largest in the world. Almost all the aspects of Lord Jagannatha of Puri are very significance in the religious history of India. On the whole, from the cultural point of view, Lord Jagannatha of Puri is an important and unique sacred deity of India and the site of His temple is not only famous as a holy place of India but its adjoining area is also treated as splendid in the whole of world.

## V. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I am deeply obliged to Prof. P.K. Nayak, Prof. K.S. Behera (late), Prof. C.R. Mishra (late), Prof. Prof. K.K. Basa, Dr. B.K. Ratha, Prof. H.K. Satapathy, Prof. Harihar Panda and Prof. Byomakesh Tripathy for their encouragement and valuable suggestions in course of the initial preparation of this article. I express my profound reverence to **Prof. Achyuta Samanta**, the Hon'ble Founder of KISS, Deemed to be University, Bhubaneswar who encouraged me for the writing of this piece of work. The photograph of Jagannatha Arati of Puri Srimandira is collected from internet website.

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