

Indian Man Single-Handedly Builds 8-Km Mountain Road So His Kids Could Visit More Often



A devoted father in the eastern Indian state of Orissa has single-handedly constructed an 8-km (5 miles) stretch of mountain road so that his children, who live away from home for school, can visit him more frequently. For the past two years Jalandhar Nayak, 45, set out every morning with an ax and crowbar and spent up to eight hours a day cutting rocks and moving boulders.

Nayak, who has never received formal education himself, lives in an isolated village, 10 km (6 miles) from the residential school where his three sons study. It would be a small distance with proper roads, but the commute takes the sons three hours as their route includes a trek across five hills to reach their home. "My children find it difficult to walk on the narrow and stony path while going to their school," the man recently told Kalinga TV. "I often saw them stumbling against the stones, and I decided to carve a road through the mountain so that they can walk freely."

Local authorities only took notice of Nayak's work earlier this month, when he was featured in a local news bulletin, as he had never sought their help. The officials told the BBC that they would finish the remaining 7km of road that will connect the village to the town where his sons go to school. They added that Nayak would be paid for his work as it was of such high quality that cars can drive on the road.

"I was impressed to find that he took great care to ensure that not a single tree was cut while building the road," Sibashakti Biswal, a local reporter who first interviewed Mr. Nayak, said to the BBC.

Nayak is "extremely happy" that the government would complete the road and told the BBC that he had also requested that they provide his village with electricity and drinking water. He added that he hopes his sons will be able to visit home on holidays and weekends once the government has finished constructing the road.

National media outlets are comparing Nayak to Dashrath Manjhi, the "mountain man" of Bihar who spent 22 years single-handedly chiseling a considerable gap in a mountain to construct a road to the nearest town. He embarked on the endeavor after his beloved wife Falguni died in 1959 when she was unable to receive urgent medical care after an accident. <https://www.odditycentral.com>