

## China's Diplomatic Entrenchment In Latin America- Implications For Taiwan And The United States

**By Arnab Chakrabarty**

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China has rapidly made a strong presence in Latin America through its practices of trade and investments. While the United States remains a formidable power in the western hemisphere it has lost its leverage to a great extent. Its preoccupation with the Second Gulf War, the Global War on Terror, and at present its involvement in the Russia-Ukraine conflict diverted its attention considerably from the hemisphere. Consequently, China silently worked its way through the region and established itself. Although the United States and China will engage in a tussle for years to come, Taiwan stands to lose the most. This paper will explain China's approach towards the region in the context of poaching Taiwan's diplomatic allies, its challenge to the American pre-eminence in the region, and the larger implications.

### China's diplomatic encroachment in Latin America

Cuba was the first Latin American country to extend diplomatic recognition to China in 1960. Following the rapprochement between the United States and China in 1972 and China's occupation of the UNSC seat, other countries such as Argentina, Chile, Brazil, Mexico, and Bolivia recognized China. Countries in the region were still heavily influenced by American policies in the backdrop of the Cold War, thus hesitating to respond to China's diplomatic overtures. During the interceding decades of 1970 and 1980, China established firm relations with many Latin American countries. China's economic liberalisation and outreach paid off and gradually it turned out to be a partner to many countries in Latin America.

Interestingly, China made tactical approaches toward the countries in Central America. It established relations with Costa Rica in 2007, followed by Panama in 2017, El Salvador and Dominican Republic in 2018, and Nicaragua in 2021. In March 2023 it established relations with Honduras. There is speculation that Paraguay may choose to recognise China after the elections in April 2023. Put simply, Taiwan's loss is China's gain as all these countries at one point in time diplomatically recognized Taiwan. Before the establishment of relations, China's condition of strict adherence to the 'One China' policy requires acceptance. As of now, Taiwan has 13 countries all over the world with which it enjoys diplomatic relations, and out of these 7 are in Latin America and the Caribbean region.

Today China is the main trading partner of the majority of countries in the region and with over US\$ 130 billion dollars of investment in a span of few years, it poses a serious challenge to the economic preponderance of the United States. It has made massive investments in infrastructure and granted generous loans and other forms of financial aid. China's objective in economically engaging these countries is to create leverage in the region and to seek their support.

It also doesn't depend on political preconditions before granting economic aid and does not partake in the political processes in the region. A serious 'disadvantage' for the United States is its views on the political landscape in Latin America which at times is seen as a perpetuation of Washington's hegemony in the region. For instance, the Summit of the Americas in 2022 turned out to be lacklustre for President Biden's administration. Its refusal to invite Cuba, Venezuela, and Nicaragua led to several countries boycotting the Summit or sending non-Head of State as representatives. One may contrast it with the first Summit of the Americas in 1994 which witnessed overwhelming participation. Hence, it is safe to argue that political withdrawal of the United States offered China valuable space to manoeuvre and establish itself in the region.

### **China's Rationale for Engaging Latin America**

China's purposes in Latin America are manifold. Primarily it stems from economic reasons but on a closer look, it has significant strategic appendages to it. China has interests in strategic resources such as Lithium. China already controls a third of the world's Lithium trade and 70 percent of Lithium-ion battery manufacturing. Latin America's Lithium Triangle which comprises Argentina, Bolivia, and Chile already has a heavy Chinese presence in Lithium extraction. The triangle supplies approximately 56% of the world's Lithium supply, and several Chinese companies such as Ganfeng and Zangge Mining have established deep relationships with their Latin American counterparts. As the world transitions gradually towards Green Energy, Lithium will be much coveted and China already has a lead in the region.

China's deeper strategic interests cannot be written off in the region. As a rising power and a challenge to the United States, China seeks to expand its footprint and open up new spaces for confrontation. The US is engaged diametrically opposite to China in the Indo-Pacific and extends its cooperation to Taiwan. As a result of which China's overtures in Latin America are in a bid to counter Washington in its own strategic space. Beijing has also supplied military hardware to the region, notably to Argentina, Bolivia, Peru, Ecuador, and Venezuela amounting to US\$ 634 million. It has also supplied hardware for the Police forces in various countries in Latin America. China has established a Space Station in Patagonia, Argentina which many fear could be of military use. It has donated facial recognition technology to Venezuela and its proximity to Cuba, Nicaragua, and Venezuela may be seen as a strategic challenge to the United States. Ironically, while the United States faces impediments in exerting its leadership in the Americas, China manages to engage countries in the entire region unhinged on ideology or political features. Thus, as the United States exerts pressure in the Indo-Pacific and in China's soft underbelly, Beijing will return the favour in Latin America.

China's special interest in poaching Taiwan's diplomatic allies has two key features. Primarily it seeks to delegitimise Taiwan's global presence and render it voiceless and redundant. On a secondary level, it seeks to score psychologically against the United States by deeming it incapable of defending its ally in its sphere of influence. Globally, as Taiwan's diplomatic allies turn towards China it exhibits Washington's shortcomings vis-à-vis China's 'skilful' diplomacy. China has thus successfully turned the region into a bargaining chip vis-à-vis the United States in the span of a few years.

### **Larger implications for the region**

While Beijing has adamantly defended its activities in Latin America as "the right choice in line with the prevailing trend", the United States has repeatedly expressed its concerns. Former President Trump and Former Secretary of State, Mike Pompeo had repeatedly cautioned their Latin American counterparts regarding China's ulterior motives. While the American administration could do little, China's activities do not spell good for the region. Although Taiwan cannot match up to China's deep pockets, its economic aid and investments are prompt and benign. It has also on occasion responded to natural disasters and calamities that are frequent in the region.

Taiwan's economic engagement in the region does not entail any ulterior motive, with its only intention being to maintain its diplomatic survivability. The Latin American countries, however, require investment and financial aid without pre-conditions attached to them. They also seek to diversify their foreign policy interests and look toward new partners; hence China fits the bill. While the United States keeps cautioning these countries, a lot more needs to be done. It must engage countries such as Venezuela, Nicaragua, and Cuba and work out solutions with them. It may also economically engage the region on a fresh note and invite other countries to revitalise the region. Since these countries in Latin America are more economically oriented toward their foreign policy objectives and do not seek to partake in a Sino-US rivalry, an economic approach may be best suited for the situation. The United States must turn out to be a partner to the region, rather than engage in diplomatic overtures on the lines of the Monroe Doctrine. As the world witnesses fragmentation and the development of new centres of power, Latin America requires a fresh approach devoid of Eurocentrism.

As Taiwan grapples with the loss of another diplomatic ally in Honduras, it needs to retain its remaining allies in the region. While Taiwanese President Tsai Wen's recent visit to Belize and Guatemala confirmed relations, it needs to foster greater cooperation with the region. While China will remain an important player in the region, cooperation among other countries which oppose Beijing may alter the situation to some extent.

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## SCO And South Asia

**By Dr.Santhosh Mathew**

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The Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), founded in 2001, is considered to be a power bloc parallel to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). It covers the largest area of landmass for any regional cooperation organization, includes two permanent members of the United Nations Security Council, and two of the top ten economies in the world- China and India. The SCO, hence, has considerable economic, military and territorial power. It often works in collaboration with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and has also been consulted on counter-terrorism by the United Nations. The organization also focuses on increasing cultural contact and community building. It participates as an observer at major Asian committees. Besides these Eurasian and global relations, there is ample scope for new diplomatic ties to flourish within the SCO. The SCO has the potential of becoming a pivotal organization in changing the diplomatic dynamic between its old and new members. Russia and China, as well as Central Asia coupled with the developing economies of India and Pakistan can become the part of a new axis of power. Optimistically, the SCO can help transform relationships between India, China, and Pakistan.

The permutations and combinations that abound in the SCO are dominated mostly by the interests of the 'big-four' players namely China, Russia, India and Pakistan. According to the World Bank China and India's hegemonic economic power may reach even greater heights by 2030. Similarly, notwithstanding the recent hiccups, Russia's indomitable leveraging ability with the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), and its historical significance as the leader of the Communist Bloc give it much clout. Pakistan, the apparent underdog, has the advantage of holding a tactical position vis-à-vis Afghanistan and its access to the Persian Gulf via the Arabian Sea. India and Pakistan are nuclear weapons states and Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty (NPT) non-signatories. Not surprisingly, the four central Asian countries that are part of the SCO do not get much attention.

Trump has also taken tough stands against terrorism and has deemed Kashmir's freedom struggle terrorism. These steps have bristled Russia and therefore it is engaging in increasingly aggressive military tactics such as combined drills with Pakistan and the export of military equipment.

The Sino-Soviet split of the 20th century is a bitter memory in the history of China-Russia relations. Even today, the two countries continue to have neutral if not lukewarm ties with each other. According to a report by the New York Times, they have a "quiet rivalry" that can be said to have precipitated from their shared communist past. They supposedly have a "comprehensive strategic partnership" under which Russia provides China with oil and the latter provides Russia with consumer goods. They also have close military ties despite Russia providing armaments to Chinese rivals-India and Vietnam. Albeit Robert Kaplan says that there's geopolitical tension under the surface. Within the SCO though China and Russia more or less hold a similar position of esteem. Russian and Chinese were originally the only two official languages of the organization, although now English has been added to the roster. These two nations were instrumental in the very conception of the SCO as well. An analysis by a Chinese news channel shows that Sino-Russian relations have been on the ascendant ever since the inception of the SCO.

Pakistan appears exalted at its SCO membership. According to media reports in Pakistan, its ministers have often heralded the partnership as a vibrant way to facilitate peace talks and global trade. An analysis by The Herald has delineated how the SCO has widened its ambit beyond Central Asia. The report did not seem very optimistic about the strategic prospects that may fall Pakistan's way given that India has also joined. Despite these less-than optimum circumstances, Pakistan continues to be optimistic about its membership in the SCO because the organization is a symbol of unity between unequal partners.

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One also needs to look from the opposite vantage to get an objective view of the reconfigured SCO. Pakistan appears exalted at its SCO membership. According to media reports in Pakistan, its ministers have often heralded the partnership as a vibrant way to facilitate peace talks and global trade. An analysis by The Herald has delineated how the SCO has widened its ambit beyond Central Asia. The report did not seem very optimistic about the strategic prospects that may fall Pakistan's way given that India has also joined. Despite these less-than optimum circumstances, Pakistan continues to be optimistic about its membership in the SCO because the organization is a symbol of unity between unequal partners.

# India must respond to the widening nuclear gap with China

**By Srikanth Kondapalli**

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*China was at the forefront of imposing sanctions on India by moving the 1172 resolution in the UN Security Council, along with the US*

As India celebrates the 25th anniversary of the 1998 Shakti tests and becoming a Nuclear Weapons State, it has to ponder over those countries that treated it as a pariah and still block its legitimate interests as well as plan the road ahead.

China was at the forefront of imposing sanctions on India by moving the 1172 resolution in the UN Security Council, along with the US. While the US moved on, recognising India as a “State with nuclear weapons” and supporting India for a “clean waiver” at the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG) after the ‘123 agreement’ in 2008, Beijing remains a stumbling block in India’s quest to boost nuclear energy.

China continues to block India’s entry into the NSG – crucial to stepped up access to nuclear technology and resources. Despite the growing global support to India and recognition – through pacts with 14 countries so far – and growing isolation of China on the matter, Beijing has been unrelenting.

China also continues to exert pressure on India by stepping up its nuclear and missile capabilities quantitatively and qualitatively. While such capabilities are primarily meant for a show-down with the US, the fact that China’s national defence white papers of 2015 and 2019 called for “medium-range precision strikes” indicate that India is also in its crosshairs. According to the Indian Defence Ministry’s annual reports, China has had India’s strategic assets as targets since the 1980s. What has changed now is the lethality and precision of its weapons.

Though China had adopted minimum nuclear deterrence policy, its preparations and literature indicate that it has graduated to a limited nuclear deterrence posture. Every now and then, China mentions that it has “only a handful” of nuclear warheads. However, external evidence suggests that it has miniaturised warheads, increased their stockpile and delivery platforms.

Currently, 14 sites are associated with the nuclear weapons programme in China and estimates of its weapons-grade enriched uranium and plutonium stockpiles indicate a substantial increase in its nuclear warheads. China may have anywhere from 250 to 2,000 warheads currently.

Doctrinally, while paying lip-service to No First Use (NFU), China’s move to a limited nuclear deterrence posture is worrying. Its commentators are also increasingly using terms such as ‘strategic deterrence’, and advocating foregoing NFU in the event of an adversary knocking off China’s ballistic missile silos or strategic hubs. Some have even called for Beijing to prepare for “launch on warning” and “launch under attack” scenarios. While China denies acquiring tactical nuclear weapons, reports suggest the contrary – indicating clearly to an escalatory ladder.

China also reorganised its rocket forces, previously called the Second Artillery to an explicit Strategic Rocket Forces. The December 2015 reorganisation gave it an increased budget and modernisation of C4ISR capabilities. The successful test of a hypersonic glide vehicle in 2021 enhanced the global reach of China’s destructive capabilities.

Nuclear whispers haven’t been heard during the ongoing India-China standoff in Ladakh, but China has built new missile silos in the western regions at Yumen, Hami and Ordos at a cost of over \$33 billion. China had also deployed several versions of DF-21 missiles at Da Qaidam, Xiao Qaidam and Delingha in Tibet.



An extended version of this missile, the DF-21D, is meant to counter the US Navy's assets but could also be used to target Indian aircraft carriers in the Bay of Bengal.

China has been a free rider so far in arms control and disarmament regimes, gobbling up critical western technologies and proliferating them to countries of concern. It has been dubbed as a "strategic proliferator". While the strategic arms reduction talks continued between the US and Russia, China did not participate in these, claiming limited capabilities. However, the US has demanded that China participate in intermediate-range nuclear forces reduction talks, but in vain.

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## **Making Indian Entities Conscious Of Intellectual Property (IP) Rights**

**By Dr. Arun Kumar Kashyap, PhD (IISc)**

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Ever since India became independent, there had been a reconstruction of India by building up modern temples of learning such as IITs, DRDO, ICAR, CSIR laboratories and several universities in government sector besides public sector units such as IOCL, BHEL, SAIL, NTPC and ONGC and other larger units in private sector such as Reliance group of industries. Private sector has also witnessed the mushrooming of several engineering colleges, medical colleges and management colleges during past four decades to cater to the demands for engineers, medical and management professionals that were largely prepared by diverting them from the science and technology mainstreams. Even, non-Indian entities (the entities that have their headquarters in foreign nations) have set up nearly 1000 R&D Centers employing nearly 3 lacs qualified Indian scientists and technocrats during past three decades.

Whereas Indian academic institutions function as knowledge powerhouse and create scientists and engineers, quite a large number of such qualified manpower are employed by Indian industries to develop newer products and processes and create IP at their laboratories. However, their IP creation has not been at a satisfactory pace considering the investments made in these modern temples of learning when compares their output with those by the non-Indian entities.

By and large, Indian entities in academia prefer to employ their faculty (the chief inventors) who have had prior exposure in developed nations. These inventors are hardly expected to have any knowledge of the local, regional and national needs of the country. Similarly, inventors in industries may not be adequately qualified/ experienced to develop the newer products and processes. In fact, the inventors prefer to work in their own areas of specializations.

It is strongly suspected that Indian entities do not employ IP professionals on their rolls. With the result, inventors are required to prepare the patent applications but their uncertain availability at the time of prosecution (usually after 2 or 3 years of filing the applications at the Patent Office) results in the abandonment of applications. Indian entities have not set up any IP cell at their premises. They do not have any internal mechanism to supervise the quality of deliverables by the IP firms that have been outsourced the IP work. Indian entities do not have any internal capability to screen the publications for the presence of any invention or plagiarism. Indian entities have been filing nearly 20% of Indian patent applications for past four decades and this trend has been pretty consistent irrespective of the technology areas they are working on. Indian entities are also known as copycats and frequently accused of plagiarism.

If 20% of Indian patent applications are filed by Indian entities, then the balance 80% of Indian patent applications are filed by non-Indian entities that have been building their home in India since the era of globalization set in India. It is therefore obvious that brain drain has been happening not only to developed nations such as USA or Europe but also to developed laboratories within India itself. However, such massive exodus of S&T manpower to non-Indian entities certainly ensures that Indian entities are continuously kept deprived of this manpower. That also puts constraint on the Indian entities to work out their research projects with whatever manpower is available to them. With the result, the inventors working with Indian entities might be overworking leading to enhanced stress levels for them and at reduced productivity levels.

It is natural that if the Indian entities continue doing what they had been doing in past, they will continue getting what they had been getting in past.

Indian IP firms largely depend on the work they receive from non-Indian entities. But the work they happen to receive is largely routine in nature e.g., filing of national phase/ convention applications and their prosecution, trademark filing and occasional litigations. There exist several kinds of IP firms that do not like to communicate with one another. With the result, it is quite likely that they do not understand the scope of IP work that Indian entities are engaged in. Indian IP firms may therefore be shy in approaching the Indian entities for the IP work. As such, Indian IP firms comprise of IP firms (largely dealing with filing and prosecutions), KPOs (largely working on prior art search and drafting), law firms (largely working on litigations, copyrights and trademark related issues), innovation firms (largely dealing with tools such as TRIZ, ideation, etc. in spotting the inventions, scenario writing, etc.), database vendors, IT firms (dealing with invention management tools), etc.

### **Work Plan:**

Government of India has released its National IPR Policy nearly a year ago. Taking a cue from it, it is expected that Indian entities will develop their IP policy with a view to encourage the creation of IP followed by their exploitation. That would involve handling of IP assets by the IP professionals employed by the Indian entities. Further, introduction of reward scheme for the inventors and innovators will accelerate the process of creation and exploitation of IP. IP audit will ensure identification of IPs that are owned and borrowed by the Indian entities. Further, it will reduce the usage of stolen IPs by the Indian entities.

Under the circumstances, it may be advisable to take the help of a KPO firm that can determine the research directions in a particular technology area by conducting white space analysis. That will help the inventors avoid duplication of research efforts in a given technology area. Enhancing pace of creating invention disclosures through processes such as ideation, TRIZ and patentability assessments of created invention disclosures, design around exercises on rejected applications, expired or abandoned patents in association with an innovation firm may be taken up.

Filing and prosecution of Indian and PCT patent applications with focus on preparation of Indian patent application by the IP firm based on the invention disclosure prepared by the inventors may be adopted. Submission of pre-grant/ third party/ post- grant observations on published applications of the competitors is an absolute necessity. Timely maintenance of granted patents is critical. Filing of national phase applications and prosecutions in different nations is conducted through the foreign associates of the IP firm. Consequently, selection of foreign associates as well as handling maintenance of patent applications/ granted patents must be made aware of.

Help should be taken from an IP firm to handle issues such as copyright including plagiarism, design thefts by fabricators and trademarks violations including counterfeiting and piracy. Handling agreements of different kinds including issues such as indemnifications, FTO, invalidations, IP insurance, implications of arbitrations and governing law also requires assistance from an IP firm.

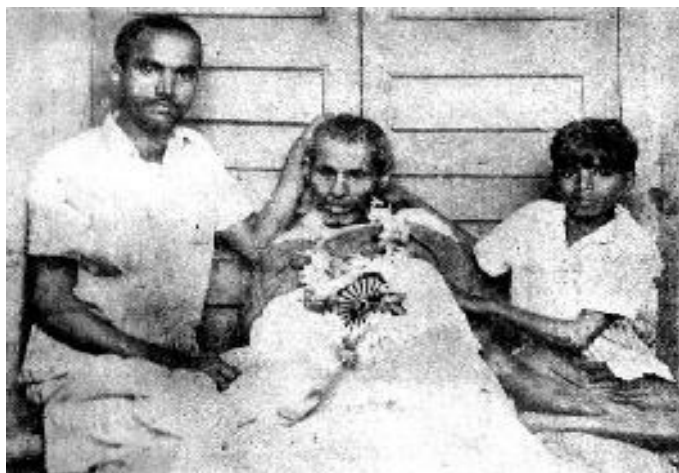
Similarly, IP watch, employee/ licensee watch, enforcements and commercializations including valuations and royalty determinations and experiences through auction sites such as pre-pat auction requires assistance from very competent IP firms. Understanding threat from non-practicing entities, threat from non-Indian entities and handling litigations and conflict of interest issues also requires assistance from IP firms.

### **Journey Ahead:**

It's an extremely important task to select a competent IP firm who can do the IP work for an Indian entity. IP firm should be able to prepare scope of entire IP work and explain the entire process to the Indian entity. It's quite likely that one single entity may not be able to generate sufficient work so as to attract the IP firm. Under such circumstances, several entities may join together to select an IP firm. It would be better if the Indian entity selected such an IP firm through a two-tier process. In the first step, focus should be to short list the IP firm on the basis of their technical capabilities. Later, in the second step, these shortlisted IP firms can be put through tendering to select an IP firm.

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## **Nation is Indebted to: Bhagaban Sahoo (1908-1976) The Forgotten Hero of the Freedom Struggle**



The history of freedom struggle of India is enriched with the sacrifices of untold number of soldiers out of which few received due recognition in the annals of history. A large number of them are either ignored or they are not treated properly because of their obscure origin, illiteracy, poor background or lack of self-aggrandizement. One such great personality who dedicated his life sacrificing all the pleasure and happiness for the cause of the nation, was Bhagaban Sahoo of Kasapa village of Jajpur district in Odisha,

He was born on 6th June 1908.

While he was in Chatasali he displayed his inclination towards struggle and virtually joined in the mainstream of the national struggle at the age of twenty-two.

He was a man of uncompromising, undaunted, bold and brave personality who exhibited daring skill to tolerate all brutalities committed to him with ungrudging attitude by the British authorities, when he was hanged upside down while facing interrogation from the British officers to reveal the names of other fellow participants in the disaffection work against the British government.



In the history of freedom fight, Bhagaban seems to have been neglected as he was very poor and illiterate in spite of his tremendous sacrifice for the nation. When Gandhiji declared civil disobedience movement popularly known as Salt Satyagraha, it inspired young Bhagaban to jump into the freedom movement.

In the year 1930, when Congress Party organized a meeting at Ahiyas adjacent to Kaspā, Bhagaban's native village, Bhagaban took up the challenging task of awaring people through drumbeats and clarion calls in fourteen nearby villages. As a result, three thousand people attended the meeting and became aware of the call of Gandhiji.

In the year 1931, he joined the "Banara Sena". He along with local leaders hoisted the national tricolor flag in the Office of the S.D.O. Jajpur. He was arrested, severely beaten and sent to jail for two months.

As soon as he was released from the jail, he with four revolutionaries raided the Court of Jajpur. Bhagaban forced the S.D.O. to leave the chair and proposed to run the Court. He was sentenced to four month's imprisonment and was sent to Cuttack jail.

He was so brave that just after his release from jail he marched with sixty freedom fighters to unlock the Swaraj Ashram at Cuttack. He joined with Neta ji Bose and other leaders and completed the work. After the task along with other revolutionaries Bhagaban Sahoo was sentenced to one month imprisonment in Cuttack jail.

After some months he again marched to Cuttack with one hundred freedom fighters and attacked one of the officers who was responsible for ill behavior to the revolutionaries in the Swaraj Ashram Case. He was jailed for six months.

The Quit India Movement of 1942 was so violently precipitated in both Jajpur and Bhadrak that it put a serious pressure on the British. When Dr. Harekrishna Mahatab was arrested, Bhagaban remained in the building of Mahatab and played a vital role in this movement. Police firing at Eram causing the death of 27 freedom fighters created sharp reaction in the mind of Bhagaban

Over a period of time Bhagaban Sahoo was charged for 55 cases of arson, mail robbery, dacoity and looting of granaries in Jajpur sub-division that Bhagaban Sahoo took upon himself. He was charged in 17 section of IPC and 3(IV) and 35(IV) of DIR and was sentenced to 29 years of imprisonment by the Trial Court and put in the Cuttack jail since from 8 Nov. 1942. However, he was finally set free in the year 1946.

In the post independent India, the course of history took a twist. The leaders turned into politicians enjoying and ruling the States or Nation in different administrative capacities ignoring the lay freedom fighters. Under such prevailing situation, Bhagwan Sahoo married a blind girl which also indicated about his social service. As he was a destitute and landless, it became difficult for him to earn his subsistence. Lack of proper education deterred him to find out a job. The extreme physical torture virtually disabled him to do hard labour. Third degree treatment in the jail had made him weak and diseased for which he was unable to do hard labour. A great freedom fighter became a street beggar in the long run.

Poverty did not break down his love and passion for the nation. On every 15th August and 26th January, during the flag hoisting ceremony, he used to come to the Ahiyas High School. In 1972 on Silver Jubilee day school, he was felicitated by President V.V. Giri, as the front-ranking freedom fighter, got Rs.200/- per month. It was too meagre for him to sustain in the old age. Sadly, he began begging from door to door to support his family of wife, one son and one daughter. In the year 1976 he suffered from paralysis and passed away on 28th February 1977.

At times society is very cruel and Bhagaban Sahoo's case reminds us of this. But nation just cannot forget such great people with iron will.

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