

Nrusingha Guru - a lovable personality

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Late Nrusingha Guru, the great son of the soil belongs to a galaxy of great personalities produced by the State during one of the most crucial phases of Indian struggle for independence. Today, when we pay our rich tribute to a champion of people's right as well as to a pure Gandhian, any effort or event linked with the perpetuation of the memory of great persons like the one of Late Guru is definitely a memorable one and deserves to be commended.

Late Nrusingha Guru is well known figure before the people of the state who have a great respect for him. Late Guru is household name in Western Orissa for his untiring efforts for the socio-economic upliftment of the people. We have come across many freedom fighters and followers of Gandhian Philosophy, but very few matched that of Late Guru who remained as a symbol of self service towards the upliftment of the Harijans, poor and the downtrodden of the society and a fearless speaker against any sorts of injustice. He was so deeply inspired by the thoughts and simplicity of Gandhiji; he had never sidelined himself from the Gandhian ideals till his last. He always believed in simple living and high thinking. And that probably is the reason why he is described as the 'Gandhi of Western Orissa'.

Very few people would have thought that the boy who was born about one hundred years ago in Gurupali Village due to the grace of Lord Nrusinghath would one day show light to the society through his noble deeds. Like morning shows the day, the activities of Late Guru from his student days led him to attain that great height. The day, 2nd January, 1921 was a remarkable and memorable day for student Nrusingha Guru, as it changed the course of his life completely. Inspired by the call of Gandhiji on that day, the agitation by the students of Sambalpur Zilla school made headlines in every newspapers that ultimately drew the attention of Mahatma Gandhi.

Late Nrusingha Guru always fought for the

rights of Harijans on being influenced deeply by Chandrasekhar Behera. His harijan welfare activities impressed Thakkar Bapa so much so that he opened a hostel for the Harijan students in Sambalpur itself.

In the post independence period, Late Guru was attracted towards journalism as profession to set the nation in the right path. He had to face real tests many times in life while following the social responsibility and that of a fearless journalist, but every time he came out successful with great courage. He was so perfect, accurate and unbiased in his reporting that this helped the government to take necessary steps in meeting successfully the drought situation in Kalahandi and Padmapur. In present times, journalism has become a coveted profession in our country and more and more educated youth are opting it as a career. So, particularly they have to believe in the values and principles of late Guru which reflect in his unbiased and fearless reporting and march ahead with time as genuine mouthpiece of the people of the State. Late Nrusingha Guru was an eminent freedom fighter, social reformer, journalist and a nice, lovable personality all rolled into one. All Oriyas will always be grateful to this great personality for his contribution towards the upliftment of the society and also for his sincere efforts to improve the quality of journalism in the State. He never ran after fame, instead fame graced him always. He was born to give something to mankind but not to take anything instead either during his lifetime or after that.

When the people of Orissa continue their fight against poverty, natural disasters and unemployment, the ideals of Late Nrusingha Guru provide the vision and strength to us. On this occasion, the greatest tribute to Late Guru would be our soulful effort to achieve a progressive Orissa.

Former Governor, Orissa

(This article is based on the speech delivered by Shri M.M. Rajendran, Hon'ble Governor of Orissa who attended as Chief Guest in the Birth Centenary Celebration of Late Nrusingha Guru at Deogarh on 19.07.2002.)