



## The Orissa Society of the Americas

October 5, 2007

OSA Office  
Bearers

Dear Esteemed Chief Minister of Orissa:

Pratap Das Greetings!

*President*

Ashutosh Dutta

*Vice President*

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On behalf of the Orissa Society of the Americas (OSA), the main organization of Odias in North America, we would like to bring to your notice the following urgent issues related to Orissa's growth and progress and the 11th Plan. These issues need earliest attention as the 11th Plan is getting finalized within a couple of months. If we miss the chance now, we will face a much harder struggle to get this accomplished.

1. Sir: The PM of India announced on August 15th 2007 that the Indian Government plans to establish 8 new IITs in India. Although your government has earlier (prior to the PM's announcement on Aug 15 2007) sent letters to the PM and discussed with the Human Resource Development Minister about an IIT in Orissa, in light of the new announcement of the PM, we suggest that your government take some additional steps, such as submitting a vision for an IIT in Orissa, including how an IIT will help Orissa and how Orissa will help an IIT located in the state. Such a step will make Orissa's claim stronger and is perhaps necessary as other states like Kerala, Tamil Nadu, and Karnataka have taken similar, competitive initiatives recently.

2. Sir: The PM in his August 15th speech also mentioned that there will be 30 new central universities, with 16 of them in states that do not have any. That means Orissa will get one and since Orissa has been asking for a central university in KBK (Kalahandi-Bolangir-Koraput) region, it should go to KBK. However, since KBK is a vast area, and is the most backward district cluster of India, we request that you make certain specific requests regarding this university. In particular:

(a) The central university in KBK should be a multi-campus one with campuses in all the **District Head Quarter** towns in KBK+ districts, i.e., the eight KBK districts and the adjacent Gajapati and Kandhamal districts.

(b) This university, to be established in the most backward district clusters of India, should be treated at par with the central universities in the north east in all respects (such as: it must have special quotas for tribals and KBK+ residents; it must have the components that will be in the central universities in the north east.)

3. As per the PM's address to the planning commission on September 14th, the remaining

30-16= 14 central universities will be decided on the basis of competition. Since India already has 23 central universities (none of these is in Orissa) and the new 30 ones will take the total to 53, and Orissa is the 11th largest state of India in terms of population and 9th largest in terms of area, and among the most backward states of India, Orissa should request for not one but two central universities. (Please note that Bihar, which has already been granted a new IIT, is asking for a greenfield central university and upgradation of the Patna University to a central University. See [http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/Cities/Patna/PU\\_be\\_made\\_central\\_varsiy\\_Teachers/articleshw/2392105.cms](http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/Cities/Patna/PU_be_made_central_varsiy_Teachers/articleshw/2392105.cms) )

We propose that the second central university in Orissa be an upgradation of Ravenshaw University. Some of the arguments in favor of Ravenshaw University, if a greenfield central university is infeasible, are as follows:

- a. Ravenshaw is a unitary university; like most world class universities such as those in the United States, and like most of the existing central universities in India (such as JNU, BHU etc.), Ravenshaw does not have any affiliated colleges.
- b. Ravenshaw is one of the oldest higher education institutions of India with a glorious past. Its alumni are almost the who's who of Orissa.
- c. Ravenshaw's location at the heart the millennium city of Cuttack and also in the middle of the Bhubaneswar-Cuttack metropolitan area makes it easy to access and the presence of top-notch educational and research institutions near it makes Ravenshaw a good candidate for becoming a world-class knowledge hub; i.e., a world class central university. (The PM in his address to the planning commission mentioned this criteria explicitly.)
- d. Ravenshaw has made plans for its expansion in directions that are consistent with the goal of a world class university that the PM talked about.

4. Sir: Most importantly to uplift KBK and the other backward parts of Orissa out of morass they are in, we request that you take up the issue of rail connectivity to these areas, urgently. We understand that you are already making cases for connectivity related to ports and mineral transportation such Talcher-Sukinda Rd and Bhadrakh-Dhamara. We are also mindful that better access to KBK area may potentially be used for undue exploitation of the KBK region, but we will all remain vigilant.

Thus, we request that you make a case for completing the important rail projects in KBK and the other norther tribal areas of Orissa during the 11th Plan. These rail projects include the lines

- (a) Khurda - Balangir  
(b) Gunupur-Theruvai  
(c) Lanjigarh Rd – Bhawanipatna – Junagarh – Nabarangpur- Jeypore – Malkangiri – Bhadrachalam Rd (Andhra Pradesh)  
(d) Talcher – Bimlagarh  
... etc.

In regards to all of these, we are willing to extend our help. For example, we have created documents and drafts that argue these cases. These documents are located at:

[I] On KBK Rail Connectivity: <http://www.orissalinks.com/orissagrowth/?p=489>

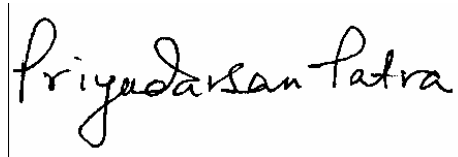
[II] The case for IIT in Orissa: <http://www.orissalinks.com/?p=128>

[III] On KBK Central University: <http://kbkcentral.googlepages.com/>

In addition, there are several Orissa origin professors and scientists in the North America who we are mobilizing to help in the higher education related efforts. A partial list of these academics and scientists is at <http://www.orissalinks.com/?p=504>

We appreciate your time.

Sincerely,



For:  
Pratap Das  
Asutosh Dutta  
Priyadarsan Patra  
Sandip K. Dasverma