

Padma Shri awardees from Odisha represent excellence across arts, literature, medicine, sports, and social work since 1954. The list spans decades, with recent recipients highlighting folk traditions and modern achievements.

Pioneers (1950s-1960s)

- Mahadeva Iyer Ganapati (1954, Medicine)
- Prana Krushna Parija (1955, Medicine)
- Laxminarayan Sahu (1955, Literature & Education)
- Isaac Santra (1956, Art)
- Sailabala Das (1959, Literature & Education)
- Lakshman Singh Jangpangi (1959, Public Affairs)
- Artaballabha Mohanty (1960, Literature & Education)
- Parshuram Mishra (1960s, Literature & Education)
- Nilakantha Das (1960, Public Affairs)
- Radhanath Rath (1968, Public Affairs)

Recent Awardees (2010s-2020s)

Year	Name	Field
2010	Pandit Raghunath Panigrahi	Art
2012	Jatin Das* (Bhushan but noted)	Art
2013	Raghunath Mohapatra* (Shri context)	Art
2018	Sudarshan Pattnaik	Art [previous knowledge]

Pandit Raghunath Panigrahi

He is an eminent Odissi music guru and vocalist from Odisha, received the Padma Shri in 2010 for his masterful renditions of Jayadeva's *Gita Govinda*.
Musical Legacy

Known as 'Suramani' and 'Gitagovinda Panigrahi,' he belonged to a family of Odissi musicians and trained under his father Pt. Neelamani Panigrahi, mastering traditional melodies from Puri's Jagannatha Temple. He provided lifelong vocal support to his wife, legendary Odissi dancer Sanjukta Panigrahi, elevating the art form globally from the 1960s to 1990s.



2010 Recognition

The Padma Shri, awarded late in his career, honored his efforts in promoting Odissi music, *Gita Govinda*, and Lord Jagannath's cult; he was the first Odia singer felicitated by France in the 1970s for this work. Earlier accolades included Sangeet Natak Akademi Award (1976) and state honors.

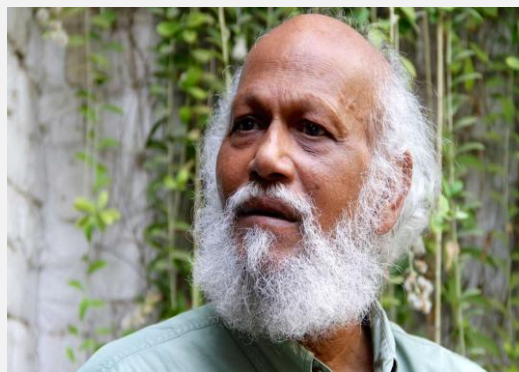
Later Years

Panigrahi passed away in 2013 at age 80 after battling throat cancer, a day after Sanjukta's death anniversary; they were Odisha's first Padma awardee couple in arts. His compositions continue influencing Odissi worldwide.

Jatin Das

He was born in 1941 in Baripada, Odisha, received the Padma Bhushan in 2012 for his outstanding contributions to painting, sculpture, and visual arts over six decades.

Artistic Achievements



A dynamic painter, sculptor, muralist, and printmaker, Das works in oils, watercolors, inks, and more on diverse surfaces, with his expressive human figures held in public and private collections worldwide. He created the massive 7x68 ft mural "The Journey of India: Mohenjo-Daro to Mahatma Gandhi" at New Delhi's old Parliament and founded the JD Centre of Art in Bhubaneswar to showcase classical, modern, folk arts, and his 6,000+ pankha (hand-fan) collection.

2012 Recognition

Announced on Republic Day 2012, the Padma Bhushan—India's third-highest civilian honor—was presented by the President at Rashtrapati Bhavan, recognizing his national and international impact alongside other Odia artists like Odissi dancer Minati Mishra. Prior awards included the Order of the Star of Italian Solidarity (2007) and Utkala Award (2006).
Broader Impact

Das donated works to charities, led Odisha cyclone relief in 1999, and advises cultural bodies; his daughter Nandita Das is a noted actor.

Raghunath Mohapatra

He is a renowned sculptor and architect from Odisha's Puri district, received the Padma Vibhushan in 2013—India's second-highest civilian honor—for his exceptional stone carving and temple architecture contributions.



Sculptural Mastery

Born in 1943, Mohapatra mastered traditional Odia stone carving from his father, creating iconic works like the six-foot grey stone Sun God statue in Parliament's Central Hall and numerous temple sculptures blending cultural aesthetics with modern design. He served as a senior instructor at Odisha's Handicraft Training Centre since 1963, training thousands and establishing expertise in temple ornamentation patterns.

2013 Recognition

Announced on Republic Day 2013 alongside artists like S.H. Raza, the award culminated prior honors: Padma Shri (1975), Padma Bhushan (2001), and National Sculpture Award (1964); presented by President Pranab Mukherjee at Rashtrapati Bhavan.

Enduring Legacy

Mohapatra founded the Raghunath Mohapatra Arts and Crafts Foundation, impacting over 2,000 students, and passed away in 2021 amid COVID-19 at age 78; his work elevated Odisha's stone craft globally.

Sudarsan Pattnaik

He is a world-renowned sand artist from Puri, Odisha, received the Padma Shri in 2014 (not 2018) for elevating sand sculpture as a global art form.



Artistic Innovation

Born in 1977, Pattnaik pioneered beach sand art using natural tools, creating massive sculptures on themes like patriotism, environment, and world peace; he founded Sudarsan Sand Art Institution in 2003 to train youth. His breakthrough came with international wins starting in 2000, including 27 championships and a 2017 Guinness record for the tallest sand castle (51 ft) at Puri Beach.

Recognition Timeline

Awarded Padma Shri on Republic Day 2014 eve—India's fourth-highest civilian honor—for seashore sand arts, presented amid Odisha's proud recipients; no 2018 Padma but continued accolades like 2019 Italian Sand Art Award. He represented India at events like Atlantic City World Cup (People's Choice, 2014).

Global Legacy

Pattnaik's ephemeral works promote messages via social media, inspiring Odisha's tourism; recent honors include 2025 Fred Darrington Sand Master Award (London).

AWARDEES FROM 2020-2026

Year	Name	Field
2020	Manmohan Mahapatra	Art (Cinema)
2020	Prasanta Kumar Pattanaik	Literature & Education
2020	Radhamohan & Sabarmatee	Social Work
2020	Utsav Charan Das	Art
2020	Mitrabhanu Gountia	Art

Year	Name	Field
2021	Krishna Mohan Pathi	Art
2021	Nanda Prusty	Art
2021	Purnamasi Jani	Literature & Education
2021	Rajat Kumar Kar	Medicine
2021	Shanti Devi	Social Work
2022	Srimad Baba Balia	Social Work
2022	Pramod Bhagat	Sports
2022	Aditya Prasad Dash	Medicine
2024	Binod Maharana	Art
2024	Gopinath Swain	Art
2025	Ashok Kumar Mahapatra	Medicine
2025	Durga Charan Ranbir	Art (Odissi)
2025	Pratibha Satpathy	Literature & Education
2025	Advait Charan Gadanayak	Art (Sculpture)
2026	Charan Hembram	Literature & Education

Year	Name	Field
2026	Mahendra Kumar Mishra	Literature & Education
2026	Sarat Kumar Patra	Art
2026	Simanchal Patro	Art

This compilation draws from official records; Odisha has over 100 recipients total, emphasizing cultural preservation.

Manmohan Mahapatra

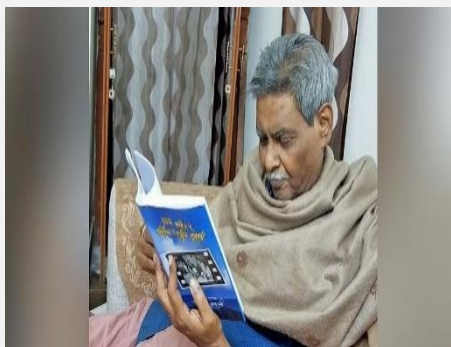
He pioneered new wave Odia cinema with realistic portrayals of rural life and social issues. Awarded Padma Shri in 2020, he earned eight consecutive National Film Awards for elevating Odia films globally.

Early Life

Born November 10, 1951, in Khordha near Bhubaneswar, Mahapatra trained at the Film and Television Institute of India (FTII), Pune. His 1975 short film *Anti-Memoirs* marked his debut, blending technical skill with narrative depth amid Odisha's socio-economic transitions.

Cinematic Achievements

Directing 13 features (12 in Odia), he launched *Seeta Raati* (1976, released 1980), the first Odia film in Indian Panorama at IFFI and winner of National Award for Best Feature Film in Odia. Eight consecutive Rajat Kamal Awards followed for *Nisiddha Swapna*, *Majhi Pahacha*, *Klanta Aparahna*, *Neerab Jhada*, *Seeta Raati*, *Bhinna Samaya*, and others, plus state honors like Best Director for *Bhija Matira Swarga*.



His works critiqued feudalism, class divides, and orthodoxy—*Neerab Jhada* (1985) explored migrant labor, while Hindi venture *Bits and Pieces* (2002) featured Nandita Das. Screened at festivals in USA, Italy, and Germany, he produced telefilms, documentaries, and serials on shoestring budgets.

He Known as "Father of New Wave Odia Cinema," Mahapatra resisted commercialism for 43 years, fostering authentic storytelling. He passed away January 13, 2020, at 69; his films remain staples in Odia cultural discourse.

Prasanta Kumar Pattanaik

He advanced economic philosophy on individual well-being and social choice theory. Awarded Padma Shri in 2020 for Literature & Education, his Odisha-rooted scholarship influenced global development economics alongside Amartya Sen.



Early Life

Born April 5, 1943, Pattanaik graduated from Utkal University, Odisha, before earning a PhD from Delhi School of Economics. Hailing from modest beginnings, he pursued academia abroad, becoming Professor Emeritus of Economics at the University of California, Riverside.

Academic Contributions

Pattanaik pioneered research in welfare economics, fuzzy preferences, and rights-based individual freedoms, authoring over 100 papers and books like *Equity, Welfare and Justice: Response to Amartya Sen*. Fellow of the Econometric Society, he co-edited *Social Choice and Welfare* journal with Sen and Kenneth Arrow, shaping metrics for poverty, inequality, and human development.

Recognition

Padma Shri 2020 acknowledged his foundational work bridging Odisha's educational ethos with international acclaim, including advisory roles at Oxford Poverty Initiative. Odisha honored its native son's rigorous intellect elevating collective choice theory.

Radhamohan and Sabarmatee

They are a father-daughter duo from Odisha recognized for their pioneering social work in sustainable agriculture and environmental conservation. In 2020, they jointly received the Padma Shri award, India's fourth-highest civilian honor.

Key Contributions

They co-founded Sambhav in 1989, an NGO focused on organic farming, biodiversity preservation, and rural development in Nayagarh district, Odisha. Starting with one acre of degraded land in 1988, they transformed it into a 90-acre food forest with over 1,000 plant

species, 500+ rice varieties, and rainwater harvesting systems using soil conservation methods.



2020 Recognition

The Padma Shri duo award in 2020 highlighted their 30+ years of promoting organic farming, seed conservation (including 800 traditional varieties), and community empowerment on environment and gender issues. Official citations praise Radhamohan's role as founder of Sambhav and his work in agriculture, environment, and gender equity.

Legacy

Prof. Radhamohan, an ecological economist and retired professor, passed away in 2021 at age 78. Sabarmatee continues leading Sambhav, earning prior honors like the 2018 Nari Shakti Puraskar for her efforts. Their model serves as a resource center for farmers nationwide on sustainable practices.

Utsav Charan Das

He is from Chaudwar in Odisha's Cuttack district, received the Padma Shri in 2020 for his lifelong dedication to preserving Chaiti Ghoda Nacha, a traditional folk horse dance art form.

Art Form Preserved



Chaiti Ghoda Nacha involves dancers performing inside lightweight bamboo-and-cloth horse structures, accompanied by rhythmic beats and songs addressing social themes. Utsav Charan Das began performing in the 1960s with his father and spent over six decades researching, refining, and staging it across Odisha and beyond to prevent its decline.

2020 Recognition

Announced on Republic Day 2020 eve, his Padma Shri award—India's fourth-highest civilian honor—celebrated efforts in art from Odisha, among 12 state recipients that year. He received it formally in November 2021 at Rashtrapati Bhavan from President Ram Nath Kovind.

Lasting Impact

At 75 during the award, Das elevated the folk art into a medium for social awareness, earning national pride for Odisha; Prime Minister Narendra Modi later honored him publicly. His work continues inspiring folk traditions preservation.

Mitrabhanu Gountia,

a renowned Sambalpuri lyricist and composer from Odisha, received the Padma Shri award in 2020 in the Art category.

Background

Born in 1942, Gountia is best known for writing the lyrics of the iconic Sambalpuri folk song *Rangabati*, which earned widespread fame and led to two Padma Shri awards for its creators—singer Jitendra Haripal in 2017 and Gountia in 2020. A retired teacher, he began writing at age 15 and focused on themes like nature conservation, deforestation, pollution, education, and Sambalpuri culture through songs and plays such as *Malli*, *Lalita*, and *Gaon Amar Maa*.

Key Achievements



- Padma Shri (2020) for contributions to art, presented by President Ram Nath Kovind.
- Odisha State Sangeet Natak Akademi Award and Akashvani National Award for music.
- Odisha State Teachers Award (2003) for education contributions.
- Honored by Sambalpur University for his literary works.

His recognition highlights the cultural impact of Sambalpuri art in Odisha.

Dr. Krishna Mohan Pathi,

an orthopedic surgeon from Odisha, received the Padma Shri award in 2021 for his contributions to medicine, not art. At 82 years old, he was recognized for decades of free treatment to the poor and tribal communities through his Bharadwaj Gurukul Ashram, including pioneering work on sickle cell disease and bone marrow tests.

Background

Born in 1939 in Sukunda village near Berhampur, Pathi trained in India and the UK, later serving at institutions like MKCG Medical College. Post-retirement, he focused on underprivileged patients in Odisha's tribal areas, earning mentions like the Limca Book of Records in 1990.



Award Context

The 2021 Padma Shri was presented by President Kovind for medicine, highlighting his trauma management and social service. No records link him to art; that may confuse him with artists like Mohan Prajapati (miniature paintings).

Nanda Prusty,

also known as Nanda Kishore Prusty or Nanda Mastre, was a centenarian teacher from Kantira village in Odisha's Jajpur district. He received the Padma Shri in 2021, but for his lifelong dedication to education, not art.

Background

Born in 1919, Prusty had only a Class VII education due to family financial constraints. He ran a free "Chatsali" (informal school) from a makeshift hut for 70 years, teaching children in mornings/evenings and illiterate seniors at night, spanning three generations in his village.



Award Context

The 2021 Padma Shri recognized his social service via education to eradicate illiteracy. He passed away from COVID-19 on December 7, 2021, at age 102. Art awardees from Odisha that year included Purnamasi Jani, not Prusty.

Purnamasi Jani,

a tribal poetess from Odisha's Kandhamal district, received the Padma Shri in 2021 primarily for her contributions to art through devotional songs and poetry in the Kui language, rather than strictly literature and education. Known as Tadisaru Bai, she has composed over 50,000 unique bhajans in Kui, Odia, and Sanskrit without formal schooling, blending spiritual activism with social advocacy for tribal communities.

Background

Born in 1944 in Talapada village (Kandhamal), Jani faced early hardships including her mother's death and loss of children, leading her to spiritual pursuits after meditating in Tadisaru hills. She gained local fame for never repeating compositions, addressing social issues through her singing over 50+ years.



Award Details

President Kovind presented the 2021 Padma Shri for "Art," recognizing her as a spiritual leader and Kui poetess alongside other Odisha recipients. Prior honors include Odisha Sahitya Akademi (2006) and other literary awards, though the Padma focused on her artistic oeuvre.

Rajat Kumar Kar

was an eminent Odia litterateur and cultural expert from Odisha who received the Padma Shri in 2021 for Literature and Education, not Medicine. Known for his extensive work on Upendra Bhanja literature (seven non-fiction books), Lord Jagannath, and reviving the Pala art form, he also served as the world's longest-serving Rath Yatra commentator since 1958 on radio and TV.

Background

Born around 1934, Kar was a prolific writer, playwright, and preacher who chronicled Odisha's cultural heritage, including Rath Yatra traditions. He earned honors like Shri Jagannath Samman (2018) before the Padma Shri and passed away on May 8, 2022, at age 88 due to heart ailments.



Award Context

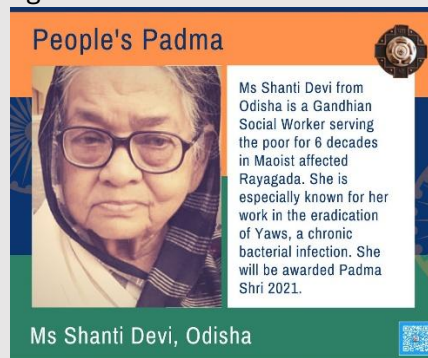
Official lists confirm his 2021 Padma Shri under Literature & Education, alongside Odisha peers like Nanda Prusty (same field) and Dr. Krishna Mohan Pathi (Medicine). President Kovind presented it, recognizing his cultural preservation efforts; Odisha's medicine awardee that year was Pathi.

Shanti Devi,

a Gandhian social worker from Odisha's Rayagada district, received the Padma Shri in 2021 for her decades-long social work, aligning precisely with the queried field. Born in 1934 in Balasore, she founded an ashram in Gobarapalli (also called Gunupur area) after marriage, dedicating nearly 60 years to tribal girls' education, orphan care, Yaws eradication, and peace-building in Maoist-affected regions.

Background

Starting social service post-1951 influenced by her husband (a Gandhi follower), Devi managed creches, vocational training, and child institutions with 50 workers and 500 volunteers. She promoted tribal upliftment, orphan marriages, and health initiatives in southern Odisha's underprivileged areas.



Award Details

President Kovind presented the award on November 9, 2021, at Rashtrapati Bhavan; prior honors included the 1994 Jamnalal Bajaj Award and Radhanath Rath Peace Award. She passed away on January 16, 2022, at age 87, earning tributes from PM Modi and Odisha CM for her selfless service.

Srimad Baba Balia,

a spiritual and social leader from Jagatsinghpur, Odisha, received the Padma Shri in 2022 for social work. He founded Sishu Ananta Ashram and Ananta Balia Trust, focusing on women empowerment, environmental protection, blood donation drives, and uplifting poor tribal communities.

Background

Based in Odisha, Baba Balia has worked for decades against social evils, promoting gender equality, organ donation, and cultural preservation while aiding backward communities. His efforts emphasize philanthropy and grassroots service in rural areas.



Award Details

President Kovind presented the award in March 2022 at Rashtrapati Bhavan, alongside other Odisha recipients like Pramod Bhagat (sports). He was one of six from Odisha honored that year, recognizing his lifelong dedication to humanitarian causes.

Pramod Bhagat,

a para-badminton player from Odisha, received the Padma Shri in 2022 for sports. Hailing from Attabira in Bargarh district, he became the first Indian to win gold in men's singles SL3 at the Tokyo 2020 Paralympics, holding the world No. 1 ranking and multiple world championships.

Background

Affected by polio at age 4, Bhagat started badminton in 2006 and rose to prominence with golds at Asian Para Games, World Championships, and 46 international medals overall. He previously earned Arjuna (2019) and Khel Ratna (2021) awards.



Award Details

President Kovind presented the Padma Shri on March 28, 2022, at Rashtrapati Bhavan, recognizing his Paralympic heroics; he was among five Odia recipients that year, including Pratibha Ray (Padma Bhushan).

Aditya Prasad Dash

is a distinguished Odia biologist and public health expert awarded the Padma Shri in Medicine for pioneering research on malaria and vector-borne diseases affecting tribal communities.

Career Highlights

Born March 23, 1951, in Odisha, he earned MSc, PhD, and DSc from Utkal University, Bhubaneswar, advancing through ICMR institutes as Director of National Institute of Malaria Research (Delhi), Institute of Life Sciences (Bhubaneswar), and others, identifying *Anopheles annularis* as a key rural malaria vector and telomerase activity in *Plasmodium falciparum* gametocytes.



Key Contributions

Former WHO SEARO Regional Adviser and Vice-Chancellor of Central University of Tamil Nadu and Asian Institute of Public Health (Bhubaneswar), he developed genomic markers for *P. vivax* drug resistance, validated Mass Drug Administration (MDA) efficacy, and led field trials translating lab findings into tribal health interventions.

Recognition

With 320 authored and 699 co-authored publications, his work established Odisha's biomedical research leadership, paralleling the state's cultural preservation by artists like Utsav Charan Das while advancing modern public health akin to Prasanta Pattanaik's economic scholarship.

Binod Maharana

is a master Pattachitra artist from Khordha, Odisha, awarded the Padma Shri in 2024 for Art, recognized for his 50+ years preserving and innovating this traditional cloth/talapatra painting depicting mythological tales.

Art Form: Pattachitra

Rooted in temple traditions from Raghurajpur, Pattachitra uses natural colors (chalk, charcoal, flower extracts) on cloth or palm leaves, featuring vivid depictions of Krishna Lila, Ramayana, and daily life with intricate borders and gold outlining; Maharana blends ancient temple murals with modern social themes.

Career Highlights

Born February 3, 1945, in Puri's Chitrakara Sahi to a painter family, he trained under grandfather Markanda Charan Maharana and Guruji Asit Mukherjee from age 10, dropping school to support family; his research on ancient temples led to unique styles earning National Award (1974) and exhibitions nationwide



Legacy

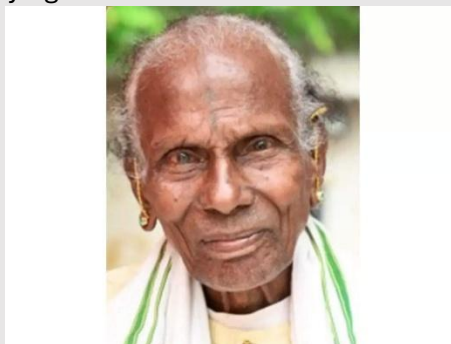
Training next generations in palm leaf etching alongside Padma Shri peers like Utsav Charan Das (Ghoda Nacha), Maharana embodies Odisha's folk revival akin to Kelucharan Mohapatra's Odissi codification.

Gopinath Swain

(born 1918), a 105-year-old centenarian from Gobindapur village, Ganjam district, received the Padma Shri in 2024 for Art, honoring his 90+ years preserving Krishna Leela—Odisha's sacred folk singing-dance tradition depicting Lord Krishna's life.

Krishna Leela Tradition

Performed during festivals, Swain mastered five rare ancient ragas (Dakhinasri, Chinta Desakhya, Todi Bhatiari, Bhatiari, Kumbha Kamodi) from 500-600-year-old melodies, singing continuously for 12 hours with rhythmic footwork and costumes, bridging mythology from Krishna's birth to Kansa's slaying.



Preservation Efforts

Starting at age 10 under Guru Choudhury Behera, he established *akhadas* (village schools) training hundreds of disciples amid declining patronage, ensuring classical purity against modernization; performed at Barabati Festival and national platforms.

Recognition

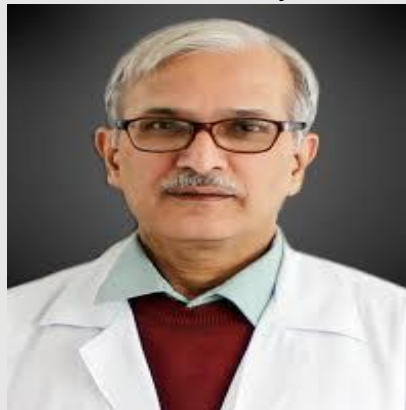
Sangeet Natak Akademi Award (2023) preceded Padma Shri; even at 107, his energy symbolized devotion, passing away October 2025, akin to Utsav Charan Das's folk revival.

Ashok Kumar Mahapatra,

born December 29, 1952, in Puri, Odisha, is an eminent neurosurgeon awarded the Padma Shri in 2025 for Medicine, recognized for pioneering complex brain surgeries and healthcare leadership.

Medical Career

Completing MBBS (1975), MS, and MCh Neurosurgery from AIIMS Delhi, he headed AIIMS Delhi's Neurosurgery Department, led India's first successful craniopagus twin separation (Jaga-Kalia, 16-hour surgery), and served as founding Director of AIIMS Bhubaneswar, Sanjay Gandhi PGIMS Lucknow Director, and SOA University Vice-Chancellor.



Research Impact

Authoring 870+ publications (26,800 citations, H-index 64), he ranks among the world's top 2% scientists (2019-2023) and top 1% pediatric neurosurgeons; guided 12 PhDs, established telemedicine/surgical centers, and led neurotrauma/skull base societies in India.

Legacy

Currently SOA's Principal Health Sciences Advisor, his work mirrors Aditya Prasad Dash's public health advancements while advancing Odisha's medical infrastructure post-Biju Patnaik's industrialization

Durga Charan Ranbir

is a renowned Odissi dancer and guru awarded the Padma Shri in 2025 for Art (Odissi), celebrated for preserving classical purity while innovating training techniques.

Odissi Expertise

Disciple of legendary Guru Deba Prasad Das, he specializes in temple-inspired choreography drawing from Puri's Jagannath, Bhubaneswar's Shiva, and Konark Sun Temple sculptures, executing precise tribhanga poses, hand mudras, and rhythmic footwork (nritya) across pure dance segments.

Key Performances

Featured in prestigious events like the 54th All India Bhaskar Rao Nritya Sammelan (March 2025, Chandigarh) with his troupe, accompanied by mardala, flute, violin, and sitar; compositions revive ancient sthayi (core movements) and explore Krishna themes from Vrindavan lore.



Training Legacy

Created novel pedagogy blending *khandi gadi* and *orsa* elements, training disciples nationwide; his work upholds Kelucharan Mohapatra's foundational codification while adapting for contemporary stages, ensuring Odissi's global transmission.

Pratibha Satpathy

(born November 27, 1945, Cuttack district) is an eminent Odia poet, critic, translator, and educator awarded the Padma Shri in 2025 for Literature & Education, recognized for her profound feminist poetry and editorial contributions.

Literary Career

Her debut *Aama Kavita* (1962) launched a prolific oeuvre exploring women's experiences, societal themes, and emotional depth; edited landmark magazines *Istahar* and *Udhas*, elevating Odia literary standards alongside editing values that influenced generations post-Kalindi Charan Panigrahi.



Academic Contributions

Ph.D. from Utkal University, she taught undergraduate/postgraduate Odia literature across Odisha's government colleges, blending academic research/administration with creative output; recipient of Sahitya Akademi Award and Kabeer Samman (2014), her works translate into Hindi/English.

Legacy

Retired from Odisha Education Service as Staff Selection Board member, her feminist perspectives and poetic innovation continue Fakir Mohan Senapati's prose legacy while nurturing education akin to Gopabandhu Das's holistic vision.

Adwaita Charan Gadanayak

(also spelled Advait Charan Gadanayak), from Dhenkanal district, Odisha, received the Padma Shri in 2025 for Art (Sculpture), honoring 45 years of black granite stone carving that blends ancient temple traditions with monumental public memorials.

Sculpture Style

Specializing in contemporary stone sculpture rooted in Odisha's Konark-era mastery, he carves human figures with dynamic tension and emotional depth using chisels on hard black granite, drawing from temple friezes while adapting for modern scales.



Iconic Works

- Mahatma Gandhi Salt March at Rajghat, Delhi—captures forward momentum symbolizing nonviolent resistance.
- Central Monument, National Police Memorial, Delhi—embodies valor and sacrifice.
- Subhas Chandra Bose Statue, National War Memorial—portrays revolutionary fervor.
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Legacy

Former Head of Sculpture at KIIT University, Bhubaneswar, and current Director-General of National Gallery of Modern Art (NGMA), his first-for-Odisha contemporary artist Padma Shri follows Raghunath Mohapatra's temple revival, training disciples to sustain stonecraft heritage.

Charan Hembram

is a Santhal tribal scholar and educator from Odisha awarded the Padma Shri in 2026 for Literature & Education, recognized for preserving Santali language, folklore, and Ol Chiki script through decades of teaching and cultural documentation.

Literary Contributions

Authoring over 20 books in Santali including *Santali Ram Katha*, *Ol Chiki Lipi*, and dictionaries, he adapted Ramayana and Mahabharata into tribal oral traditions, bridging indigenous narratives with mainstream literature while compiling endangered folk songs, proverbs, and myths.



Educational Impact

Retired headmaster who established Santali-medium schools in Mayurbhanj and Keonjhar districts, trained thousands in Ol Chiki script (invented 1925 by Raghunath Murmu), and advocated mother-tongue education; founded cultural organizations promoting tribal identity amid modernization.

Legacy

Continuing Odisha's tradition of grassroots preservation—from Fakir Mohan Senapati's prose to Utsav Charan Das's folk dance—Hembram's work ensures Santhal heritage survives alongside Odia mainstream, earning national acclaim at age 82 from Paudi Bhuyan-dominated villages.

Mahendra Kumar Mishra,

from Sinapali, Nuapada district in western Odisha, received the Padma Shri in 2026 for Literature & Education as an "unsung hero" for his 40-year dedication to documenting and preserving tribal folklore, languages, and oral traditions.

Key Contributions

A linguist, folklorist, and educationist, he authored 30+ books in tribal languages, produced documentaries on indigenous cultures, and translated national/international works into Odia and tribal tongues; pioneered mother-tongue-based multilingual education (MLE) policies influencing national frameworks.



Impact on Tribals

National Advisor at Language and Learning Foundation (New Delhi), Mishra amplified unheard tribal voices through research on oral traditions, earning UNESCO's International Mother Language Award (2023)—first for an Indian—for promoting linguistic diversity amid modernization pressures.

Legacy

His work complements Charan Hembram's Santali preservation and Pratibha Satpathy's literary feminism, ensuring Odisha's tribal heritage endures alongside mainstream Odia culture forged by Fakir Mohan Senapati.

Sarat Kumar Patra

is a master Bandhakala (tie-and-dye/Ikat) artisan from Tigiria, Cuttack district, awarded the Padma Shri in 2026 for Art, celebrated for his 60-year mastery preserving Nuapatna's 12th-century handloom heritage.

Bandhakala Art Form

Rooted in Maniabandh Nuapatna cluster, this intricate resist-dyeing technique uses natural dyes (50+ shades revived by Patra) on cotton, silk, and bapta fabric, creating calligraphic patterns and mythological narratives through complex tying/warping before weaving sarees, scarves, and dhotis.



Masterpiece Achievements

- 52-meter Geeta Govinda saree: Seven-year labor inscribing Jayadeva's sacred verses and Lord Jagannath scenes, offered to Puri temple.
- Dashavatara wall-hanging: Monumental Ikat depicting Vishnu's ten incarnations, blending textile with classical literature.

Legacy

Training weavers while innovating sacred motifs for modern markets, Patra's work sustains Odisha's handloom tradition alongside Binod Maharana's Pattachitra and Gopinath Swain's Krishna Leela, ensuring Jagannath-centric crafts endure.

Simanchal Patro

(born 1927), a 99-year-old veteran Sakhi Nata folk theatre artist from Bamakei/Digapahandi, Ganjam district, received the Padma Shri in 2026 for Art as an "unsung hero" for preserving Prahallada Natak.

Prahallada Natak Tradition

This dramatic Ganjam folk theatre narrates Vishnu's Narasimha avatar through Prahlad's devotion, featuring 200+ songs across 35 Odissi ragas, vigorous dancing, operatic singing, acrobatics, and melodramatic dialogue blending Odia folk, classical, and tribal elements.



Preservation Efforts

Training from age 12 under father Sura Patro, he sold personal property to sustain performances amid declining patronage, achieving national recognition for this centuries-old form surviving largely through his efforts.

Legacy



At nearly 100, Patro joins Odisha's 2026 Padma cohort (Charan Hembram, Mahendra Mishra, Sarat Patra), embodying grassroots cultural devotion akin to Gopinath Swain's Krishna Leela and Utsav Charan Das's Ghoda Nacha revival.

