



*Kamal Chakraborty and Jayatidi receiving the Patton Award for 'A School that Cares' from Sanjay Budhia for the Bhalo Pahar School, Banduan, Purulia*

Bengal by environmentalists). The group used all their savings in an ambitious venture to create a pollution-free, eco-friendly village. Under the leadership of Kamalbabu they formed a society called Bhalo Pahar in the locality on 1 September 1996.

In 2001, Kamalbabu left his job as an engineer at TELCO to live permanently at Bhalo Pahar.

More than 2 lakhs locally grown trees were planted by Kamalbabu and his friends. These include teak, neem, babool, sal, sonajhuri etc. Many plant species, which had become almost extinct from the area were to be seen once again. Today, in this man-made forest, wild cranes lay their eggs and rear their off springs without any disturbance. Birds and insects have found their natural habitat

once again.

Over the past years, 52 like-minded people have joined hands. One of them is Jayatidi who left her job six years ago at TISCO and joined Bhalo Pahar. She now resides there with her widowed mother. She is the main force behind the Bhalo Pahar School. Now the school has about 150 santhal children from Nursery to Class III. They have their own uniform and stationery. They get mid-day meal, books and undergo medical check ups regularly. Special care is taken to teach them English, General Knowledge, drawing and singing. Many of the children come from far away places, from about 14 -16 km away. The classes begin at 6:30 in the morning and runs till afternoon. Students celebrate various cultural occasions and sporting events