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Message from the President

Dear Members:

On behalf of your OSA Executives and Board of Governors, I would like to convey my best wishes to you and your family for 2008. While we all are busy with our daily routine-responsibilities, we still continue to put our combined efforts to make our Orissa Society of Americas (OSA) a better and stronger organization.

OSA Executives have been discussing the OSA matters with BOG on a continuous basis to get a general consensus best for OSA. I have met the General Counsel twice to discuss the legal matters and a CPA in New Jersey about the EIN conflicts and a possible course of action to bring clarity and fiscal responsibility. I have made two trips to meet OSA NY/NJ Chapter OSA Executives to discuss the problems and status of their fiscal responsibility of accurate reporting of OSA EIN. I am making a trip to Canada for a planning session with CanOSA for the forthcoming OSA convention.

Some of our efforts are as follows:

Financial Transparency and Consolidation:

* We have received the final ruling from IRS canceling the Employee Identification Number (EIN) 23-7136326 under the name of Orissa Society of the Americas as an Internal Revenue Code 501(C) (7) on January 9, 2008. The Orissa Society of Americas with the EIN 62-1105102 with an Internal Revenue Code 503 (C) (3) will be in full effect. As a result, OSA will be identified with the EIN 62-1105102 only for its financial reporting. All OSA local chapters including the national organization must use and report their financial transactions against EIN 62-1105102.

* OSA is in the process of hiring a Certified Public Accountant with extensive knowledge of handling non-profit social organizations like OSA to review our financial structure, consolidation of accounts, and reporting of both state and federal tax returns in a timely fashion. The CPA will also audit OSA accounts annually and report to the treasurer for the publication of an annual financial statement.

* The proposed CPA is to advise OSA on the fundamentals of the members' charitable donations towards tax deduction and OSA's responsibilities of accepting these donations and reporting to IRS. The CPA will educate our members emphasizing what is deductible and what is not.

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Dear Friends,

Welcome to this issue of the OSA newsletter. You will find in this issue important messages from the executives, OSA finance report, and various other news items from chapters and the BOG.

As an NRI community, we have grown stronger in the past year by showing more involvement in the society affairs and facing the challenges with grit and vigor. The current executives have shown their commitment to bringing necessary structural changes that will make our society transparent and vibrant. It is undeniable that a society can't prosper without active participation from its members and volunteers. Many have contributed to the best of their abilities, and more constructive support is definitely needed.

We thank all, who contributed to this issue. Please send your news items and literary articles for the next issue of Utkarsa by July 20. Send us your comments and suggestions at osaeditor@orissasociety.org.

Thank you.

Editors

President's message continued from page-1...

* We are bringing financial transparencies and consolidation of OSA financial funds among the national organization and the local chapters. In order to get a complete financial report of OSA accounts it is pertinent to take in to account the local financial statements. Therefore, all the local chapters have been requested to provide the financial statement of past three years to the Treasurer.

* Financial Reform Committee is in a process to recommend few improvements to bring in more transparencies.

Membership Committee:

A membership committee under Gyana Ranjan Patnaik is trying to build up a team of volunteers to recruit more members, and examine the possibility of adding a couple more chapters to OSA. It's our goal is to recruit more members to make our organization stronger.

Membership Benefit Committee:

The Membership Benefit Committee under Sudip Patnaik as the Chair is in the process of exploring several benefits for our members. I will be able to provide a preliminary report within next three months.

OSA Souvenir Publication Committee:

A committee is in the process of evaluating the printing of OSA magazines in the most cost effective way, and their timely distribution to our members. A recommendation from the committee will be published in the OSANet shortly.

39th Annual OSA Convention at Toronto:

CanOSA is in full swing to host the 39th Annual OSA Convention at Toronto area. The information including the registration, hotel, cultural events, etc. is already available at www.orissasociety.org. I am meeting the Organizing Committee at Toronto to visit the convention site and discuss its plan and member participation.

Grievances Committee:

Sujit Mohanty, General Counsel for OSA has already started the process of drafting a grievance procedure including the appointment of an Ombudsman for OSA. This procedure will protect the member's rights against any concern or injustice. The draft will be presented to BOG shortly.

OSANet:

OSANet continues to improve in its operation. A grievances procedure against the moderator has been added. Delivery of the e-mails in a digest mode brought our readers a lot of relief. I thank and encourage our participants for bringing valuable and

constructive comments.

38th OSA Annual Convention at Detroit:

The Detroit Chapter has completed its accounting of the 38th Annual Convention at Detroit in 2007. A total of \$10,173.34 has been sent to the OSA Treasurer towards the OSA advance and convention revenue sharing. OSA appreciates the Detroit Chapter for its hard work in hosting one of the most successful conventions in recent OSA history. Congratulations!

Future Committees:

I am in the process of announcing few more committees to bring in new ideas for making our organization more effective. Those committees are:

1. Constitution Revision Committee
2. OSA Archive Committee
3. OSA Award Committee
4. Convention Planning & Advisory Committee
5. Orissa Divas - Regional Drama & Talent Competition
6. Oriya Summer School
7. Oriya Film Festival & Sahitya Sammelan
8. Woman Empowerment

At the end, I would like to request our members' patience and support for re-building OSA. It's not easy. It takes a whole village. It's not only the OSA Executives' responsibility. Some of the members requested for OSA to go back and dig up the past or provide them with the information, which we may not have. Our goal is to MOVE FORWARD. We have learnt enough from the past. It's not the time to point fingers at others on whether the right thing was done or not. Our mission for the next two years is to build OSA for the future and to do things together and better. Otherwise, our two years will pass by with us just wasting our energy and resources. We must bring in a system that will stop any further wrong-doing. We must bring unity. We must take pride in OSA and try to make it better. Members who think that OSA is not worth it, should not be with OSA. I appreciate constructive criticism, but I will not let my 40 years OSA be ridiculed and undermined. We will make OSA a better organization - more transparent, fair, member-friendly, program-oriented, and more futuristic than what we had inherited in 2007. It's a promise. I need your support, and am counting on you.

Pratap Das
President, OSA

OSA Secretary's Column

Dear OSA members and Orissans Worldwide:

On behalf of the Orissa Society of the Americas (OSA), it is my immense pleasure to wish you a peaceful and meaningful new year 2008!

The newly elected officials have been in office for over 3 months now and we are grateful for the tremendous goodwill and the messages of support we have received from members from far and wide. I take the opportunity to inform you about some of the events, actions and mechanisms that will surely interest you.

Please be reminded that the next OSA convention is being planned during the July 4th weekend in Toronto. Please visit <http://convention08.orissasociety.org> from time to time, or write to convention08@orissasociety.org.

It is also our pleasure to announce that our member Dr. Laxmi N. Bhuyan received the Prabasi Pratibha Sammaan at the 4th Oriya Prabasi Diwas held in Bhubaneswar on December 23, 2007, which was attended by several OSA members. We have also extended the new membership promotion until March 31, 2008.

We have now been able to constitute a few committees to address many issues of importance to the members. We have organized a Financial Reform Committee consisting of our members Kesab Dwivedy, Niranjana Tripathy, and Subhas Mohapatra. The primary objectives relate to: bring transparency and archival permanence of financial records; standardization of bookkeeping & banking procedures; level and type of responsible and cost-effective auditing; financial reporting of the local chapters; IRS and other govt. filing; record dissemination to members and public; and the OSA donation guidelines & associated fees.

We have also formed a Souvenir Committee to develop recommendations for the issues related to the annual souvenir and address book: sponsorship development, advertisement collection, author guidelines, possibility of publishing in print and CD formats, printing streamlining, specifications of productions, mailing and distribution, and equitable distribution of responsibilities between BOG and convention hosting chapter. The editors of the souvenirs for all years from 2003 through 2008 who have agreed to serve are: S. Satapathy, L. Mansinha, M. Panda, B. Samal, N. Mohanty and P. Pattnayak.

A "Member Recruitment and Chapter Revalidation & Facilitation" committee has just been organized with Gyana Patnaik as the coordinator. This will have all of the 10 BOG members (Chapter presidents) as ex-officio

members and many others from areas where no chapters exist. All those who want to help should contact Gyana Patnaik, Chicago.

There are several other committees being formulated or explored, such as (1) Constitution Committee, (2) OSA Ombudsman, (3) Member Benefits and Corporate Sponsorship, (4) Convention Planning & Advisory Committee, (5) Cultural sub-committees such as Inter-Chapter Drama Competition, Oriya Film Festival, Regional Talent Search, 20-20 or 1 Day Cricket Matches, Oriya Summer School, Oriya Sahitya Sammelan, (6) OSA Archives, (7) Orissa Watch, and (8) Women and Senior Member Recognition, etc.

Although OSA membership primarily comes from USA and Canada, OSA members also originate from other countries such as UK, Germany, Middle East, Australia, in addition to India. As of now OSA has attracted 665 current family, couple and individual memberships. Membership rolls of OSA vary a bit from year to year as both yearly and permanent members are allowed. This number is still a fraction of over 2100 families/individuals that we have been able to identify. Moreover, there is also a floating population temporarily relocated abroad. Very recently we have instituted a living project-cum-system called The Directory of Odiyas Living Abroad (DOLA). DOLA is meant to gather, archive, and judiciously share non-private information of and among people of Orissa origin or interest, irrespective of their color, creed, gender or religion. Even those who do not speak Odiya but have a love for or a special connection to Orissa, its land, or culture are within its scope. We have just catalogued approximately 2100 non-resident Odiya families world over into a safe, secure, and convenient system backed up by the resilience and automation of a database and user-interface. DOLA is restricted to those who register into the system, thus an authentication mechanism and judicious listing of information will enable you to locate and connect with other Orissa people in case of need or mutual interest. It's a living project because it will allow you to keep your information current and dynamic and the membership in DOLA ever expanding. It also has the potential of being an enabling infrastructure for numerous other important issues of present or future. How many times have you wished you knew another friend or another Orissan when you visit a new place! Please visit www.orissasociety.org for more information on this and numerous other cultural,

[Continued on page 9](#)

OSA Awards - 2007

Birendra Jena, OH

1. Distinguished Oriya Award:

Recipient: Dr. Digambar Mishra

Presentation: Plaque, Certificate of Honor

Certificate of Honor

The Distinguished Oriya Award for the year 2007 was presented to Dr. Digambar Mishra, in recognition of his outstanding accomplishment in his area of expertise and service to the OSA members.

Plaque:

The Orissa Society of the Americas honored Dr. Digambar Mishra, by presenting him with the 2007 Distinguished Oriya Award. Dr. Mishra, a Fulbright Scholar and a well established teacher and political activist, has won laurels in his area of expertise. He has made a very significant contribution by establishing a link between OSA, Orissa Government, Utkal University, and Ravenshaw College. He has been a very successful OSA president for the period 1992-1994. During his tenure, his hard work, dedication and commitment to elevate the stature of the Oriyas at home and abroad has resulted in increased number of OSA membership, well-structured OSA conventions with a high level of participation in administrative, social, educational, and cultural programs.

2. Utkalamani Gopabandhu Dash Memorial Award

Recipient: Sri Sandip Dasverma

Presentation: Plaque with a picture of Gopabandhu Dash, Certificate of Honor.

Certificate of Honor

The Utkalamani Gopabandhu Dash Memorial Award for the year 2007 was presented to Sri Sandip Dasverma in recognition of his outstanding contribution to the cause of social change in Orissa at the grass-roots level by helping in the improvement of education in Orissa.

Plaque:

The Orissa Society of the Americas honored Sri Sandip Dasverma by presenting him with the 2007 Utkalamani Gopabandhu Dash Memorial Award in recognition of his successful effort in implementing social change through science and education for all. He diligently works on two projects, namely FFE (Foundation for Excellence) in Orissa and RMTS (Rural Math Talent Search) in association with Institute of Mathematics and Applications (IMA), Bhubaneswar. In addition, he also provides scholarships for the Spelling Bee test in Orissa. Mr. Dasverma is a Gandhian in spirit and in his approach to social development and believes strongly in equity and justice for all.

3. Youth Volunteer Award

Recipient: Sri Santanu Das

Presentation: Plaque, Certificate of Honor.

Certificate of Honor

The Youth Volunteer Award for the year 2007 was presented to Sri Santanu Das for his outstanding volunteering activities for his local OSA SW chapter as well as for OSA National and greater Indian community.

Plaque:

The Orissa Society of the Americas honored Sri Santanu Das by presenting the 2007 Youth Volunteer Award in recognition of his outstanding voluntary service. Sri Das is a dedicated volunteer with superior organizational capabilities who has relentlessly worked independently for the development and maintenance of OSA website. He has been involved in producing Oriya music CDs, managing Oriya Karaoke, coordinating Odissi dance events, and organizing Oriya local functions.

4. Yuva Kala Vikash Award

Recipient: Miss Shibani Mohapatro

Presentation: Plaque, Certificate of Honor.

Certificate of Honor

The Yuva Kalavikash Award for the year 2007 was presented to Miss Shibani Mohapatro in recognition of her outstanding contribution for promoting Oriya art and culture.

Plaque

The Orissa Society of the Americas honored Miss Shibani Mohapatro by presenting her with the 2007 Yuva Kala Vikash Award in recognition of her outstanding contribution in promoting Oriya art and culture in North America. Miss Mohapatro is a graceful and accomplished Odissi and Bharatanatyam dancer, who has performed on stage in and around USA. She accommodates all socio-cultural activities, dance, and dramatic performances while being extremely successful in her academic schedule. She performs on average twelve times a year on stage for social and cultural organizations including charity fund-raising functions.



Winner of Prabasi Prativa Samman – 2007:

Dr. Laxmi Narayan Bhuyan

Dr. Laxmi Narayan Bhuyan, born in 1950, is now a professor and Chairman of the Computer Science and Engineering Department at the University of California, Riverside. He is a graduate in Electrical Engineering of R.E.C Rourkela. After a brief stint as a lecturer in REC he left for USA in 1980 to pursue higher studies. He obtained a Ph.D. degree in Computer Engineering in 1982 from Wayne State University and taught in various universities in the US before his present assignment.

Being an educationist, Dr. Bhuyan has also immensely contributed to educational activities in Orissa. He is a Constant Visitor and seminar speaker at government and private engineering Colleges in Orissa during his trips to Orissa.

He has nurtured several Oriya students for their MS and produced three Oriya Ph.D. degrees in the USA.

Dr. Bhuyan is an internationally known researcher in Computer Science and Engineering, Fellow of ACM, IEEE, AAAS and World Innovation Foundation; he is an ISI Highly Cited Researcher in Computer Science and a Senior Fulbright Specialist. He is a founding member of the Orissa Information Technology Society (OITS) and is on the permanent Advisory Board of the International Conference on Information Technology (CIT) for the last ten years. Held every year in December, this conference attracts a lot of international and IITs' research papers, is well attended, and brings in high visibility to Orissa. He is a founding tutorial speaker for the IT Workshop at Utkal University, now organized every year by OITS that gives state-of-the-art knowledge to faculty in Engineering Colleges in Orissa.

Dr. Bhuyan was President of the Orissa Society of the Americas (OSA), 2003 - 2005. In spite of his busy schedule, he revitalized the function of OSA and introduced many new activities for the benefit of OSA members and Orissa.

He put the finances of the OSA on a sound footing.

He formed vibrant coordination committees and oversaw the amendment of the OSA constitution, introduced new awards, published regular newsletters to apprise the members of the state of affairs of OSA and formed an active education committee that helped students desirous of coming abroad for higher studies.

In December 2004, he was instrumental in organizing the first NRO Day in Orissa with a seminar on Orissa's Development. Prabasi Diwas became an occasion for a social gathering with serious discussions focusing on NROs contributions to the wholesome development of Orissa. His efforts led to the establishment of an NRO cell in Government of Orissa and formation of the Non-Resident Oriya Facilitation Center (NROFC) to coordinate the activities of the NROs.

During his tenure, OSA raised financial contributions from OSA members for International Conference on Information Technology (CIT) and Bhubaneswar Behera Memorial fund at NIT, Rourkela.



Winter Blossoms Mamata Misra

The red bud tree in my back yard
is dressed in bright pink
fooled by the unusual mid-January warmth.
Surely it's spring, it says.
The weatherman shakes his head.
The Alaskan front is days away
from stripping off that beautiful attire.

Malathi, when you say
Surely he is going to change
when he sees his baby kick and cry
and touches the tender skin!
After all, isn't it his own flesh and blood!
When you try not to remember
how he left you
to bleed alone
to starve
not caring
if his baby in your womb
kicked or not,
I feel like the weatherman,
knowing that the battering front
is only days away
from turning your hope into despair.

The above reprinted poem is from the author's new book *Winter Blossom and other poems*, iUniverse 2007. For more information about the book, including reviews and interview with the author, visit mamatamisra.com

Minutes of OSA BOG Meetings:

January 13, 2008

Attendees: Pratap Das, Priyadarsan Patra, Leena Mishra, Jogesh Panda, Lipishri Nayak, Sandip Dasverma, Amit Nayak, Sikhanda Satapathy, Ashutosh Dutta

Moderator: Pratap Das

Minutes: Priyadarsan Patra

Terminology reminder: By OSA we mean the national or parent organization called The Orissa Society of the Americas, which is a 501(c)(3) non-profit.

Resolved: Phone Meetings will take place once every three months; preferably on the first Sunday of the month.

Agreed: A chapter can send another executive to represent the chapter head, but the rep can't vote for the chapter head. Anyone whose vote is to be considered must have informed the OSA executives ahead of time in writing (email ok) about his or her absence or representative. If not, it will be assumed that the decision taken by voting by all present is acceptable to the absentee. In case he/she has informed his/her absence or sent a rep, he/she will be able to vote by email within a week of receiving the motion, to be voted upon, in email.

Topic and issue 1: Chapter accounting requirements agreed to by all: the OSA treasurer will send a format to all chapter heads (BOG members) on the common format of reporting any income and expense against OSA's name and EIN. It is agreed that all chapters will maintain one account under OSA's EIN and provide all the yearly account reports to OSA national within one month of the end of accounting year. The accounting year is from January 1st to December 31st. All recognized the importance of reporting all yearly income raised in name of OSA or its single EIN. All accounts will mark off those items that were for goods or services provided to the members in return for their payment. Such payments are not tax-deductible and every one is reminded about it. OSA will file an annual tax report if the gross receipts exceed \$25,000 and everyone appreciated that it's the receipt and not net income that decides the tax filing requirement. The treasurer will send a guideline in a form to help the chapters understand what payment is likely tax-deductible and what must not be considered as not tax-deductible contribution. It was suggested that the paying member will be properly warned by the chapter which collects the money (by giving an appropriate receipt). All this was agreed to be consistent with the OSA constitution which was read online.

CANOSA chapter mentioned that it doesn't really have a financial relationship for tax or account reporting, but

rather a cultural tie with OSA (national). This will be clarified in the next meeting with the help of the Finance Reform Committee formed by the OSA Executives.

When someone asked how to report any money that was left over from a previous year, it was agreed that the amount will simply be informed as the starting amount for the accounting year and all other chapter transactions in OSA's name will be sent together in the yearly report, mentioned above, to the OSA Treasurer.

Topic and Issue 2: "Multiple EINs?" It was noted that OSA has the 501c3 EIN which was registered in 1981 in Tennessee. There is one other EIN under similar name that seems to have been applied but no OSA national accounts were opened under. This other 501c7 EIN has become an unfortunate source of controversy.

IRS has been informed about it. Some claim, in 2004 this EIN was closed, but don't know if any OSA member did it or the IRS noticed that it was dormant, so closed it.

All the evidence so far suggests that a real national organization was started in 1981 and supersedes any other informal operations before. Some people 30 more years ago probably were not diligent to transition the old, defunct 501c7 organization to the newly incorporated 501c3 organization in 1981. Many folks including Satya Shaw, Ladukesh Patnaik, Joygopal Mohanty, Manaranjan Patnaik, Bijoy Mishra, and several others were interviewed or spoken with. The previous secretary Bigyani Das has also spoken to IRS for months to make sure the old 501c7 status is properly closed/surrendered.

Topic and issue 3: Chapter validation. Chapters will send any missing information or incorrect information about their constitutionally formed executive body and membership to the OSA Secretary within a week -- this includes the Virginia-Maryland chapter. Minnesota chapter will be notified one last time about its obligations as BOG is not aware of their current status. Ohio is holding elections, so will inform us of its status soon. Florida is encouraged to form a chapter but they can't yet represent in OSA until they form their chapter. South East chapter (Neelina) needs to respond too. Chapter heads will notify/update all relevant changes to OSA execs in a week so the validated info goes on OSA web.

OSA will appoint award committees

Closing:

Everyone pledged strong cooperation with each other with goodwill, appreciated the efforts of the executives, and agreed to follow the rules to make the organization transparent and strong to be proud of.

February 9, 2008

Attendees: Pratap Das, Priya Darshan Patra, Sandip Dasverma, Niranjan Tripathy, Lalatendu Mohanty, Lipishree Nayak, Budhinath Padhi, Amit Nayak

Moderator: Pratap Das

Minutes: Amit Nayak, Priyadarshan Patra

Resolved: BOG meeting shall be called via tele-conference every month first Saturday. This is an amendment to the previous BOG meeting resolution of calling the meeting once in every three months.

Agenda # 1 (a): Accounts from Chapters : All chapters shall be requested to open or convert existing bank account to a new account using OSA's valid EIN number as posted in the OSA website. Also it was agreed to provide quarterly / bi-annually / annually their financial statements as per the advice of the OSA-appointed CPA for audit purpose. The accounting year is from January 1st to December 31st. Please note that at this moment the CPA auditor is not officially appointed but very likely to get appointed in the near future and OSA's financial matters shall run as per the auditor's advice. Past president Niranjan Tripathy was requested to talk to the appointed CPA on behalf of OSA BOG for making things simple and legal.

Chapters need to give report of all incomes in which OSA's EIN number was used and a receipt was issued. However, they do not have to report all those incomes which were generated for self-financing events like cultural programs/picnics etc. As of now CanOSA shall be the only exception for being in a different country and governed by local laws. However, the CPA's advice shall be taken how to deal with this kind of situation.

Agenda # 1 (b) : Ms. Kabita Sahoo's letter and legal counsel report from the President : It was agreed that the president shall reply to Ms. Sahoo explaining her the inability of OSA Executives & BOG to reimburse her legal expenses as claimed in the letter.

Note : The OSA President assured the BOG that he is not going to spend any single penny from OSA

fund unless there is a case first filed by another party. However, the approval for \$2,000 is only taken to meet the immediate requirement for OSA defense in the case of emergency.

Agenda # 1 (c): Regional Drama Festival: It was observed that many BOG members are either not completely aware of the proposition, or have not expressed their views on the proposal. Hence it was decided to urge all the BOG members to go through the proposal, to discuss it among other members of their respective chapters, and to give comments on the feasibility of any such proposal. The matter will be taken up again in one of the future BOG meetings and decisions shall be arrived based on members' comments.

Agenda # 2: Constitutional reform committee: Though it was agreed that an amendment to various areas of the OSA constitution is necessary, nothing much was really discussed on this subject.

Agenda # 3 (a): Selection of Judges for various OSA awards : It was unanimously decided that procedures for all the OSA awards including the newly created Meghna award by Michigan Chapter and the necessary forms for the nominations shall be posted in OSAnet for members' reference. Regarding the selection of judges for various awards, there were two schools of thoughts. While one set of members believe in disclosing the names of Judges in OSAnet after their appointment, the other set of members felt the Judges name should be kept confidential to avoid any kind of lobbying or influencing. No final decision was taken on that and it was left to OSA President to explore the matter further and take an appropriate decision.

Agenda # 3 (b): 50 years of completion in USA award : It was unanimously agreed to honor those six OSA members as suggested by Sandip Babu who have been living in North America for over 50 years. It was also agreed that further announcement shall be made in OSAnet about the existence of any other qualified members of similar category missing in the current list. An opinion poll shall be taken from the general members of the society about continuation of any such felicitation program in future on an annual / every five years basis or this shall be only a one time event. This was also clarified that this shall be an OSA felicitation and is not in duplication to CanOSA's announcement of "Gurujana Sammana" where OSA members of age 70 and above with attendance of minimum five convention in life time shall be honored.

Agenda # 4 : OSA Convention 2008 Chief Guest : It was agreed that since CanOSA being the host chapter has already approached few individuals to be

Continued from previous page...

the Chief Speaker, it should be given chance to confirm those names by end of Feb 08. In the event that CanOSA couldn't get any confirmation by that date, OSA and CanOSA shall jointly look for a Chief Speaker for the occasion. The Chief Guest shall be a local high profile dignitary.

Agenda # 5 : Proposal for 2009 convention : A short discussion was done to explore which chapter is going to host 2009 convention. Members felt that it is too early to discuss the topic but the BOG should have a name before meeting at the Toronto convention site. This matter shall be discussed in future BOG meetings.

Agenda # 6: Posting of Budget, BOG resolutions/decisions in Utkarsha : There was no discussion on this subject due to lack of time.

Agenda # 7: Open: Due to the lack of time no discussion was made on other items. However, few out of the context topics were discussed in between but since they were not part of the agenda, no detailed discussions were made.

Closing:

Everyone appreciated the efforts of the executives and agreed to follow the rules to make the organization transparent and strong.

OSA Secretary's report continued from page-3...

educational and socio-economic activities of OSA.

Reflecting the concerns of many OSA members for Orissa's development, we have communicated to the Chief Minister and the Prime Minister regarding some important issues related to Orissa's growth and progress that include: (1) "Greenfield" IIT during the 11th Plan, (2) a multi-focus, multi-campus Central University system for the Kalahandi-Bolangir-Koraput region, and (3) Elevating the 150-year old Ravenshaw University to 2nd Central University status in Orissa (4) Expeditiously completing rail links to tribal KBK area other tribal, under-served areas.

Please visit

<http://www.orissasociety.org/osaftp01/osaexecupdate.s.htm> for updates from the executives time to time.

Again, wish a wonderful year for you, your family and the society as a whole.

Priyadarsan Patra
Secretary, OSA



Announcement

OSA Awards 2008

The last date of Nomination is: April 30, 2008

Contact: Dr. Birendra Jena at abjena@yahoo.com
175 Apple Grove St. NE #A-12, North Canton, OH 44720, USA.

Please refer to Award Guidelines on www.orissasociety.org for additional information.

- **Distinguished Oriya Award**
- **Kalashree Award**
- **Utkala Mani Gopabandhu Das Memorial Award**
- **Youth Volunteer Award**
- **Yuva Kala Vikash Award**
- **Subrina Biswal Award**

Invitation to attend 39th OSA Convention in Toronto, Canada

Dear friends and OSA members,

As you all know, the Orissa Society of the Americas (OSA) is holding its 39th Annual Convention in Toronto, Canada, from July 3rd to July 5th, 2008. It is going to be held at the Rose Theatre and Holiday Inn Select, Brampton, Ontario, Canada. CanOSA is the host of this convention. On behalf of the convention organizing committee, CanOSA members and OSA national executives, we cordially invite all Oriyas to participate in this celebration and make it a memorable event. The purpose of this celebration is to enhance and preserve the rich language and culture of the people of Orissa, India. The theme of the convention is "**Orissa: Our Land Our People**". This will be an occasion to remember our land and feel nostalgic about it.

The organizers and volunteers are working hard to make this an enjoyable and exciting event. You will be greeted with true Canadian hospitality and smiles. You may extend it as a family vacation by visiting the local tourist places such as Niagara Falls and the CN Tower, to name a few.

If you need further information, please visit our web site at convention08.orissasociety.org. Please plan to attend the convention and make it a grand success.

With best regards,

Gagan B. Panigrahi
Convener

Amit Nayak
*Co-Convener and
President CanOSA*

Ashutosh Dutta
*Co-Convener and
Vice-President OSA*

Event Highlights

Performing Arts Programme- Odissi dance is the heart of Oriya art and culture. Sujata Mohapatra, Sushri Mishra Kar, Ellora Patnaik and Devraj Patnaik from Orissa and Ontario are invited to perform in the convention. Music, drama and dance performances will be presented by participants from different chapters of the organization. We aim to present a high quality entertainment programme by the top invited artists, but at the same time, we intend to emphasize the local talents and maintain a balanced programme.

Seminars and Lecture/Demonstrations- on issues of interest to the Oriyas (Literary through Oriya poetry reading; Odissi dance demonstration; Orissa development and Education; Women; Health and Medicine issues) featuring distinguished personalities and experts from both India and North America.

Films- made by the Oriya youth will be screened.

Exhibitions- display of fountain pens, rare first edition books, paintings, photography and handwritten manuscript will grace the convention.

Youth Forum- participation by all youths of Oriyas to exchange ideas on how to propagate and promote Oriya culture in North America through seminars. Simultaneously, care will be taken by presenting entertaining programme for the toddlers as well as the teens to make the convention an attractive and a memorable event. We are also planning to showcase the exceptional talents our second generation youth have achieved.

Reunions- for alumni such as those from Ravenshaw College and NIT Rourkela (previously REC).

Stalls- Facilities for setting up commercial stalls to display and sell various items of interest to convention participants.

Tentative Convention Schedule:

- **Thursday, July 3:** Arrival, Registration: 8.00 pm, Informal gathering and Mehfil : 10 pm.
- **Friday, July 4:** Opening Ceremony 10.30 am. Program: 2 pm, Cultural evening: 5.30pm, Mehfil: 11 pm.
- **Saturday, July 5:** Program: 2pm, Cultural evening and closing: 5.30 pm, Mehfil: 11 pm.
- **Sunday, July 6:** Departure.

OSA NYNJ Chapter News

Lalatendu Mohanty

In November 2007, NYNJ chapter celebrated the annual Kumara Utsav, an outstanding event full of stunning performances and breathtaking entertainment. It was a gala cultural event with sensational entertainment with more than hundred participants on the stage and lasted for four long hours.

The show started with a tribute to Orissa with the song "Bande Utkal Janani", which couldn't have been more real. Overfilled stage with kids did not leave a single popular Oriya personality not represented on the stage. Odissi performances were electric and people saw all flavors of beauty, grace, rhythm, melody, spirituality, and devotion. Kharabela was a classic that elaborated the epic of historic days with a rare combination of mothers and daughters live on stage. From "Sthai", "Om Gajanana Namoh Namoh" to "Jai Nandalala Jai Gopala" brought an unusual blend of Odissi fused with mainstream



music. Hats off to all kids, both tiny to tweeny, who looked like angels dancing in green alpine meadows. "Ae Ranga Rahile Hela" drama was a super hit that seemed pretty close to the reality. Paala was a stunning venture this year which worked out pretty well. The catching up of the culture with changing times in the Rangarang program turned the imagination of the hills into mountains. Chitrageeti was a real entertainer with rare merge of freestyle, jazz, hip hop to swing. Some looked princess or prince-trying-to-charm, while some looked peaches, kiwis, Khoka Bhai or paanwalla. Some showed freestyle, some showed swing, while other could not believe that they could do hip hop, jazz, and still play "Mo Sathe Lagana Re".



An election was held to nominate new office bearers for 2008-09. Lalatendu Mohanty as President, Jeetendra Pradhan as Secretary and Antaryami Panigrahi as Treasurer were elected unanimously.

Plans for the Saraswati Puja on 16th February is going in full swing. A tentative plan for coming events throughout the year is taking shape. The chapter's various ventures like Kala Niketan, promoting Odissi among kids is growing in popularity. Bala Niketan, teaching Oriya to kids, is being revived. Sunday Oriya radio program around the tri-state area, Utkal Prabha has gained lot of popularity.



CANOSA News

Amit Nayak

Friends,

The year 2007 was eventful for CanOSA. The following activities took place in this year.

- 1) Sahitya Patha Chakra (Apr 14th) : For the first time we have started this program officially in a structured manner. The said program will be arranged every year before Bishuba Milana. This year's Sahitya Pathachakra's was based on the writings of Late Mayadhar Mansingh and eminent columnist Late Godavarisha Mohapatra of "NiAn KhuNtA magazine." The entire program was well executed by Mrs. Sumitra Padhi. Close to 100 people participated in this PaThaChakRa despite bad weather conditions after a heavy snowfall.



- 2) Bishuba Milana (May 20th) : Bishuba Milana Cultural event was held on May 20th at the Cyril Clerk Library Auditorium in Brampton. Honr. Colleen Beaumier, M.P – Brampton West was the chief guest on the occasion. Ms. Beaumier released the annual Souvenir on this occasion. Several cultural program consisting of Dance, Drama, and One Act plays were performed to cater the needs of all age groups.

- 3) One day Picnic (June 23rd) : One-day picnic was held at G.Ross Lord Park in Toronto on June 23rd. Over 140 people attended this Picnic.



- 4) Oriya Song Melody (July 7th) : Mrs. Sushmita Das renowned Oriya singer, who had performed in 2007 OSA Convention in Detroit, was invited to perform in Toronto. She sang for almost two hours in front of a sizeable number of audiences in the Mimico Library Auditorium.

- 5) One day Picnic (Aug 11th) : This year we didn't had the annual cottage picnic and this was substituted by another "One day Beach Picnic" held in Hamilton area. Over 120 members participated in this beach picnic.

- 6) Kumar Utsav (Oct 19th) : Kumar Utsav was organized on October 19th again at the Cyril Clerk Library Auditorium in Brampton. Honr. M.P Singh – Consul (Office of the Consulate General of India, Toronto) was the chief guest on the occasion. Over 240 people from greater Toronto and near by suburb area attended this event.



- 7) OSA Convention : CanOSA bided to host the 39th annual OSA convention and was awarded the same by OSA BOG. Also for the first time members of CanOSA participated in the "Promod Pattnaik Inter Chapter Cultural Competition" in the 38th OSA convention held in Detroit, we were declared as the winner and was awarded with the running shield.

- 8) Kedar Nath Rehabilitation Fund Raising : CanOSA members have done their part in supporting Kedar (An Oriya student, who had come to Canada on an International student exchange program to University of Western Ontario in London, Ontario, had undergone a severe trauma in his life by getting suddenly sick and partially paralyzed, and is considered to be one of the rarest case in Medical History) by contributing to the fund raising drive by CanOSA. We have raised \$ 2428 towards this purpose. Many other CanOSA members supported Kedar either directly or indirectly through other means.

- 9) A talk on 'Freedom from Begging' by Mr. Bhisma Rath (July28th) : Mr. Bhisma Rath an award winning humanitarian and a social scientist from Orissa and the winner of "Mother Teresa Award of Excellence in India" gave an audio visual presentation to the members of Odiya Community here in Toronto on July 28th. The compelling presentation called 'Freedom from Begging' is a project designed to help Indian street people develop the skills and means to support themselves and their families for the home less street beggars in Orissa.

- 10) Panorama India : Panorama India – The umbrella organization of all Indo-Canadian Socio Cultural Organizations in GTA conducts several programs from time to time. Members of CanOSA participated in their recently held Indian Independence Parade in downtown Toronto on August 19th. Also members of the community performed in the cultural program organized by Panorama India.
- 11) The Consulate General of India's office in Toronto has recognised CanOSA to be the registered Orissa Association in Ontario to represent Odiyas for all Government of India records.
- 12) Congratulatory Notes: CanOSA has received several congratulatory notes and certificates from the following persons / offices for its community involvement in making Canada truly a multi cultural country and a better place to live. The certificates received are from
 - i) Honr. Stephen Harper – Prime Minister of Canada
 - ii) Honr. Dalton McGuinty - Ontario Premier
 - iii) Honr. R.L Narayan – High Commissioner of India to Canada
 - iv) Honr. Dr. Ruby Dhalla – M.P, Brampton Springdel
 - v) Honr. Colleen Beaumier – M.P, Brampton West
- 13) Publicity : Our major programs like Bishuba Milana and Kumar Utsav got wide publicity in local Print and TV media. Also Odiya News papers like "The Samaj, Dharitri and Samabad" published articles on CanOSA organized programmes.



Washington DC news

Leena Mishra

Saraswati Puja 2007

OSA DC chapter celebrated the Saraswati Puja with joy and festivity on February 10th 2007 at Potomac Elementary School. About 150 people attended the function. Shri Nrusingha Chaitanya Prabhu, a Hindu priest from Baltimore, performed the puja, charming the audience with his eloquence and knowledge of the scriptures. Many wonderful Oriya families showed up in overwhelming numbers, from all parts of



Maryland and Virginia. The organizers were pleased to see many new members at the event. A large number of children participated in the puja. The food was delicious as usual. The volunteers performed a superb job on deity decoration, donation collection, prasad distribution, food distribution, cleaning etc.

Raja Picnic 2007

Before all our oriya friends could get occupied with their summer plans, the OSA DC chapter picnic was organized in Cabin John National park on 23rd of June 2007. There were as many new attendees as veterans. The weather did its part to make the picnic

a success. There was so much food to choose from that it was not only hard to get it all down but also hard to remember which tasted better. The Aloodum, the exotic dahibara and Ghuguni were fine hors d'oeuvres. We had our deft griller dole out some scrumptious chicken, hotdogs and veggies. Post lunch, our Oriya friends made use of the beautiful weather by plunging



into a game of "mixed Kabaddi", in the park area, with unbridled enthusiasm. The game attracted a few strangers. All our friends enjoyed themselves thoroughly. The kids were given a beautiful train ride. After sweating themselves out at Kabaddi and Volleyball, our Oriya friends made a beeline for the sweet watermelon and delicious "Bundi." Putting it succinctly, the picnic was a success. Thanks to all those who attended and made this year's picnic memorable.

Ganesh Puja 2007

Ganesh Chaturthi is the birthday of Lord Ganesh and is known as the day most sacred to Lord Ganesh.

Lord Ganesha is the elephant-headed God. He is worshipped first in any prayers. His Names are repeated first before any auspicious work is begun, before any kind of worship is begun. He is the Lord of power and wisdom. The OSA DC chapter celebrated the Ganesh Puja with joy and festivity on September 15th 2007 at Potomac Elementary School. About 190 people attended the function. The other social functions on the community also showed up in the event.

Shri Nrusingha Chaitanya Prabhu, a Hindu priest from Baltimore, performed the puja. The volunteers have done excellent job in performing various responsibilities. Many new families, from all over the DC area joined the event.

Musical Night (Sushmita Das)

A musical concert by Susmita Das was organized by the OSA DC chapter and Indian Performing Art Program (IPAP) on 5th August 2007. The programme was held at the Suffolk Terrace, Quince Orchard Valley Neighborhood Park, Maryland. Featuring Sushmita Das, a renowned



singer from Bhubaneshwar, India, the programme was done in co-ordination with the IPAP, a non-profit body that promotes Indian culture in North America. The show was a great show. Not only did Susmita accept to participate, but she contributed her time without hesitation whatsoever, coming to DC by her own means to make this evening a success. Judging by the applause that met the singer, she surely won the heart of the audience.

The MC for that evening was Dr. Julie Acharya Ray. She represented Susmita very well. It would take too long to list here her numerous accomplishments. The classic tune she sang a "Malli mala" brought back a lot of nostalgic memories. It was met with warm applause from the audience. Later, she took us back memory lane with the tune "Dele Dhara" and particularly "Paradesi Bandhu Tume" one of the Oriya hits with the legendary Ensemble Nirmala Mishra. As soon as she uttered the first words of the song, the audience burst into applause. Susmita sang a couple old hindi songs with the Karaoke. An old Hindi medley was well represented at the concert. At the end of the program Susmita was presented a plank for her performance by IPAP and OSA DC chapter.

Kumar Purnima

This year's Kumar Purnima was celebrated on the 27th of October, 2007 at the auditorium of Walter Johnson Middle School. The cultural programs presented by adults and children, were not only entertaining but also informative.

To begin well the program started with a kumar purnami puja in front of the Chaura. Meera Mohapatra along with the little kids had done an excellent job in explaining the tradition and ritual of the kumar Purnami to the kids of our community. "Kuaanara Punei Jahna Go" was presented as a chorus by the singers of our local area and was followed by varieties of programs. Apart from the adults, nearly fifty kids in twelve groups had participated in the event. Sambalpuri Dance, Solo and group Bollywood dance by few tiny tots, Bhangara, solo song, Instrumental, Oriya group dance and drama were the attractions of that evening which made "Kumar Purnima" event a great success. Nearly 300 people from all over the DC area attended the Kumar



Purnima festival. We had nearly 30 volunteers who should get all the credit for making it a great evening to remember. The arrangement would not have been credible without the direct involvement of these volunteers whose input on stage and off stage is commendable. The Food and Stage

Management team had done a superb job in setting up the Food Stalls and in managing such a large number of attendees efficiently within the constraints of time. While saying this, we can not forget the brilliant job of the Food Preparation and Decoration team that added the charisma to the event. Everyone liked the "paana" which was served at the end. Mrs Urmila Sahu was awarded as the "Outstanding Volunteer of the DC Chapter".



ନବବର୍ଷର ଶୁଭକାମନା, ୨୦୦୮

ବିଜ୍ଞାନୀ ଦାସ, ଡେଟନ୍, ମେରୀଲାଣ୍ଡ

ନୂତନର ଆବାହନ
କେତେ ପୁଣି, କେତେ ଚଞ୍ଚଳତା
କେତେ ସ୍ୱପ୍ନ, କେତେ ଆଶା
ନୂତନ କ୍ଷଣରେ ସତେ ଅଛି କି କୁହୁକ?
ସବୁକିଛି ପାଲଟିବ ମଣିମୁକ୍ତା,
ଭରିଯିବ ସୁଖଶାନ୍ତି, ହସଖୁସି
ଝଲସିବ ଚତୁର୍ଦିଗ
ମନପ୍ରାଣେ ସଞ୍ଚରିବ ଅସୀମ ପୁଲକ ।୧।

ଏ ଶୁଭବେଳାରେ
ତୁମ ପାଇଁ ବନ୍ଧୁ
ଚାହୁଁଛି ମୁଁ
ଗୋଲାପ ସୁବାସ ଭରା ବର୍ଣ୍ଣିକ ପୃଥ୍ୱୀ,
ନିତି ସଫଳତା, ଧନ, ମାନ ଲାଭ;
ସର୍ବଦା ବସନ୍ତରତୁ,
ମୃଦୁମୟ ସମୀରଣ,
ଅସରନ୍ତି ସ୍ନେହପ୍ରୀତି,
ସୁଖ ଅନୁଭବ ।୨।

ତୁମପାଇଁ ବନ୍ଧୁ
ଚାହୁଁଛି ମୁଁ
କୋକିଳର କୁହୁଗୀତି
ଜ୍ୟୋତ୍ସ୍ନାଭରା ଜହ୍ନରାତି
ଆଶାର ଅଲୋକବତି
ନିତିପ୍ରତି ଶୁଭ ସମାଚାର;

ବନ୍ଧୁ ପରିଜନ ମେଳ
ରସାଣିତ ହୃଦୟ
ଆନନ୍ଦ ମୁଖର
ତୁମ ହସିଲା ସଂସାର ।୩।

ଏ ଶୁଭବେଳାରେ
ଚାହୁଁଛି ମୁଁ ତୁମପାଇଁ
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ଆଶୀର୍ବାଦ,
ଦୟା, ଅନୁଗ୍ରହ;
ତାଙ୍କ କୃପା, ତାଙ୍କ ସ୍ନେହ,
ସଙ୍ଗତ ଓ ସନ୍ଧିଷଣେ
ଅଜଣା ଜୀବନରଣେ
ଅଜେୟ, ଅମୋଦ ଶକ୍ତି
ଅକ୍ଷୟ କବଚ,
ତାଙ୍କ ଅଭୟ ଆଶ୍ରୟ ।୪।

ତୁମ ଲକ୍ଷ୍ୟ, ତୁମ ଇଚ୍ଛା,
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ହେଉ ସର୍ବ ପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ;
ଏହି ମୋ ହୃଦ ସନ୍ଦେଶ,
ମୋ ମନର ଅଭିଳାଷ
ସୁମନ ସମ୍ପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ ଭରୁ
ଚଲାପଥ ତୁମ ।୫।

Odissi dance troupe, Rudraksha in USA this Summer

Dear Friends,

In the spring of 2008, the India Association of Nebraska and the Oriyas are organizing an Odissi dance group tour. It will be headed by Guru Sri Bichitrananda Swain, and will consist of 14 members including musicians and singer.

Sri Bichitrananda Swain is the founder / director of Rudrakshya, and the former principal and chief instructor of the Orissa Dance Academy . He is one of the leading Gurus of contemporary Odissi dance. He has composed a number of innovative pieces in the Odissi style including solo, duet, and group presentations. He has earned wide praise particularly for his all male choreography, highlighting the strength and versatility of the male form. He has earned accolades not only for his brilliant choreography, but also for his vision of maintaining the purity of style and presentation of Odissi dance, while bringing freshness and vitality through his compositions.



It will be a rare opportunity to enjoy the traditional Odissi dance performed by a group as large and as varied as this one. I strongly recommend you to consider hosting this group. It will be a wonderful way to highlight not only the emerging talent from Orissa, but also the activities and the dedication of your organization to uphold and maintain the rich cultural heritage.

You will be able to find the proposal and promotional materials from the website: <http://rudrakshya2008.googlepages.com>. If the information provided there does not meet your needs, please let us know. We are looking forward to working with you and your community to support our heritage and culture.

Siddharth Behera

THE HINDU

Wednesday, Mar 26, 2008

All-male dancers' troupe set to storm US cities

Shyamhari Chakra

Nine-member team to stage performances

BHUBANESWAR: Breaking the bastion of female Odissi dancers, an all-male dancers' troupe from Orissa is set to storm the stage at the famous Lincoln Centre in US soon. The enviable distinction has come to the city-based Rudrakshya dance institution of young but versatile Odissi guru Bichitrananda Swain.

A distinguished disciple of legendary Kelucharan Mohapatra, Bichitrananda is known for his pioneering choreographic compositions for male dancers besides grooming a number of talented male dancers who have been touring the world as teachers and performers.

"A man must not dance like a woman and vice versa as the physical features in men and women are distinctly different. This realisation prompted me to develop a dance vocabulary for male dancers – 'purush ang'," explained the guru whose nine-member troupe including four girls is leaving for US on a four-month tour later this week being sponsored by the India Association of Nebraska and Indian Performing Arts Promotions, both led by non-resident Oriyas. The dancers include Yudhisthir Nayak, Pabitra Kumar Pradhan, Lingaraj Pradhan, Amulya Balbantray, Gouri Shankar Dash, Mamata Das, Sanjukta Dutta, Arupa Gayatri Panda and Moushumi Madhuchhanda. Ramahari Das who heads Odissi Research Centre here has scored music for the dance numbers.



Social Sector Slips Again in ORISSA STATE Budget 2008-09*

Pravas Mishra,
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The budget for the financial year 2008-09 was tabled in the Orissa Assembly on 16th Feb 2008. The state government had taken a number of measures in the past on fiscal management front which have helped it to progress from a state of critical financial health to the zone of comfortable revenue surplus. The state budget, for the first time in 22 years, showed a revenue surplus of Rs. 481.19 crore in 2005-06 and this improved situation continued in the next financial year 2006-07 and subsequently. This in turn has enabled the state to raise the state plan size as well as the capital expenditure which is the need of the hour. However, looking in to the investment pattern of the consolidated fund, one observes that the trend of expenditure on social services has not been received the desired priority in the budget 2008-09. Similar is the case for rural health services and capital expenditure.

Overall analysis of the state budget 2008-09 reflects the following conclusions

Greener side of the Budget:

- Revenue deficit has been completely eliminated and state is now enjoying the revenue surplus which is estimated to be Rs. 1045.76 Cr during 2007-08. This way the state has achieved the target set by Medium Term Fiscal Plan (MTFP) much before the deadline. The Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management (FRBM) Bill, adopted in the Assembly in line with the objectives of Medium Term Fiscal Plan, targeted to reduce revenue deficit to zero by 2008-09. For the year 2008-09, the revenue surplus is estimated at Rs. 563.87 Cr.
- On revenue front, the growth rate of own tax and non-tax revenues, based on actual realisation, has achieved the target which was 3.97 % during 1999-00 and increased to 6.65 % in 2006-07.
- From the year 2005-06, state has not availed ways and means advance and overdraft from RBI.
- During 1999-00, 79.17 percent of net loan was used for financing the revenue deficit, but as state is now revenue surplus, there is no need of diversion of loan funds for financing revenue deficit.
- Increased plan expenditure out of the total state expenditure: 27.77 % in 2006-07 to 42.43% in 2008-09 budget estimate
- More than 39 percent rise in state plan size over the last year which will accelerate the pace of development of the state.
- Share of capital expenditure from GSDP has increased to 2.93 in 2008-09 budget estimates from 1.58 % in 2006-07. Similarly, as a percentage of total state expenditure, the spending on capital assets is estimated at 3.60 percent in 2008-09, up from 3.05 per cent during 2006-07.
- Allocations of Rs. 50 Cr. in 2008-09 budget for construction of Primary Health Centers (PHCs) and Rs. 5 Cr. for the establishment of new PHCs will cater to the need of the people in remote areas of the state.
- Increase in allocation for diet in hospitals from Rs.3.84 Cr during 2007-08 to Rs. 7.42 Cr. in 2008-09 budget will certainly help the patients
- The budget has proposed increase in pre-matric scholarship from Rs 20 to Rs 100 per head for about one lakh students.
- Rs. 10 Cr has been earmarked for seed, fertilizer, bio-fertilizer and bio-pesticides.
- Allocation towards Accelerated Irrigation Benefit Programme (AIBP) has been increased to Rs. 800 Cr. in 2008-09 budget, up from Rs. 464.28 Cr. in 2007-08
- Allocation of Rs 100 crore for MO KUDIA YOJANA, a new scheme of the government to provide shelters to those who are below poverty line in rural areas.
- Inclusion of 3 lakhs additional beneficiaries in Madhu Babu Pension Yojana (combination of state old age pension and disability pension schemes) for which Rs. 72 Cr. has been allocated during 2008-09
- Financial assistance of Rs 500 to one lakh SHGs each and the total amount provisioned for this in the budget is Rs. 50 Cr.
- For Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JNNURM) Rs. 95.23 Cr. has been provided in 2008-09 as against Rs. 65.25Cr in 2007-08.

- Rs. 1546.29 cr. was budgeted for maintenance and repairing expenditure in 2007-08, which is increased to Rs 1651.97 Cr. in 2008-09.

Other side of the State Budget:

- Allocation for School and Mass Education as a share of total state expenditure reduced to 10.66 percent in 2008-09 from 12.20 percent in 2005-06 and as a share of GSDP it hovered around 2.5 percent. It is worth mentioning here that expenditure on education sector should be a minimum of 6 percent of GSDP.
- Marginal increase in the expenditure on elementary education reflects that state is still unable to priorities elementary education in the current budget. During 2006-07 Rs. 1341.86 cr was allocated to this sector and in the current budget estimates, this has gone up to Rs. 1837.62 cr., which is a meager 1.78 % of GSDP.
- As a percentage of total state expenditure, the projected expenditure on elementary education decreased to 6.58 percent in 2008-09 budget while it was 6.94 during 2006-07. During the last 5 years the allocation towards elementary education as a percentage of total state expenditure has been decreasing which in turn will affect the quality of primary education in the state.
- Allocation for higher education decreased from 2.27 percent of the total state expenditure in 2005-06 to 2.04 percent in 2008-09 budget estimate. As a percentage of GSDP it gives no such encouraging increment (0.53 percent during 2006-07, 0.55 during 2008-09)
- Even though in absolute term allocation for minor irrigation has increased in the current budget compared to the previous year, its share in the total department expenditure decreased in 2008-09, compared to 2007-08 budget estimates in spite of the fact that the state is committed to enhance irrigation potential of at least 35 % in each and every block.
- Expenditure on social services as a share of the total state expenditure reflects a stagnating trend during the last three years (30.46 % in 2005-06 and 30.02 % in 2008-09 BE)
- Heavy debt burden of the state requires some close attention at this juncture. During 2008-09 budget estimates, it is estimated that, the total debt of the state stands at Rs. 41075.30 Cr which constitutes 35.19 percent of GSDP. As per the stipulation fixed by the 12th Finance Commission the Debt-GSDP ratio should be 28 percent and the state has to make more concerted efforts to limit the debt burden. But state still fails to achieve this target.
- Interest payment as percentage of revenue receipt should be 15 percent as per the recommendation of the 12th Finance Commission. But it is as much as 19 percent as per the budget estimates of 2008-09. This is still much higher as per the norm fixed by the Commission.
- As such, the overall allocation for health sector is not so encouraging. During 2006-07 Rs. 590.51cr. was earmarked for health and family welfare department and this has increased to 1004.79 cr. in 2008-09 BE. The total allocation is less than 1 per cent of the GSDP (0.97 percent). To achieve the target specified in Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) declaration towards health sector, that the expenditure on health sector should be a minimum of 3 per cent of the GSDP. What is worse is that the distribution of funds within the health department in 2007-08 is quite discriminating towards the rural health services. The share of rural health expenditure has decreased to 30.55 percent in 2007-08 from 41.29 percent in 2005-06. There is a scope for changing the prioritization of rural health over urban health in allocation of fund to the health sector at the stage of passing of the budget. Rural health sector needs prioritization to overcome the problem of high Infant Mortality Rate (IMR), which is now 75 per 1000 as against the national average of 58.

**This is a contributed article, and doesn't express any opinion of the OSA or its officials.*

Send your suggestions and comments to: osaeditor@orissasociety.org. OSA website is: <http://www.orissasociety.org>