

## **DISTRICT PARTNERSHIP WITH THE DIOCESE OF CUTTACK, CHURCH OF NORTH INDIA, AND UPDATE ON THE CHRISTIAN HOSPITAL AT BERHAMPUR**

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The Plymouth and Exeter Methodist District has had a developing partnership with the Diocese of Cuttack, North India, since September 2017, following several visits to the area by individuals and small groups from the District.

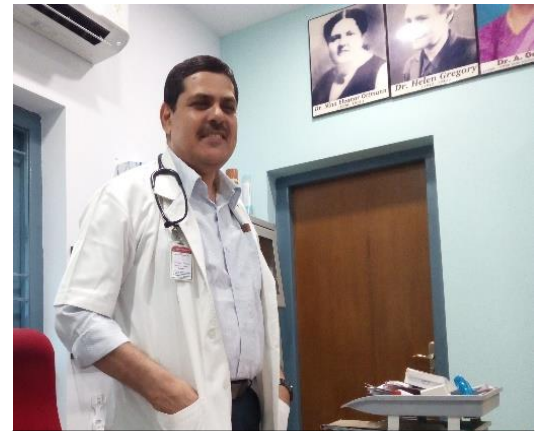
Approximately 80% of the population of Cuttack Diocese is made up of Dalit (non-caste) and Tribal peoples; CNI and its Dioceses are committed to serving the poor and excluded in their communities, and do this in many imaginative ways through partnerships with other bodies, and through their social programmes.

Poverty is entrenched and perpetuated in particular areas of India through the caste system in a very particular way. Caste condemns individuals from birth to a life of exploitation, violence, social exclusion and segregation. Women are particularly oppressed. Caste discrimination not only violates human rights, but also exposes those affected by it to other abuses of their civil, political, economic, social, religious and cultural rights.

On one of our visits to the Diocese in January 2020, we learned of the threat to the Christian Hospital at Berhampur. Berhampur is located in the Ganjam District, southern Odisha, a predominantly rural area where the population is made up of largely Tribal and Dalit people. They suffer considerable

challenges in terms of deprivation and poverty, poor nutrition, disease – such as malaria and tuberculosis, and infant and maternal mortality.

The Christian Hospital offers a high standard of compassionate care at affordable costs, under the Directorship of Dr M K Nanda. A vital aspect of the Hospital's work is the integral Nurses' Training College, through which women are not only equipped with much sought-after professional skills, but are also empowered to generate sustainable change in their homes and communities.



Dr Nanda with portraits of previous Directors dating back to 1900



New government regulations meant that the hospital – which is over 100 years old – was unable to meet the requirements without a rebuild of the core structures. In 2019, Dr Nanda oversaw the drawing up of plans for new buildings and renovations to some of the existing blocks which will give space for 170 beds, additional and enhanced services, and accommodation for the increased number of staff required.

In January 2021 work began, despite the challenges of the Covid pandemic, and in August 2022, work on Phase 1 of the new development was almost completed.



Front view of the hospital



Interior female surgical ward



Female recovery room



Photographs of progress August 2022

In October 2022, we had the wonderful news that Block A had been inaugurated, with prayers and celebrations. Rev Surendra K Nanda, Bishop of the Diocese of Cuttack, and Dr N K Nanda officiated.







Work was begun almost immediately on Block B, and in May 2023, we had news that the ground floor roof had been cast, and construction work was continuing, with a projected completion date at the end of December 2023.



Thank you once again for your financial support of the vital work of the Hospital. If you are able to gift aid your donation, please use one of the forms available; you will be helping to improve the lives of some of the most vulnerable people, and demonstrating supportive partnership in the wonderful work already being done.

*Rev Deborah Kirk  
on behalf of the World Church Committee  
August 2023*