

## 7. Panchanan Choudhury, Executive Director, (HRD), Vishakhapatnam Steel Plant

### BIO-NOTE

A short biographical note on Panchanan Choudhury, Executive Director, (HRD), Vishakhapatnam Rasgriya Ispat Nigam, interviewed at Vizag steel plant on September 10, 2004

Born in Calcutta, the ancestral village of Panchanan Choudhury was in Faridkot, now in Bangladesh. His forefathers were brought from Kannauj in Uttar Pradesh and settled here with the surname Mishra which was changed into Chakravorty. When they bought Zamindari in Faridkot, they adopted the surname of Choudhury.

Pawhich threatened nchanan Choudhury had his schooling and university education in Calcutta after which he attended institutions in Bombay and London for personnel training and joined Steel Plant in Durgapur as the first generation service person in his family.

In 1965, Panchanan joined as officer and came under the influence of INTUC leacer and MP Anand Gopal Mukherjee who brought him in the trade union movement. 6ther unions active in Durgapur tried to take him in but the INTUC influence was deep on him. Panchanan joined trade union as he thought his canvas would be wider if he really wanted to serve his country and his plant. He refused promotion for six years in order to be active in the trade union.

From the beginning, Panchanan had felt that unless the unions have collaborative approach, plant and its worker would reach nowhere. At his initiative joint consultative committee was formed with all the other unions to get better results. Though he had gone on strike too in Durgapur on the demand of incentive for the workers, he thinks now on the hindsight that problems could be resolved even without taking up the extreme course.

These were turbulent times in Bengal as the Naxalitees were coming up in various districts in a big way and Panchanan being in INTUC had also faced threats. It was at this moment that his mother intervned and stopped him from working in the trade union movement. Panchanan was attached to his cause and found other ways to serve the plant and the workers.

In 1993, there was a massive strike in Vizag steel plant that even threatened its closure. The then Chairman of the plant knew about Panchanan and invited him to salvage the situation. Panchanan joined in 1994 and formed a consultative committee with all the three unions for negotiations with the management. Panchanan believed that no management could get the

workers produce if it only passes orders and does not consider the problems. The initiative paid the dividends.

The AITUC came to the forefront and asked the workers to join their duties. They followed the policy of unity and struggle. The production reached unexpected heights and the sick unit became the first in the country and fourteen in the world in profit making. The workers were taken care of and were paid Five to six thousand as incentive. They were given many other facilities and the "Colaborative approach" propogated by Panchanan paid.

Since then he has never looked back. The canvas he had created to widen the scope for his work still works .

#### TRANSCRIPTIVE NOTE

A short transcriptive note on Panchanan Choudhury, Executive Director, (HRD), Vishakhapatnam Rasgtriya Ispat Nigam, interviewed at Vizag steel plant on September 10, 2004

Born in Calcutta, our ancestral village was in Faridkot, now in Bangladesh. My forefathers were brought from Kannauj in Uttar Pradesh and settled here with the surname Mishra which was changed into Chakravorty. When they bought Zamindari in Faridkot, they adopted the surname of Choudhury.

I had my schooling and university education in Calcutta after which I attended institutions in Bombay and London for personnel training and joined Steel Plant in Durgapur as the first generation service person in my family.

In 1965, I joined as officer and came under the influence of INTUC leacer and MP Anand Gopal Mukherjee who brought me in the trade union movement. Other unions active in Durgapur tried to take me in but the INTUC influence was deep on me. I joined trade union as I thought my canvas would be wider if I really wanted to serve my country and my plant. I refused promotion for six years in order to be active in the trade union.

From the beginning, I had felt that unless the unions have collaborative approach, plant and its worker would reach nowhere. At my initiative joint consultative committee was formed with all the other unions to get better results. Though I had gone on strike too in Durgapur on the demand of incentive for the workers, I think now on the hindsight that problems could be resolved even without taking up the extreme course.

These were turbulent times in Bengal as the Naxalitees were coming up in various districts in a big way and I being in INTUC had also faced threats. It was at this moment that my mother intervned and stopped me from working in the trade union movement. I was attached to my cause and found other ways to serve the plant and the workers.

In 1993, there was a massive strike in Vizag steel plant that even threatened its closure. The then Chairman of the plant knew about me and invited me to salvage the situation. I joined in 1994 and

formed a consultative committee with all the three unions for negotiations with the management. I believed that no management could get the workers produce if it only passes orders and does not consider the problems. The initiative paid the dividends.

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Since then I have never looked back. The canvas I had created to widen the scope for my work still works.