

# Orissa: The Struggle Against POSCO Continues

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The seven-day long *padayatra* against corporate invasion of coastal Orissa has gained momentum on it way with more and more local villagers joining the protest march to mark their solidarity with the movement.

On 2 December, the fourth day of the *padayatra*, which started from Dinkia on 29 November, the original procession of 600 protestors had swelled to over 750 with people joining all along the way. In Machchagan alone over a hundred new villagers joined, including over 40 women.

“Though many of these villagers are not directly affected by any of the mega-projects in coastal Orissa they can understand what it means when possession of land or one’s livelihood is affected,” said Abhay Sahoo, leader of the POSCO Pratirodh Sangram Samithy.

As they wind their way over rough village roads, through rice fields and along water canals the *padayatris* are receiving enthusiastic response everywhere. Local people presented flowers to the protest marchers in many places.

Though a bulk of the *padayatris* are from the anti-POSCO movement representative of over 14 movements in Orissa are also participating. The distance from Dinkia to Puri, the destination of the *padayatra*, is nearly 140 kms and every day the marchers are covering an average of 20 kms. Though this is tough going for many of the older people they are persevering nevertheless as the issues on hand are a matter of life and death for them. On the fourth day, the *padayatris* had to walk for another 3 km to stay for night since the Jagatsinghpur District collector canceled the booking of Gorai School.

While food for the *padayatris* is being arranged mainly by local villagers along the route, a major problem facing the *padayatra* right now is the lack of adequate resources to pay for accompanying vehicles, generators, sound systems E for campaigning, tents for sleeping where needed and other related expenses. PPSS leader Abhay Sahoo has appealed to all those in solidarity with the struggle of the local people to urgently send financial support.

Those wishing to contribute to the *padayatra* can contact Prashant Paikray, spokesperson, PPSS at Ph: (0) 9437571547.

For further information see  
<http://orissaconcerns.org>

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\* From:  
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