



OSA Newsletter

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Editors: Tapas Sahoo and Sikhanda Satapathy

November 2006

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Dear Friends,

We are happy to bring you the fall issue of the OSA newsletter. It contains the much awaited OSA convention report among other important communication on OSA related matters. Please join us in congratulating Dr. Joy Gopal Mohanty and his team for demonstrating superior leadership in organizing a very successful convention this year. You will also find in this issue an interesting proposal from Mr. Prakash Patro on a single day Oriya party across America. Send us your response, or other ideas, for inclusion in future newsletters. The next step on such proposals can only be taken based on the readers' response – so go ahead, write back a line or two. The letter from Dr. Bhagwan Prakash on "Omericans" is really heart warming. Kudos to all, who contribute the time and effort to keep alive the Oriya language and culture far away from our land of origin.

We thank all the contributors. Please send us your news items and articles by March 1 for the next issue of the newsletter. Your comments are welcome at osaeditor@orissasociety.org.

Thank you.

Editors

GBM MINUTES

July 2, 2006

Sheraton Columbia Hotel – Lakeview Room – B and C, Columbia, Maryland

Time: 11:45 AM-12:45 PM

Present on podium: Niranjana Tripathy (NT), President; Dharendra Kumar Kar (DKK), Vice President; Bigyani Das (BD), Secretary; Prakash Patro (PP), Treasurer; Laxmi Narayan Bhuyan (LNB), Immediate Past President.

Abbreviations:

OSA-Orissa Society of the Americas GBM-General Body Meeting Q/C- Question/Comment

Meeting commenced: 11:47 AM

Although most of the executive members were present in the meeting hall at 11:05 AM, because of the parallel seminars on Education and Jagannath Philosophy, they could not arrive on time and the meeting was delayed. (Learning: Every member has a role on making OSA events successful and timely).

Introduction

(NT) President Niranjana Tripathy greeted the audience and introduced his team members. He then gave a brief review of the activities that OSA is involved under his presidency. The activities include the membership growth, Prabasi Utkaliya Dibasa, next year's election committee, OSA 2007 convention in Michigan.

Financial Statement (PP) Presentation of financial statement

Secretary/Treasurer Prakash Patro presented financial statement. The OSA Operating Account or Executive Account now stands at \$ 6,481.13. He also stated that at present OSA's fixed deposit funds or Trustee Account has \$77,785.26. (For details, please go to the [Financial Report](#).)

OSA accounts are divided in to two accounts – Trustee Account and Executive Account. The Trustee account holds the deposits for long term for OSA, such as life member fees and donations etc. This account has been built over many years of existence of OSA. The Executive account is the account that holds deposits to be used for general OSA expenses occurring for normal functioning of the organization and holds deposits such as annual membership fees and surplus funds received from previous convention.

New Life Members: A total of 20 new life members and 4 new annual members have been registered since the end of last OSA2005 convention and to-date.

The financial report was passed. Durga Mishra proposed the motion and Uma Mishra seconded it.

1. Motions

Souvenir Distribution

Every year the organizers of OSA Annual Convention face the problem of getting enough funding for the souvenir printing and distribution. The following points were discussed in this regard:

- CD or book?
- From where should the money come from?
- Who should distribute?
- How to select articles?
- What is the best method to distribute?

Several suggestions were made and nothing converged to everybody's satisfaction. Suggestions were received to have reduced number of copies. However, number of copies is not a big factor as regards the cost. Since hardly \$2000-\$3000 extra cost is involved in making 700 copies instead of 200 copies.

How about reducing the number of pages?

This is a good option. However, OSA membership has grown. Considering adults and children in about 600 family members we have almost 2000 individuals to express themselves. We can select articles on

quality; however, we still cannot reduce the size to less than 250 pages. That is the minimum size we should count.

How about CD?

Many people do not like to read from a CD. Specifically many veteran members do not like to read from CD. Also, many other members spoke about their preference for a book format.

From where should the money come from?

One suggestion was that if every OSA member family can contribute \$100 for their yearly contribution to OSA, then OSA National would at least have a budget of \$50,000. Then souvenir distribution would not be a problem any more. Is there enough number of good OSA citizens that would come forward for this cause?

It seems that people who attend convention spend a lot of money. How about the members who do not attend the convention? Cannot they at least donate their registration fee for the sake of the Society?

This is a good solution. Only if our OSA members could have faith on the leadership and its judgment, or just do their duty for the sake of the Organization, a lot of problems can be solved.

Who should distribute?

To reduce the cost of distribution, it has been decided to distribute the souvenir and the directory through chapter presidents. Chapter presidents/representatives or members who attend the convention should volunteer to take the copies for their chapter members. Since Ganesh Puja and Kumar Purnami are the two chapter events that come after July convention, members are requested to attend these events and get their souvenirs and directories. This would help more participation of members in chapter events and also help souvenir/directory distribution job smooth.

What about the members who are in remote places that do not have any OSA chapters?

These members will get their souvenir/directory copies by a member of the Annual Convention organizing committee. This member will act as a volunteer and act in the position of souvenir distribution coordinator.

The fund for the distribution will be provided by the convention fund. In case of a loss, OSA National should make an effort to raise the fund for this purpose.

Conclusion

The discussions did not converge. We like member input on this. For this year's distribution chapter volunteers have taken copies to distribute among the chapter members. The communities that did not come to the convention will be receiving the copies either by post or by some interaction method before Kumar Purnami celebration. These communities will receive their copies during Kumar Purnami celebration.

2. Next Year's Election Committee

The election committee members were nominated from the floor. The following names were finalized.

Chairman: Dr Shanti Mishra, NY

Members: Anjana Chowdhury, MD

Nivedita Mohanty, VA

Twinkle Mohapatra, NY

Digambar Mishra proposed the motion. Nick Patnaik seconded the motion.

3. Request for OSA Support for 2007 Convention

Acting upon a request by the OSA Convention 2007 organizers to provide the seed money, OSA BOG had approved \$2000.00. This was approved in the GBM unanimously. Also the convention site was approved unanimously.

Uma Mishra proposed the motion. Naresh Das seconded the motion.

Announcements

1. Pravasi Oriya Divas in December 2006 in Bhubaneswar, (Sahadev Sahu).
2. OSA 2007 Convention during July 4th weekend in Michigan.

Closing Remarks: Thanks to Joy Gopal Mohanty and 2006 Convention Organizers for a great job and true volunteer spirit (Niranjan Tripathy).

Meeting adjourned: 12:50 PM

In this quarter I am involved in three important tasks. They are:

1. OSA 2006 Souvenir and Directory Distribution
2. OSA Membership Drive
3. Fundraising to balance the shortfall in OSA Convention 2006 Account

OSA 2006 Souvenir and Directory Distribution:

Note: We have a few souvenir copies and directory for sale for \$10 each (souvenir \$10 and directory \$10) for those who are not permanent members of OSA National, but would like to have copies for themselves and help OSA. If you are interested, please contact us. Mailing charge may cost extra.

The annual souvenir distribution plan for OSA National's permanent members (life/patron/benefactor) for this year is as follows:

1. Copies of souvenir were sent with the chapter presidents (volunteer representatives). Most of them were distributed. We have got some reports on distribution and still waiting to hear from others. We have also contacted Oriya communities elsewhere and individual members and have distributed some copies. Please check Table 1 for the distribution status as of today sorted by states.

2. Chapter presidents are in charge of souvenir and directory distribution to permanent members of OSA National. For the rest of the members who have not yet received the souvenir, mostly chapter presidents would receive their copies. To help them do this job effectively, we request you to attend chapter events. The upcoming chapter events Durga Puja and Kumar Purnami are great opportunities for souvenir distribution.

3. We have also contacted members directly where there are no chapters. We have got some responses and waiting to get response from others.

4. If you have any questions/suggestions on the distribution mechanism, please contact Bigyani Das (410-531-7445 or bigyanidas@yahoo.com) or contact any member in the distribution team.

USA States	OSA Perm Members	No. People Received	To Receive	Responsible
AL	11	All		Sarojini Mishra
AK	4	All		Bigyani/Debendra Das
AZ	8	All		Bigyani Das/Hara Mishra
AR	4	All		Bigyani/Brajendra Panda
CA	65	30+4=34	31	LNB/JGM/Manoj Sahu (23 sent to Mano; 5 sent to LN; 3 to be sent to Sanjeev Patro)
CT	5	3	2	BD
FL	21	All		Shashadhar Mohapatra
GA	4	All		Dhirendra Kar
IL	27	All		JGM/Neelamadhab Nanda
IN	5	All		BD+Prakash Patro
IA	3	All		Prakash Patro + BD
KS	3	All		JGM+PP
KY	1	All		BD
LA	3	All		BD
MD	45	All		BD+BS+JGM
MA	10	All		Bijoylaxmi Mishra
MI	31	All		Singdha Senapati
MN	17	2	15	Sitikantha Dash (To take in Oct. 2006)
MS	1		1	BD (Recipient's ph# Doesn't work)

MO	8	6	2	PP+BD
NE	4	All		BD/Alekha Dash
NV	1	All		BD
NH	1	1		BD/Bijoylaxmi Mishra
NJ	40	16+1=17	23*	PRM/PT/JGM
NY	26	8	18*	PRM/PT/JGM
NC	11	All		Dhirendra Kar & Subhas Mohapatra
OH	26	9	17	JGM+BD (4 - Duryodhan Mangaraj; 4 – Haralal Choudhury; 5 – Mark Tripathy)
OR	6	2	4	BD
PA	15	2+1 = 3	12*	PRM/PT/JGM
RI	4		4	BD
SC	4	4		Dhirendra Kar
SD	1	?	?	BD
TN	18	All		Abinash Joshi & Sarojini Mishra
TX	45	21	24	DK+NT+TM (12 sent to Gopal Mohapatra, Houston)
VT	1	?	?	BD & Bijoylaxmi Mishra (Email & Phone Do not work)
VA	21	11	10	BD
WA	6	6		BD
WV	1		1	BD
WI	2		2	BD
CANADA AB+BC+ON+QC+SK	3+1+23+3+1			Hara Padhi

BD: Bigyani Das (410-531-7445, bigyanidas@yahoo.com)
JGM: Joy Gopal Mohanty (410-796-0608, jgmohanty@yahoo.com)
PP: Prakash Patro (913-681-8469, prakashpatro@yahoo.com)
DK: Dhirendra Kar (919-380-9195, dhirendra_kar@hotmail.com)
NT: Niranjana Tripathy (940-382-7305, tripathy@unt.edu)
TM: Tapasi Misra (210-523-5054, lmisra@aol.com)
BS: Babru Samal (301-294-0851, bsamal@comcast.net)
LNB: Laxmi Narayan Bhuyan (951-7899890, lbhuyan@hotmail.com)

We are adopting the above distribution procedure to accomplish two goals: a) to reduce the cost of souvenir distribution; b) to distribute among all the permanent members of OSA before October 30, 2006. We have not yet recovered from the printing cost of the souvenir. We would appreciate donations for the cause of souvenir printing and distribution. Checks for this cause can be written to OSA Convention 2006 and sent to OSA 2006 treasurer

Dr Shashadhar Mohapatra,
2105 Hidden Valley Ln.,
Silver Spring, MD 20904.
Phone: 301-879-8188,
email : smohapatra318@yahoo.com

OSA Membership Drive

Dear Friends,

If you are not a permanent member (life/patron/benefactor) of OSA National (Orissa Society of the Americas, National Organization), we invite you to become one. Please check <http://www.orissasociety.org> and click on membership to know the details.

For any new permanent member of OSA, we will mail you the beautiful OSA Souvenir 2006, the directory with the listing of about 1800 Oriya families in USA/Canada

and other places, and the Konark CD (Inauguration CD of OSA Convention 2006) for free.

If you have been thinking of becoming a member, but waiting for the right time, now is the right time to join OSA as a permanent member. Think about the above 3 immediate benefits. This offer will last until we have the above products available (which are not many).

Apart from that you get the benefit of becoming a part of the historic organization that is catering the social and cultural needs of immigrant Oriyas in USA and Canada for 37 years. For more, please refer to <http://www.orissasociety.org>

If you have any questions on membership, please contact OSA Treasurer, Prakash Patro (913-681-8469, prakashpatro@yahoo.com)

Permanent Membership Fees (Revised in 2006)

Benefactor: A person or family contributing a lump sum of \$1,000 or more to OSA.
Patron: A person who contributes \$600.00 or more to OSA
Life Members: A single person or family paying \$300.00

Join OSA now!

Fundraising to Balance the Shortfall in OSA Convention 2006 Account

OSA National organized the convention this year. Thus it became the duty of every OSA National officer to be involved closely in the organization process. Maryland Oriyas came forward and took the task. We organized a convention within a very short period of time. By the time we took up the task, OSA communities elsewhere had already made plans for Rathayatra, marriages, travel and deity installation ceremonies. Our constant appeal to attract the participants did work at the last moment; however, it did not meet our expectations.

We organized the best convention in OSA history. A tradition survived. However, we found the shortfall of about \$10,000.00. We then approached general membership. Some veteran members such as Dr Sri Gopal Mohanty and Dr Lalu Mansingh contributed their share of the registration fee although because of the above reasons they could not attend the convention. Some members tried other methods such as selling CDs etc. and some other members donated. However, that has not helped much.

We are thus approaching you all, the generous Oriyas to help us. It needs 20 people who can donate \$500 and it needs 40 people who can donate \$250.00 and 100 people who can donate \$100.

Please be generous. OSA is us. Individually we have jobs and we earn money. But the organization does not have a job and it does not earn money. The organization can only become rich by the contribution of its members. Without everybody's involvement we cannot uplift the standard of the organization and its operation.

(Note: Becoming generous can bring you satisfaction. Becoming satisfied will help your heart.)

Please write your check in favor of OSA Convention 2006 and send to OSA 2006 treasurer

Dr Shashadhar Mohapatra,
2105 Hidden Valley Ln.,
Silver Spring, MD 20904.
Phone: 301-879-8188,
email : smohapatra318@yahoo.com

Please note that all your donations are tax deductible. So, please be generous, help OSA, get tax credit and help your heart.

Welcome New Members: We welcome the following permanent members to OSA National community.

Benefactor

Mr. Akshya Parija: Sultanate of OMAN

Life Members

Drs Debanand and Deepa Das, MD
Anil and Anju Jain, NY
Pradip and Liza Tripathy, IL
Aseema Pani, AZ

CONVENER'S REPORT

Joy Gopal Mohanty

As I stated inside the Souvenir, I was asked to be the Convener of the 37th OSA Convention in January 2006, after OSA executive committee exhausted other possibilities, which was already late by more than six months as compared to the past Conventions. Therefore, as soon as I took charge, we were rushing in everything starting with venue selection, inviting artists and guests, selecting auditorium and food caterers. We were really lucky to have a wonderful team of Oriyas from several states like Maryland, Virginia, New York, New Jersey, North Carolina, California, Texas, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, etc. to help us, without which this Convention would not have been possible.

Many of the attendees wrote to us or communicated to us verbally about their experiences. Some of them wrote personal congratulatory messages to individual members of the organizing committee. I am reproducing a few samples from them.

Dr Parshu Rath from Houston, TX wrote on July 7th, 2006:

*"We spent both Saturday and Sunday (7/1-7/2) at the convention in Columbia, MD and returned home early Tuesday morning feeling nostalgic, a bit homesick but with lots of pride and fun memories. **In our opinion, the convention this year was a tremendous success and the organizers at each level did a wonderful job in hosting the convention.***

Thus a big "THANK YOU" to the organizers and all the volunteers for your toil and sweat in putting together such an awesome event.

We attended the event with both my father-in-law and mother-in-law. They actually wanted to fly from India before the convention and attend the convention before spending the remainder of their trip in Texas (with Drs. Durba and Kalyan Rath, their other daughter and son-in-law). According to them, the trip (from India and the 6 hr drive) to the convention was all worth it. They pretty much spent the entire 2-days inside the High School auditorium (a big achievement for someone who usually leaves the room between the speeches and the cultural programs). They enjoyed all the shows and had fun meeting lots of Oriya people.

Our children had lots of fun too. Even our 3 yr old Asha was up past midnight enjoying "Mehfil" (she called it "Meiphil"). Now she is hooked to the cultural program KONARK CD. She has probably listened to it more than 20 times and still counting. She calls it the "Convention gEEta" CD, listens to it on her trip to/from daycare while Barney and Bigbird have gone on a long vacation for her (nice break for us the parents too).

As for Lipi and myself, we caught up with many of our old friends, enjoyed the whole event very much. The cultural programs were fantastic and very well presented.

Anyway, thanks again. We don't have e-mail addresses of all the organizers and volunteers. I would appreciate if you could thank them for us by forwarding this msg. We haven't been to many OSA conventions, but I think this one was as good as the convention I had enjoyed more than 20 yrs ago, the 1984 Glassboro college convention."

We have also received a very detailed message (dated July 10, 2006) from Dr. Prasanna Pati, a life member of OSA from Salem, Oregon. I am copying some of his lines in italics for your attention. He has given positive comments, criticisms and some new suggestions to improve OSA Conventions in future. I have put some of his lines with bold letters that has true positive comments, which also came from other attendees as well.

1. **My wife, Norma, and I have been attending the OSA Conventions for sometime and we think, food was better than average.** In the future, Oriya ladies should give specific Oriya recipes to the restaurants that cater such food or even “supervise” the preparation in the restaurants.
2. *I think, there were some talks in Oriya. I think, all talks should be in English. My wife can not understand any Oriya. We have Bhajans and poetry readings in Oriya. This should be enough. I respect many Oriya kids born and brought up in North America will not understand a lot of Oriya.*
3. *Dr. Raichoudhury was telling me that “Goti Pua” dancers in Bhubaneswar are just spectacular. May be the Michigan chapter will sponsor them. **Gunjan and Rudrakshya were wonderful.** There should be less Odissi dances and more of folk dances of different parts of Orissa. Also, dances by Oriya kids to Bollywood music should add a lot of fun and variety.*
4. *Also, as OSA Conventions are held around July 4, in the inauguration function, the US flag along with the flag of India should be displayed.*
5. **Swamiji from Homestead, FL did a wonderful job and should be re-invited to Detroit.**
6. *As usual, during the performance, people visited were talking loudly and sometimes, children were all over the place. There should be total silence during the performance. Folks who would like to talk should step out. It is very annoying to have a constant chatter in the audience. I think, the MC’s should make clear that silence is maintained and respect for the performance is expected.*
7. **In the 37th OSA Convention, there was not a lot of delay and time management was much much better.**
8. **In summary, it was a huge success and my sincere thanks to all the members of the Convention Management team and many others who contributed time and talent.**
9. **Finally, the Souvenir issue this year is wonderful, probably one of the best.** *I hope, folks read my story and give me some feedback.*
10. *The directory has some flaws. For example, life members (like my wife and I) were not listed in the regular section with full addresses. Also, we were not listed under our state, Oregon. Several from Oregon were not listed.*

I am thankful to Dr. Pati for his candid comments. I have put his comments in this open forum, so that the next year’s Convention team can get his criticisms and improve upon it.

I would like to comment on Dr. Pati’s statement #10. I hope attendees of the Convention and those who received the copies of the new directory must have noticed a change in style from the directories of previous years. This year we have separated the members and non-members into two separate sections. This helps us to identify members and the prospective members easily. Unfortunately, Dr. Pati did not look his name and address in the members section. I hope he did it by now.

As the Convention was closing, we realized a deficit in the Convention funds. So we tried many different approaches to meet the difference including selling rasogollas, CDs, sarees bought for decoration, and asking fellow Oriyas for donations. We raised some funds; but still we are in the deficit.

In any case, we were very fortunate to have good audience (400-500 including children) during the Convention irrespective of the above mentioned problems and three Rathajatras being organized by Oriyas during the same time in Philadelphia, PA, Nashville, TN and New Jersey. The end result was the following,

A tradition survived. We took the risk and we made it the best convention in years of OSA Convention history. All the seminar sessions, spiritual discourse and children activities were well attended. All the cultural segments were timely and well structured to cater the interests of diverse group of people. Food, decoration, music, Odissi dances, the Mehefil, the auditorium, the Souvenir and OSA directory all were rated high by the convention guests.

Joy Gopal Mohanty
Convener

OSA Convention 2006 Cultural Program – A Never Ending Story

As Joydeep Banerjee enters the stage riding a bike, the audience becomes still. After a moment of pin drop silence, they cheer. Technician Kerry and his associates mouth aloud, "Wow! That's innovative!" Now this wasn't a sports event going on. It was "Oriya Chitrahaar" being staged by enthusiastic volunteers of the 36th OSA Convention. Joydeep was on stage with his wife Dharitri dancing to the song "Tora chikimiki chikimiki jari shaadhi..tu ki buli baahaarilu sahara. Tu ta nije goTe chaudhury bazaara." The excited screams and whistling sounds arousing from the audience could not be contained.

Oriya Chitrahhar was one of many new and innovative presentations that OSA Convention 2006 had up its sleeve. Another such kind of a performance on the second day of the convention was the inimitable Punjabi "Bhangara". Satish Mishra and his friends had not only amazed the audience with their acrobatic and gymnastic talents, but also their superb presentation skills. The performance held surprises as well as clarity of presentation. When Bagmi Das emerged from almost nowhere on the backdrop and sashayed to "Sayna, sayna, how you said it to me" some in the audience broke into vigorous jigs. As the performance showcased typical punjabi moves, like picking up fellow performers to hold them on their shoulders or having dancers pile up like on a hill and have one dancer jump over the human hill, one could not but stare in disbelief that this was happening at the 36th OSA Convention in Jim Rouse Theater, in the very heart of Maryland.

Every event that was witnessed in this convention had something new. Every performer had a story. Every organizer had a rewarding experience to recall. Every audience member felt proud to be a part of the best convention in OSA history.

Inauguration Song: Srustire Jahin Pushpa Barase & Ghena Bandhu Ama Swagata

A voice from the back of the auditorium welcomes the audience--the voice of OSA vice president Dharendra Kar. The enthusiasm in his voice is contagious and it is supported by the inaugural welcome song. As Debaki Nandan Chowdhury and Julie Acharya Ray begin with "Niladrau Sankha Madhyen", a sense of sanctity ripples through every soul and some bow their head at the lotus feet of Lord Jagannath in their minds. The sacred chants then change gears into patriotism with "Srustire Jahin Pushpa Barase" and finally the audience is given a heart welcome with the words "Ghena Bandhu Ama Swagata Subha Swagata Ghena".

Music director Dr Surendra Ray is satisfied with his students' performance. With 20 odd singers and instrumentalists it was quite a challenge. However he was proud today.

**Konark: The Monumental Oriya Heritage - The Inauguration Cultural Program**

The lights went off quite suddenly bringing the auditorium to pitch darkness. Suddenly the air was filled with a resonant voice chanting the SuryaBandana, "Jabaa kusuma samkaasham". On the backdrop is the eternally enchanting Konark Temple as it appears at sunrise and the audience is catapulted to Orissa. Suddenly the voice announces: "Mun Konarka Kahuchhi". This is followed by Konark, the monumental Oriya heritage telling the story of its glorious past. Konark first pays obeisance to soil of mother Orissa and 4 young couples with gorgeous outfits and gorgeous smiles (Leena and Bimal Mishra, Moushumi and

Sandip Patnaik, Linie and Deepak Dhal and Upendra and Madhabi Das) from Washington DC, start dancing to the tune. The practice sessions to the dance has worked miracles to their confidence. Their dance choreographer Jayantee Paine Ganguly has taught them much more than just dance movements. Mother Orissa showers her blessings on these immigrant Oriyas for their immense love for her soil.



Konark speaks about the dreams and aspirations of the artisans that created her. About the men and women who sacrificed their lives and families while building this heritage for the world to marvel at. Gunjan Academy dancers Isha Satapathy, Sharmishta Raichoudhury, Ritika Mandal and Shibangi Mohapatra make a spectacular presentation for this mind map scene of the artisans, dancing to the tune of a Sabhinaya Pallabi piece "Kuhu Kuhu Koili Gaae". This was a custom made dance piece specially created for OSA's inaugural show. Choreographer Meera Das keeps watching from the side wings. On the sides of the stage stand at attention 4 silhouettes of Odissi dancers made up of hardboard and paint. The minds of the audience are dancing to the lilting music.



Konark then describes the sacrifices of Dharmapada. This is presented by Swayamprabha and Ananya Kar, the mother and daughter team representing Michigan chapter- Swayamprabha in the role of Bishu Moharana and Ananya in the role of Dharmapada gave very realistic presentations. Pratap Dash, Debaki Nandan Chowdhury, Siddharth Mohapatra and Alok Mohanty of DC filled the roles of the companion artisans. Dharmapada in the final act sacrificed his life to save the life of his fellow artisans. Konark's voice quivered as he described the story of this sacrifice by Dharmapada.

Oriyas have been monumental in every aspect of life. Its literary excellence achieved by one of the great poets such as Upendra Bhanja was depicted by Gunjan Dance Academy's performance to the poetry "Ki Sobha go Kunje". With the backdrop of Kunjabana and Radha Krishna dancing with the Gopis, a sense of spiritual feeling flowed inside the hearts of the audience. Orissa's monumental social traditions reflecting a society with minimum conflicts and maximum happiness was then depicted by Bagmi Das and Shashwati Das dancing to the tunes of "Nachare Nacha Nacha". Following the same steps of tradition, Suman Ojha and other small girls enacted "Kuanra Punei Janha Go Phula Baula Beni". The next event presented had the ladies from New York/New Jersey, Eva Mohanty, Susandhya Nayak, Lora Pattnaik, Rajshree Rath, Seema Senapati dancing to the tunes of "Juhaara Ma Somalai Lo" and the dynamism of Sambalpuri dance was felt in every heart. Their guru Bani Ray had indeed created a sophisticated style of dance for the traditional song.

Our greatest poet Jayadev comes alive through the Odissi performance of "Bedanudharate", another spectacular presentation by Gunjan. Konark then questions the audience. All these monumental achievements belong to the past. What have we contributed to the present? Konark hopes that the future Oriya children would keep dream alive. Washington DC children Dibya Bose Das, Lonika Behera, Shilpa Das, Sweta Das, Mrunali Das, Shashwati Das, Rajashree Mishra and Ankita Ray become the wave forms of Konark's dream. Their magnificent dance "Jaagare Jaagare" could be compared to one taken from a movie! Their choreographer Jayantee Paine Ganguly had worked her charms on them too.

[Click here for the remaining part of the Cultural Report towards the end of this file](#)

OSA Financial Report as presented at OSA2006 convention

The following report was presented at the general body meeting of OSA2006 convention held at Baltimore, by the treasurer. The first part of the report is revenue and expenses from the OSA2005 convention as reported by the OSA2005 convener as given below.

2005 OSA ConventionIncome / Revenue

Convention Registration	\$19,260.00
OSA Registration Fees	\$ 2,730.00
OSA Membership Fees	\$ 2,460.00
Food Tickets	\$24,060.00
Sponsors / Advertisements And Donors	\$31,595.00
Loan Advance	\$ 3,100.00
Grand Total	\$83,205.00

Expenses

Registration Expenses	\$ 1,286.57
OSA Registration Fees-sent to OSA	\$ 2,730.00
OSA Membership Fees-sent to OSA	\$ 2,460.00
Artists	\$ 520.00
Invited Guests	\$ 3,772.00
Volunteers Expense	\$ 517.32
Souvenir Printing & Mailing	\$ 7,958.58
Directory Printing	\$ 2,200.00
Web Site Fees	\$ 600.00
Stage/Decorations/Audio/Video/Light	\$ 5,302.42
Snacks	\$ 2,020.00
Youth Programs	\$ 2,158.46
Hotel Package Stage dining lunch	\$37,327.00
Hotel balance due	\$ 5,800.00
Loan Advance, Food, Other refunds	\$ 3,695.00
Miscellaneous	\$ 283.17
Grand Total	\$78,630.52

Convention SURPLUS	\$ 4,574.48
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The second part of the financial report is OSA accounts. OSA accounts are divided in to two accounts – Trustee Account and Executive Account.

The Trustee account holds the deposits for long term for OSA, such as life member fees and donations etc. This account has been built over many years of existence of OSA. The Executive account is the account that holds deposits to be used for general OSA expenses occurring for normal functioning of the organization and holds deposits such as annual membership fees and surplus funds received from previous convention.

2006 OSA Finance

Trustee Account

Received From P. Satapathy	\$66,000.00
Received from 2005 OSA Committee	\$11,000.00
OSA Life Membership Fees	\$ 4,000.00
Loan to 2006 Convention	\$- 4,000.00
Interest Income	\$ 785.26
Total	\$77,785.26

Executive Account

Received from 2005 OSA Committee	\$ 5,000.00
2005 OSA Committee commitments	\$ -1,300.00
2006 OSA Expenses	\$ - 493.87
2005 OSA Convention Receipt	\$ 5,190.00
Loan to 2006 OSA Convention	\$ - 2000.00
OSA Annual Membership Fees	\$ 85.00
Miscellaneous	\$ 283.17
Total	\$ 6,481.13

Grand Total	\$ 84,266.39
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New Life Members

A total of 20 new life members and 4 new annual members have been registered since the end of last OSA2005 convention and to-date.

1. Oriya Spirit Award

Recipient: Dr. Chitta Baral
Presentation: Plaque, Certificate of Honor

Orissa Society of Americas: Certificate of Honor:

The Oriya Spirit Award for the year 2006 is presented to Dr. Chitta Baral in recognition of his outstanding accomplishment in his area of expertise and service to the people of Orissa.

Plaque:

Orissa Society of Americas honors Dr. Chitta Baral by presenting him with the 2006 Oriya Spirit Award. Dr. Baral, a well accomplished computer scientist who has won laurels in his area of expertise, has made very significant contribution to Orissa by spearheading a campaign to highlight the NIS/IISER issue through creation of public awareness and mobilization of public support on the issue. His efforts culminated in a grassroots level protest movement not only in the state but by Oriyas all over the world. He is also fighting for the establishment of other institutes of higher learning in the state. Dr. Baral 's commendable efforts are hereby recognized.

**2. Utkalamani Gopabandhu Das Memorial Award**

Recipient: Dr. Devi Mishra
Presentation: Plaque with a picture of Gopabandhu Das, Certificate of Honor.

Orissa Society of Americas - Certificate of Honor:

The Utkalamani Gopabandhu Das Memorial Award for the year 2006 is presented to Dr. Devi Mishra in recognition of her outstanding contribution to Orissa in areas of humanitarian and community services.

Plaque:

The Orissa Society of Americas honors Dr. Devi Mishra by presenting him with the 2006 Utkalamani Gopabandhu Das Memorial Award in recognition of his outstanding dedicated service and significant contribution for the development of Orissa. Dr. Mishra is well known for his active involvement and generous financial contributions to various developmental activities in the state of Orissa covering healthcare, education, art, culture and socio-economic projects that spans several decades. Notable among his contributions are; promotion of dance-forms of Orissa through financial support to Orissa Dance Academy, contribution to various educational institutes such as Utkal University, SCB Medical College and Ravenshaw Collegiate School for infrastructural development and introduction of new programs, providing financial support to set up a fifty bed eye hospital in rural Dhenkanal and contributing to several NGOs in the state working for the socio-economic improvement of the underprivileged. His true passion and dedication for the development of Orissa and exemplary selfless service to humanity will be an inspiration for others to follow his footsteps.

3. Youth Volunteer Award

Recipient: Mr. Pradip Tripathy
Presentation: Plaque, Certificate of Honor.

Orissa Society of Americas - Certificate of Honor:

The Youth Volunteer Award for the year 2006 is presented to Mr. Pradip Tripathy for his outstanding volunteering service.

Plaque:

The Orissa Society of Americas honors Mr. Pradip Tripathy by presenting the 2006 Youth Volunteer Award in recognition of his outstanding voluntary service. Mr. Tripathy is a dedicated volunteer with superior

organizational capabilities who has relentlessly worked for the promotion of Orissa and Oriya culture in the US. Apart from organizing various chapter events he has also been involved in the starting a weekly radio program in Oriya and participating in India's Independence Day celebration in New York City by bringing out a colorful float of Orissa. Mr. Tripathy's most spectacular accomplishment has been in the unification of two OSA chapters, New York and New Jersey, thus ending a feud that had continued for two decades. Mr. Tripathy is also involved in several humanitarian activities such as organizing eye camps in his village in Orissa and participating in relief efforts in Indonesia after the Tsunami disaster.

4. Subrina Biswal Memorial Award for High School Graduates

Recipient: **Mr. Anup Das**
Presentation: Certificate of Honor. A onetime scholarship of \$1000.

Orissa Society of Americas - Certificate of Honor:

The Subrina Biswal Memorial Award for the year 2006 is presented to Mr. Anup Das in recognition of his outstanding accomplishment as a graduating High School Student.

5. Yuva Kalavikash Award

Joint Recipients: 1. **Miss Natasha Mohapatro**
2. **Miss Prerana Pradhan**
Presentation: Plaque, Certificate of Honor.

1. Miss Natasha Mohapatro

Orissa Society of Americas - Certificate of Honor:

The Yuva Kalavikash Award for the year 2004 is presented to Miss Natasha Mohapatro in recognition of her outstanding contribution for promoting Oriya art, literature and culture.

Plaque:

The Orissa Society of Americas honors Miss Natasha Mohapatro by presenting her with the 2006 Yuva Kalavikash Award in recognition of her outstanding contribution to promote Oriya art and culture in North America. Miss Mohapatro is a gifted artiste who has been presenting dance performances at various OSA conventions since an early age and has won numerous awards. She is a graceful and accomplished Odissi and Bhartanatyam dancer and has been promoting Oriya dance and culture through her performances around the USA. Most recently, Miss Mohapatro was crowned as Miss Jr. Teen USA, 2005.

2. Miss Prerana Pradhan

Orissa Society of Americas - Certificate of Honor:

The Yuva Kalavikash Award for the year 2004 is presented to Miss Prerana Pradhan in recognition of her outstanding contribution for promoting Oriya art, literature and culture.

Plaque:

The Orissa Society of Americas honors Miss Prerana Pradhan by presenting her with the 2006 Yuva Kalavikash Award in recognition of her outstanding contribution to promote Oriya art and culture in North America. Miss Pradhan is a talented artiste who has been promoting Oriya art and culture since her childhood through Odissi and Sambalpuri dance performances, violin recital and participation in various plays and Oriya radio broadcasts. She is a regular contributor to OSA journal since 2001 and her articles in Oriya and English have also appeared in other publications. She has also represented Oriya culture in various national and international events.

CanOSA

Gagan Panigrahi

Bisuba Milan:



The members of CanOSA celebrated Bisuba Milan on the 20th of May 2006, in the Cyril Clark Library Theatre in Brampton. Around 190 people participated in the programme. The President Gagan Behari Panigrahi handed over the charge to the new office bearers. The present office bearers are Amit Nayak (President), Suwendu Mishra (Vice-President), Rajesh Nayak (Secretary), Hara Padhi (Treasurer), with Lalu Mansinha, Prafulla Pujapanda, Nibedita Patnaik, and Sujata Das as directors. With the support of a

few individuals and sponsors, CanOSA has produced its first magazine as a Bisuba Milana special; a 50 page issue, with poems and articles in Oriya and English, and a glossy colour cover. This first issue was edited by Niranjana Mishra, Sabita Panigrahi, Soman Panigrahi and Pallavi Sodhi. The cultural program started with Gita Recitation by Illan Pujapanda that was followed by an Oriya Opening song arranged by Sabita Panigrahi and Sushree Mishra. The children put on a Drama, *Dhruva* in Oriya. It was written by Sumitra Padhi and directed by Prafulla Pujapanda. An Oriya geetinatya "Neela Madhab" was staged, which was directed and produced by Gagan Panigrahi. The programme ended with a sumptuous dinner.



One Day Picnic:

The one day picnic was held on 8th of July at G. Ross Lord Park of Toronto. 150 people attended the picnic under a clear blue and sunny sky. The food was prepared on the spot under the canopy of trees. The high light of the picnic was volley ball, lemon race, music chair and cricket match.



Cottage Picnic:

The major attraction for the members is the renowned cottage picnic. This year the picnic was organized at Rice Lake's Sandercock Tourist resort, Peterborough from the 4th of August to the 7th of August. For the occasion, 14 cottages were booked for the 75 participants. People from Buffalo, Ottawa, Sudbury, Montreal, London and Greater Toronto participated in the picnic. The weekend was loaded with cultural activities, games, sports, fishing, boating and many other activities. People made new friends, shared stories and laughter. Delicious food was served, ranging from chena podo, halwa, upma to meat curry. We sincerely thank the organizers, especially Amit Nayak, Suwendu and Prachi Mishra, Chitta and Sushree Kar, Ratna and Madhusudan Dutta, Ranjan and Mami Pradhan, Rashmi Pradhan, Rajendra and Sabita Sabat, Prafulla and Sanjukta Pujapanda, Alok Patnaik, Sandhya Tripathy, Asha Saxena and Pallavi Sodhi for their hard work to make this event a successful one.



Celebration of India's Independence Day

The Volunteers of OSANY-NJ participated in 59th India's Independence Day on 20th of August in New York City. The relentless effort of local Odiyas, well wishers and not to mention its ever energetic volunteers, resulted in a colorful extravaganza of melodious songs, traditional music, Odissi dance atop the float, bearing "The Great Konark Wheel", "Arch of Mukteswar Temple", Picturesque of "The Mighty Konark" and "Ratha Yatra". Indeed, the event was classic and touched many hearts among the fellow Indians and New Yorkers. The Float conveyed the message of, Rich Odiya Heritage, Jagannath Culture, Abundant Natural Resources, Unique Life Style and Friendly Odiya Community.



Audience around the globe became spell bounded after observing the Odissi Dance tuned to devotional songs.

"Nandighosa, Taladhwa and Darpadalan" at the backdrop, Konark Wheel taking the center stage, Odissi dancers, dancing like "Devadasis" in front of the chariots are some of the unique symbol of Orissa on its Float, that attracted many audience regardless of their religion, ethnicity and race.



Organized by IFA, since last 26 years, the India Day Parade is a significant event for fellow Indians in Tri-State area. This year, Odiyas appeared with exuberance, strength, color and pride to celebrate the birthday of Independent India. This was our 3rd year of participation. Local Odiyas walked the parade route, along with fellow Indians, visiting Indian dignitaries, celebrities, Bollywood stars and others. At the end of the parade, there were Indian cultural programs, music, dance, and tasty treat of ethnic foods from all around India. Nice summer weather, endless entertainment, thousands of Indians and all other traditional galore, made the day memorable forever. Bestowed by the blessing of Lord Jagannath, the Odiyas will continue the legacy in future, represent the state and country and celebrate in pride.

Please follow the following link to view some more memorable pictures from the event.

<http://picasaweb.google.com/dhirendrakar/NewyorkIndipendenceday2006OrissaFloat>

February 4, 2006: Saraswati Puja at India center in Shrewsbury, MA:

The weather was very cooperative, the venue was full of warmth, and as usual the food prepared by all our volunteers was spectacular. We had a good turn out of attendees.

Cultural program consisted of items presented by children: Toshit Panigrahi, Anindita Kumar, Amrut Padhi, Anish Padhi, Milani Behera, Sneha Mahapatra, Roshni Sahu., and others who did a marvelous job. Adult performers including Kalpana Panigrahi on key board, Mitali Kumar, Rajesh Behera, Prashant Sahoo and Leeta Mohanty with their vocal performances rendered an evening of melody. Mr. Prashant Sahoo spoke about his music site and the Oriya music. Please access www.oriyamus.com, or www.oriyacd.com for details. Mr. Sushant Dash delivered a magnificent presentation on Odia software that teaches the young easy ways to learn Oriya All interested may access www.odia.org for details.

**May 6, 2006: Holi/Spring festival at St. Paul's Episcopal Church, Hopkinton, MA:**

It began with "Bandhu Milan", followed by a rich cultural function, great snacks, and a sumptuous Chinese dinner. The beautiful weather complimented the occasion.

Members and local talents lent a big hand to make the cultural program a big success, which consisted of: Significance of Holi explained in words and thru "palli geeta" by Leeta Mohanty; Odissi dances choreographed by Jayashree Mahapatra; Keyboarding by Kalpana Panigrahi & Toshit Panigrahi; Movie song dance by Sneha & Roshni, Sambalpuri dance by Megha & Neha; Popular Oriya songs by Prashant Sahoo that brought back memories of back "home" Other musical performers included Leeta Mohanty, Satya Mishra, Budhinath and Kalyani Padhi.

Mr. Prashant Sahoo of www.oriyamus.com released a set of new CD's recreating the melodies of great singer late Akshaya Mohanty. The 4-CD album was unveiled by Bijoy Laxmi Mishra, President, OSNE.

**August 12, 2006: Annual Picnic:**

The Society organized its annual summer picnic at Goddard Memorial State Park in East Greenwich, Rhode Island. The event was very well attended. The lunch consisted of barbecued chicken and corn, fruits, and plenty of other preparations by members. The ocean and the golf course being close by, which attracted people to pursue a variety of interests. Other groups submerged themselves in card games, badminton, horse shoe, etc. Sulina Mohanty organized children's activities including an art session. The day ended with dinner consisting of catered Indian food and some "bana bhoji" menus.

The members and children had a great time. The balmy weather helped to make the day even more enjoyable. A general body meeting was held towards the end. The executives kept it brief by introducing new members, and updating members about OSA and upcoming chapter events.

Showcasing of Oriya Heritage in Columbus India Festival:

The Oriya community of Columbus, Ohio had participated in the India Festival held at the Veteran's Memorial Hall on October 15, 2005. A stall exhibiting various aspects of the rich heritage and culture of Orissa was opened which drew a large number of visitors. The visitors were very enthusiastic to know about Orissa and had had numerous questions about the state and its heritage. The Mayor of Columbus, Mr. Michael Coleman was one of the distinguished visitors to the stall and was very impressed with the rich cultural heritage of Orissa. The Oriya children also participated in the cultural festival. Thanks are due to Mr. Saswata Mohapatra and other members of the Oriya community for organizing the event.

Kumar Purnima Celebration:

The chapter celebrated Kumar Purnima on November 5, 2005 in Parma, Ohio. The get-together was started with signature campaign for the establishment of National Institute of Science (NIS) in Orissa. Birendra Jena provided the background information on the issue and explained how the Government of India done a grave injustice to the state by reversing the decision of the previous government which had announced to set up the NIS in Orissa. After that all the members signed the petition addressed to the Prime Minister of India requesting him to reconsider the issue. Discussions were also held on the measures that could be taken up to improve the education sector in Orissa. This was followed by potluck dinner and light entertainment program.

Dr. Prasanta Raj Honored:

Dr Prasanta Kumar Raj, a senior member of the local Oriya community was s recently honored by the Indian Physician Association of Northern Ohio (AIPNO) as the Distinguished Physician in recognition of his contributions to the advancement of Medicine and Surgery and involvement in community activities. The award was presented to him by Dr. Toby Cosgrove, CEO of Cleveland Clinic at the Annual Awards Black Tie gala dinner of the Association on November 12, 2005 at La Center, Westlake, Ohio, where Dr. Cosgrove was the Chief Speaker. In his introduction of Dr. Raj, Dr. Nanavati spoke of his contribution to the medical profession by citing his original scientific publications and other accomplishments. He was also lauded as a philanthropist with many exemplary achievements. In his acceptance speech, .Dr Raj talked about the rich culture and traditions of his home state, Orissa and mentioned about the efforts being made in order to uplift the image of the state.



AIPNO is a part of National Indian Physician Organization called AAPI

NEWS FROM CALIFORNIA

International Gurukul's 6th Annual Function and Cultural Extravanga.

The event has been successfully staged on June 4th 2006. Thanks to the tireless effort and contributions from all our members, volunteers, supporters and well wishers. The event was packed with a dozen of dashing programs; the theatre was great with all modern equipments; performers were so energetic and creative and finally the audience was very supportive and encouraging. The sequence of events were: Opening song and offering flower to Lord Jagannath, Keynote address by the Director, Chorus song by all students, Yoga Show, Dance drama Shrikrishna by children, Kabita Pathostava, Adult drama Akhadua Mahapatra, Pallavi (Bollywood dance by Children), Raffles and finally the climax of the show the Bollywood dance by adults. Both the dramas were supported by excellent props and the entire program was enchanted by live music/orchestra. There was free dinner served at the end of the show outside the Spartan Theatre in a friendly and cheerful ambience with pleasant weather condition. We brought out a nice Souvenir with many poems and articles contributed by young and adult members of iGurukul and Oriya Community.

Namaskar,
International Gurukul Family.
<http://www.internationalgurukul.org>

A Letter on Gurukul: Young Odisha in USA

Dear Friends

I want to share with you today something different. During my short stay here I was greatly impressed to see how a small group of dedicated Odias in far away America are struggling to maintain their identity and promote the image of the state and its cultural heritage. It is to be seen to believe. Most of them are quite young!!

By now Orissa Society of America is fairly well known. But in California, where about 500 Odiya families are living and most of them in the posh Bay area, a new Odisha is taking shape-without a shade of petty caste, communal or regional feeling. I call them the new Omericans-Odisha Americans. Every year they celebrate Rath Yatra, Bahuda yatra, Raja, Nuakhai, Basant Panchami and Ganesh chaturthi together. Now all of them have come together for constructing a Jagannath temple here.

The other day I was in Freemont city to witness celebration of India's Independence Day with a respectable attendance of about fifty thousand people. There were a large number of floats and a prominent one among them was the Odisha float which got the third prize. I came to know that during last seven years the Odisha float has stood first three times for its creative projection of a variety of rich Odishan heritage.

And all this (happened) through voluntary efforts without any official patronage. It was quite inspiring to see the crowd repeatedly cheering the girls singing and dancing to the tunes of classical Odissi and Sambalpuri folk songs.

During August only, Bay area Omericans have lined up four cultural events. In order to ensure that their children didn't forget the mother tongue, a small group of young Oriya ladies have set up a Sunday school called "CHAOS", an acronym for Chala Ame Oriya Sikhiba running successfully for the last six years. To expand and diversify this experiment Omericans have set up another organization here known as International Gurukul. Struggling to grow they regularly organize seminars and workshops on life skills and human development issues.

Similarly Oriya Sewak is another new initiative that has been quietly doing commendable work in some backward areas of the state. Their work in the aftermath of super cyclone has been very well appreciated. Jyoti Kala Mandir, a dance and music institution established here more than a decade ago to promote Odissi has now emerged as a cultural hub in California attracting many non Oriya Americans to its fold apart from people from other countries.

Enlightened and concerned Oriyas meet here almost every weekend to discuss what they can do for the state and to take stock of what is happening in the state. So the branches have not forgotten their roots! Do the roots remember them?

With regards and best wishes,

Dr Bhagban prakash

NISER

Dhirendra Kar, Vice President OSA

NISER A New Direction in Activism for the Cause of Our Beloved State Orissa



We prove that if there is a will there is a way. Our sustained and fight together for the cause of Orissa on the issue of regional disparity and shifting of NIS from Bhubaneswar to Calcutta, brought a great awareness among all Oriyas worldwide and every one did his piece of work and finally, Foundation stone for NISER was laid by Dr. Man Mohan Singh, honorable Prime Minister of India on 28th August'06. Please see the content of PM's speech on this occasion. With the formal announcement of NISER (in Bhubaneswar) by the Prime minister Dr. Man Mohan Singh, our objective of correcting the above-mentioned injustice has been somewhat "achieved". Although Central govt. has delayed the process by not listening to our demands in the right spirit in the peak of our struggle since August-September 2005 and dilly-dally the case by creating confusion about NIS and IISER. but still our struggle has paid dividends. After all Orissa is going to be benefited and that's exactly what we wish in heart of heart. It's certainly a time of happiness to see that the struggle of Oriya's has born fruit after almost a year of Struggle. This fight is unique in the sense it brought all Oriyas around the globe together for one cause.

In such moment of happiness let us congratulate all the persons involved in the struggle, members of "OSA", members of "Agami Odisha", members of "NIS-IISER", All MP's of Orissa, Members of "My Odisha ", All students of Colleges in Orissa, Senior citizens of Orissa, All print and electronic media and the global Oriya family in coming together to fight for the cause of our beloved state. We have frozen the iiser.blogspot.com blog where we have documented all the developments of this struggle and moving over to a new blog <http://niser-bbsr.blogspot.com> as now our job will be to monitor NISER and make sure that it is at par (or better than) the IISERs.

The issue of NIS is just a symbol of the injustices done to our state and our struggle and fight is going to be there till we see Orissa as the Number one State in India.

Reference :

<http://pib.nic.in/release/release.asp?relid=20345>

PM ANNOUNCES SETTING UP OF NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF SCIENCE EDUCATION AND RESEARCH AT BHUBANESWAR

18:37 IST

The Prime Minister, Dr. Man Mohan Singh, announced the setting up of National Institute of Science Education and Research at Bhubaneswar today.

Following is the text of the Prime Minister's speech on the occasion:

"I am truly delighted to be here in Bhubaneswar today at the Institute of Physics. I have great affection and regard for the people of Orissa whose contribution to the history, culture and economy of our nation are second to none. I am particularly delighted that my first visit to this State is associated with the announcement of the establishment of the National Institute of Science Education and Research. This is the fulfillment of a promise to the people of Orissa. Our Government is genuinely committed to the development of Orissa and to the educational empowerment of the people of Orissa. The National Institute of Science Education and Research will be a symbol of that commitment.

I share the concern being expressed by many of our scientists that our best minds are not turning to science, and those who do, do not remain in science. I am told that less than 3% of school children want to pursue a career in science. We must find ways of making these disciplines more attractive to children. We have to improve the quality of teaching of science and mathematics at the school level. Countries like China and South Korea are far ahead of us in investing in science and technology. We need to do much more in this vital area if we have to keep pace with the evolving global economy of the future.

We have to take urgent steps to prevent scientifically talented persons from moving away from careers in scientific research and development. This is happening at the 10+2 level and at the B.Tech. level. Most of our universities are performing sub-optimally. They lack good infrastructure and suffer from acute faculty shortage. There is not enough interaction between our academia and industry. Many technologies developed for our rural areas have not been delivered properly. We will need to address these on a war footing.

I am also concerned about the regional imbalance in science teaching and the development of science and technology in India. There was a time when the East was at the forefront. Today the East is lagging behind the South and the West. We need to redress this regional imbalance. It is to meet these challenges that we will be setting up the National Institute of Science Education and Research in Bhubaneswar.

As India moves up the technology ladder and improves its relative competitive status in the global domain, the need for capable innovative scientists will increase. Our higher education programs should empower young science students to engage not only in advanced research but also in domains which facilitate translation of research results into development of new technologies and their commercial deployment. This requires acquisition of necessary experimental skills and familiarity with the realities of practical world.

There is a strong synergy between research and higher education. Co-existence of both leads to higher excellence in both. It provides opportunities for students to be exposed to excitements in scientific research and benefit from teachers who are themselves engaged in expanding the horizons of knowledge. Such participation in teaching also benefits researchers by way of greater clarity of thought and availability of students to broaden support to research activity.

The National Institute of Science Education and Research will facilitate this synergy between research and higher education. The major strength of Institute of Physics is a strong emphasis on the quality of the faculty and its present pre-doctoral and doctoral programs are among the best in the country. The faculty is composed of all world-renowned scientists who are also established teachers. Association with the Institute of Physics will enable the National Institute of Science Education and Research to draw upon this outstanding tradition and expand it further to cater to a much larger pool of science students. NISER will be at par with the IISER being established in other places but will operate under the umbrella of DAE. It will undertake integrated 5-year Masters courses in core and emerging branches of science to provide world-class education to students after the 10+2 stage. It can also include an integrated M.Sc.–Ph.D. after graduation level.

The emphasis of education at NISER will be to generate scientific trained manpower of a very high quality which could directly find placement across the country. Greater emphasis will be on branches of science

relevant to the Department of Atomic Energy and also catering to the better exploitation and utilization of Orissa's regional natural resources. Orissa's mineral and marine resources will be taken into consideration in designing training programs of students here.

While working within the DAE family and awarding degrees under the Homi Bhabha National Institute [HBNI], which is already a Deemed University for post-graduate studies, NISER will be an institute at par with the best in the country in terms of facilities and faculty. It will have a research to teaching load as practiced in the best universities in the world. This will ensure world class education and also attract the best researchers. It will have world-class experimental facilities in all the current and emerging branches of science including physics, chemistry, modern biology and environmental sciences. We will provide enough resources to DAE to convert this into reality within a very short time frame.

In order to attract bright young students to this integrated course, it is proposed to make the course challenging on a world-class level, give reasonable stipend to the students and also allow them time for research activities even during their student days. There will be campus interviews and placements at both research centers and in industry in order to make the course more attractive to the students in the present competitive environment of market forces which drives them to IT-related jobs.

I am told that this project will be quickly completed in two phases. In Phase-I, additional courses will be started immediately in 3 or 4 selected subjects like physics, mathematics, chemistry and biology with existing faculty and new faculty. In Phase-II, 200 acres of land will be acquired around Bhubaneswar and activities expanded on a larger scale. When completed, I am confident that the National Institute of Science Education and Research will become a Mecca for science just as TIFR and IISc are today.

With our recent unprecedented economic growth, I am optimistic that India will become a 'developed country' in the not too distant future. In this process, Science & Technology will continue to play a major role. Since independence, there has been a great deal of progress in our S&T system. This is evident from the success of the mission-oriented S&T agencies, like the family of DAE institutions, that have made our nation proud.

However, I am aware that we must increase our expenditure on Science & Technology. India's expenditure on S&T is about 1% of our GDP. This is half of what developed countries are devoting to S & T. The Government is committed to increasing R&D funding. For the last few years, we have been allocating larger budgets for R&D. For example, last year, we increased it by 20%. We shall strive to reach the target of 2% in the 11th Plan. But I also expect the private sector to do more in this area. We also need more public- private partnership in R&D in all areas of S&T.

One way of making careers in science and technology attractive would be to improve remuneration and ensure the integrity of selection processes. It is well known that the initial starting salary for scientists with a PhD in India is often lower than those of Engineers, Doctors and Management graduates. It is obvious that if talented young people are to be retained in science, scientists have to be treated differently than other Government employees in service and salary matters.

The Government will be happy to provide career support for students talented in science for a reasonable period, including into their initial employment years, to attract such students to scientific research. There is also a need to develop a more productive interface between the National Laboratories and the University system. Proximate national laboratories could supplement the faculty both for undergraduate and post-graduate courses in universities and colleges. Private sector enterprises should also be able to create centers for their product innovation and development in proximate national laboratories and universities.

I would like to reaffirm my commitment to the growth and modernization of Indian science and technology institutions. The establishment of the National Institute of Science Education and Research in Bhubaneswar is one more symbol of this commitment. I hope this institution will emerge as a center of creative teaching and research and contribute to our national development. Orissa has produced many great scientists of India such as Jogesh Chandra Pati. I hope this institution will produce many more in the years to come. I wish you all the best in all your endeavors."



NROFC

Non-Resident Oriya Facilitation Center

Regd. no. 22034/15 of 2005-06 of Orissa under Registration of Societies Act 1860
D-3, B. J. B. Nagar, Bhubaneswar 751014 (0674 2432251)

To
Our Friends Overseas

Re: Third Prabasi Oriya Divas on Dec. 24, 2006 at Bhubaneswar

On behalf of the NRO Cell of the Government of Orissa and the Non-Resident Oriya Facilitation Center (a society registered), we would like to invite you to participate in the **Third Prabasi Oriya Divas** and the 3rd Annual Symposium on Orissa Development. The Inaugural Ceremony will start at Nine Thirty O'Clock in the morning on **December 24th, 2006** at Community Center, NALCO Nagar, Bhubaneswar. Over the years, members of the Non-Resident Oriya Community have contributed to various development projects in Orissa. They evince keen interest in peaceful development of the State, in the contribution of the corporate sector to the wholesome growth of the people of Orissa, in the state of higher education in Orissa and in raising the living standard of the common man of the State. The concern they show leads the public, the press and the Government on their right track. The Third Pravasi Oriya Diwas will hold a symposium to highlight the contributions by NRO community, to involve local organizations in the efforts and to seek Orissa Government participation in these projects.

The NROFC and the NRO cell of the State Government will facilitate their endeavors in these regards. Our get-together in this annual Pravasi Oriya sammelan is a step in that direction.

We are attaching a copy of the draft program for the day for your information. We will be grateful if you send your views in a write-up (in word format) to be printed in a souvenir befitting the occasion. Gist of your write up may be presented in the appropriate session of the Symposium.

Please note: We will be giving [opportunity to younger generations](#) of NRO community to present their talents [in performing arts](#) and introducing their achievements [in other fields](#). We request parents to let us have a list of participants so that we arrange programs suitably.

We look forward to hearing from you soon with your itinerary

With our best regards,

Sahadeva Sahoo, President, NROFC
Dhirendra Kar, Vice President, OSA
Chittaranjan Das, Secretary, NROFC
website at www.nrofc.org

15 September 2006

**3rd Prabasi Utkal Divas
&
3rd Orissa Development Symposium
December 24th, Nalco Community Centre at Nalco Nagar, Bhubaneswar
Tentative Programme**

REGISTRATIONS (8.30 – 9.00 AM)

\$25 or Rs 1,000 for Non-residents, Rs 500 for Residents, and Rs. 500 for family members and Guests. Sahadeva Sahoo, (President – NROFC) at sahademas@yahoo.com and 0674 2432251 (Bhubaneswar), Dhirendranath Kar (OSA Vice President and NRO Coordinator) at dhirendra_kar@hotmail.com

Morning Session (9.30 AM – 10.30 AM)

Inauguration

Presentation of Pravasi Prativa Samman

Hemant Senapati Trust Award

Tea Break (10.30-10.40 AM)

Session I: Orissa's Development and Corporate Response (10.40AM-12.30PM)

Presentations and discussions on investments in Orissa

Lunch (12:30 – 1:30 PM)

Session II: Higher Education - Quality & Problems (1.30-3.00)

Discussions and presentations on NRO participation

Tea Break (3.00-3.30)

Session III: Striking at Poverty (3.30-5.00)

Session IV: Closing Discussion (5.00 – 5.30PM)

6:00 PM: Cultural Program by Children of NRO Community and Professional troupes.

If possible, Handicrafts-cum-Textile exhibition and ethnic food festival

1ST GLOBAL CONVENTION OF NON-RESIDENT ORIYAS - *Invitation*

1ST GLOBAL CONVENTION OF NON RESIDENT ORIYAS AND OTHER INTERESTED NRIs

16th - 17th DECEMBER 2006

INDIA INTERNATIONAL CENTRE, NEW DELHI

Dear friends

Odissa Forum is a Delhi based registered Society of professionals from diverse fields and is devoted to socio-economic, cultural and habitat issues of Orissa. Since its inception in December 1998, Odissa Forum has striven hard to project the rich cultural heritage of Orissa and has provided a platform to its members for dialogue on issues concerning socio-economics and cultural development of Orissa.

On every second Saturday of the month, the members assemble at Orissa Bhavan and discuss issues ranging from economics, environment, education to culture, literature, arts and crafts.

1ST GLOBAL CONVENTION OF NON RESIDENT ORIYAS AND OTHER INTERESTED NRIs IN DELHI:

You will be glad to know that Odissa Forum is organizing the 1ST GLOBAL Non- Resident Oriyas and other interested NRI MEET in Delhi to be held at India International Center, 40 Max Mueller Marg, New Delhi on 16th December 2006.

The date has been so fixed to enable you to combine your visit with NRO Day in Bhubaneswar (25th December 2006).

This meet has the support of Ministry of Overseas Affairs, Govt. of India and Orissa Govt.

This two-day meet is intended to:

- Increase personal and professional contacts among NROs and interested NRIs with interested in business, Tourism or other areas of various countries, other cities and the large Odiya population in Delhi & NCR.
- Promote business / investment/professional opportunity on a broader front.
- Recognize outstanding and life time achievements of NROs in various fields. Nominations will be sought widely and from all countries
- Project professional face of Orissa

Programme: - (16th December'06) At IIC (Tentative)

Inauguration & Address –

Union Minister, Overseas affairs, Govt. of India and CM of Orissa

9.30 AM to 10.30 AM

Recognition of Achievements among NROs in diverse professions:

Please send nominations (once you receive the details of the scheme) to Region coordinators (Mr. Niranjan Tripathy, President, OSA or Mr. Kirttan B Behera for America and Dr. Rajendra Das for Europe.) Coordinator for Mumbai and Western India is Mr. D P Mishra.

Symposium on opportunities & Networking:

- I. BPO / IT**
- Presentation from industry body
 - Corporate *Invitees* *10.30 AM to 12.00 Noon*
- II. Education and Health care***
- FICCI / PHD Chamber of Commerce presentation
 - Corporate / Institutional Invitees *12.00 Noon to 1.30 PM*
- *NRO Doctors can have a separate meet with corporate Hospital chiefs and leading members of the Profession if there is sufficient interest.
- Lunch *1.30 PM to 2.30 PM*
- III. NGOs**
- Interaction with successful NGOs *2.30 PM to 3.30 PM*
- IV Personal needs of Guests**
- Real Estate Investment in NCR *3.30 PM to 4.30 PM*
 - Citizenship Issues
- V. Closing Discussion**
- **Cocktails & Dinner at Rose Garden I.I.C** *7.30 PM*

DINNER TO BE HOSTED BY UNION MINISTER, OVERSEAS AFFAIRS, GOVT. OF INDIA

Programme :- (17th December'06)

Odissa festival at Delhi Haat Inauguration

- ✓ Day – Enjoy shopping and savoring authentic cuisine of Orissa and other states at Dilli Haat
- ✓ Evening –Cultural Performances – Sai International Auditorium, Lodhi Road Minister of Culture from Govts of Orissa and Delhi will be invited.
- ✓ Temple Dinner at Jagannath Temple (Optional)

Registration Fees:

- ❖ The fee that will include symposium, Lunch and Dinner on the 16th and cultural performances on 17th will be \$50.00 for NRIs Plus \$15.00 for their family members or guests to be paid while registering for the Meet.
- ❖ Registration for Residents will be Rs.500. (dinner by invitation for residents)

HOTEL BOOKING

We can book 30-40. Rooms in India International Center and India Habitat Center (both have reasonable tariff of \$50for single room and-\$70 for double per Night) Talks are on for block bookings

With some hotels. Please Mail your requests to Odissaforum@rediffmail.com or contact me or:

	<u>Contact Person</u>		<u>Mobile No.</u>	<u>Email I.D</u>
1.	S K Das	General Secretary,	Odissa Forum	9811990251 skdas4@gmail.com
2.	Ravi Pani	Treasurer	Odissa Forum	9810705062 ravipani@itgi.co.in

Please inform us as soon as possible so that block booking can be arranged in a suitable Hotel in Delhi in addition to IIC and IHC

Coordinators

1.	U.S.A	Mr. Kirtan Behera	310-5474800	kbehera@aol.com
		Mr. Niranjana Tripathy (President OSA)	9403827305	tripathy@unt.edu
2.	Germany	Mr. Rajendra N. Das	0049-2131-476137	
3	Mumbai	Mr D.P. Mishra	09820049581	

Please contact them for further clarification or e-mail to me directly.

Executive committee of Odissa Forum:

Mr. N. C Patnaik	President
Mrs. Monica Das	Vice President
Mrs. Rajalaxmi Rath	Vice President
Mr. S K Das	General Secretary
Mr. Ravi Pani	Treasurer

Advisory Board for the Global Meet in Delhi :

Mr. Lalit Mansingh
 Mr. J P Das
 Dr. G K Das
 Justice G.B. Patnaik
 Mr. Jatin Das
 Mr. Samar Ballav Mahapatra
 Mr. Amulya Ratna Nanda
 Mr. I. Srinivas Resident Commissioner, Govt. of Orissa

Executive Committee of Odissa Forum and member of the Advisory Board met on the 5th Jan'06 in Orissa Bhavan and have extended invitations to all NROs to join the meet in large numbers make it a great success.

Nagen C Patnaik
 President, Odissa Forum
 Ph: 911245061216
 email: nagen_patnaik@yahoo.com
 mob: 9811312487

Grand Single Evening ORIYA Party across USA for OSA membership drive

Dear all,

An Idea and Proposal from Prakash Patro:

Objective:

- To enroll new annual members for OSA
- To make more OSA life members, patrons and benefactors
- To announce OSA affairs and the upcoming convention
- To raise donations for OSA

Proposal:

- A coordinated single day ORIYA party across USA in every county, city, and state in respective individual homes on the same evening. You will know there is Oriya party going on everywhere that evening.
- Besides having fun, the purpose is to enroll all from ORISSA in OSA annual membership and generate funds for OSA as donation if necessary.
- In the future all these events could be electronically connected and viewed through Internet or TV or phone.
- Proposed Date: **Last Saturday Of February Every Year**
- OSA National will coordinate any minor peripheral issues if necessary. It is a LOCAL EVENT PARTY.
- Many things can grow out of this as time goes by in the future which cannot probably be even imagined right now if this succeeds.

ନମସ୍କରଣୀୟ

ଶାନ୍ତି ଲତା ମିଶ୍ର, ରତେଞ୍ଜର, ମିନେଶୋଟା

ତୁମର ଆକାର, ବିକାର ନାହିଁ ।
ତୁମର ତ ରଂଗ ରୂପ ନାହିଁ ॥
ଯେ ରୂପରେ ଯିଏ ସ୍ମରିଛି ତୁମକୁ,
ସେ ରୂପରେ ଦୃଷ୍ଟ ହୁଅ ତାହାକୁ ॥୧॥

କେବେ କାହା ପାଇଁ କଳା କହ୍ନାଇ ।
କେବେ ଯୀଶୁ କେବେ ଆଲ୍ଲା ହୋଇ ॥
ରାମ, ଗୋବିନ୍ଦ, ଜଗନ୍ନାଥ ବୋଲାଇ ।
ଲକ୍ଷ୍ମୀ, ମେରି କେବେ ପାର୍ବତୀ ହୋଇ ॥
ଯେ ରୂପରେ ଯିଏ ଭଜିଛି ତୁମକୁ,
ସେ ରୂପରେ ଦୃଷ୍ଟ ହୁଅ ତାହାକୁ ॥୨॥

ଦୌପଦୀ ତାକେ ଯଶୋଦା ନନ୍ଦନ ।
ଅହଲ୍ୟା ପାଇଁ କି ରଘୁ ନନ୍ଦନ ॥
ସଂସାର ଦୃଷ୍ଟିରେ ଅଭୟାଲମ୍ବନ ।
ଭକ୍ତ ପାଇଁ ତୁମେ ଜଗନ୍ନୋହନ ॥
ଯେ ରୂପରେ ଯିଏ ଚିନ୍ତଇ ତୁମକୁ ।
ସେ ରୂପରେ ଦୃଷ୍ଟ ହୁଅ ତାହାକୁ ॥୩॥

ସୁନାର ଦେଉଳେ, ହୀରାର ମନ୍ଦିରେ,
ତୁମେ ବନ୍ଦି ହୋଇ ରୁହ ତ ନାହିଁ ।
ମଣିଷ ଗଢ଼ା ପଥର ମୂର୍ତ୍ତିରେ,
ଅବସ୍ଥାନ ତୁମେ କର ତ ନାହିଁ ॥
ଯେ ରୂପରେ ଯିଏ ତାଜିଛି ତୁମକୁ,
ସେ ରୂପରେ ଦୃଷ୍ଟ ହୁଅ ତାହାକୁ ॥୪॥

କଞ୍ଚନା, ଜଞ୍ଜନାର ବହୁ ଉର୍ଦ୍ଧ୍ୱରେ ।
ଘୂର୍ଣ୍ଣୟମାନ ବିଶ୍ୱାସ ବଳୟେ ॥
ମୂଲ୍ୟାଙ୍କନ ତୁମ ! ସର୍ବ ଶକ୍ତି ବାହାରେ ।
ସ୍ୱୟଂ କର୍ତ୍ତା ! ସ୍ୱୟଂ ସୃଷ୍ଟ ସଂସାରେ ॥
ଯେ ରୂପରେ ଯିଏ ଭାବଇ ତୁମକୁ,
ସେ ରୂପରେ ଦୃଷ୍ଟ ହୁଅ ତାହାକୁ ॥୫॥

ଦୁଇଟି କବିତା

ତାପସ ରଂଜନ ସାହୁ, ଡାଲାସ୍, ଟେକ୍ସାସ୍

- ୧ -

ହୃଦୟ ତ ଡରି ଡରି ଯାଏ,
ମନରେ ଉଠଇ କୋହ,
କେବେ ପୁଣି ବିମୁଚିଏ
ଆଖିରୁ ଝରାଏ ଲୁହ;

ଶୁଖି ଶୁଖି ଯାଉଥିବା ପତ୍ର ସବୁ
ଭରୁଥିବି ଝୁଡ଼ିରେ ତୋ,
ଜିଇଁ ଜିଇଁ ଯାଉଥିବ ସବୁଜିମା
ଛୁଆଁରେ ଛୁଆଁରେ ତୋ,

ଲୁଗୁଲୁବି କେଉଁଠି ବା
ଛୁଇଁଛୁ ଯେ ଏ ଦେହକୁ . . .
ଦେଖାଇବି କାହାକୁ ବା
ବାନ୍ଧିଛୁ ଯେ ଏ ମନକୁ,
ଜୋଛନାରେ ଜହ୍ନ ତୋର
ଅଙ୍ଗ ଅଙ୍ଗ ଜଳେ ମୋର,
ଦୂରତ୍ୱ ତୋ ଅପହଞ୍ଚ,
କାଟିନେଲି ତେଣା ମୋର !

- ୨ -

ଆପଣାଇ ନେ ମୋତେ ଜୀବନ,
ଭରି ନେ ବୁକୁରେ ତୋ ମୋ ଅଭିମାନ ।
ଲହୁରେ କି ରଙ୍ଗେଇନି ପାଦ
ତୋ ରାସ୍ତାରୁ କଖା ତୋଳିନେଇ,
ଲହୁରେ କି ଭରିନି ମୁଁ ଆଖି
ତୋର ପ୍ରତି ଦୁଃଖ ଆପଣାଇ ?

ମିଛ ମିଛ ବାହାନାରେ ଦିନେ
ଦୁନିଆଁଠୁ ଲୁଚିଛପି କେବେ
ସପନରେ ଗଢ଼ିନେଲି ସୁନାର ମୁଁ ଘର;
ଛୋଟ ଅବା ଛାଇଟିଏ କା'ର
ଭିଜେଇଲା ଆଖିପତା ମୋର
ଦୁଇଟୋପା ଲହୁରେ ମୁଁ
ଭରିନେଲି ମନ ।

ମଞ୍ଚପ୍ରବେଶ

ବିଜ୍ଞାନୀ ଦାସ, କଲମ୍ବିଆ, ମେରୀଲାଣ୍ଡ, ଆମେରିକା

ମେ ମାସର ଚାଣ ଖରା ଦେହକୁ ଜାଳି ଦେଉଥିଲା ଯେମିତି । ମନକୁ ଜାଳୁଥିଲା ଚିତ୍ରାର ମନ୍ତ୍ରବ୍ୟ । ଦୃଢ଼କଣ୍ଠରେ ଜଣାଇଦେଇଥିଲା ଚିତ୍ରା ତାର ମତାମତ ।

- “ସୋନିର ମଞ୍ଚପ୍ରବେଶ ପାଇଁ ମୋ ପାଖରେ ସମୟ ନାହିଁ । ମୋତେ ଅନ୍ୟ ତିନିଜଣ ଛାତ୍ରୀଙ୍କର ମଞ୍ଚପ୍ରବେଶ ପାଇଁ ସମୟ ଦେବାକୁ ପଡ଼ିବ । ତାପରେ ମୋର ଚାକିରି । ସୋନି ଯେ ମାର୍ଚ୍ଚମାସରୁ ଏତେ କାମ୍ ବନ୍ଦ କଲାଣି, ତେଣୁ ମୁଁ ତାର ମଞ୍ଚପ୍ରବେଶ କରାଇପାରିବିନି ।”

- “ହେଲେ ଏଇଟା ତ ୨୦୦୪ ମସିହାର ମେ ମାସ । ମଞ୍ଚପ୍ରବେଶ ହେବାକୁ ଆହିରି ଗୋଟିଏ ବର୍ଷ ଅଛି । ମାର୍ଚ୍ଚମାସରୁ ମେ ପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ ତା’ ସ୍କୁଲ୍‌କାମ ଅଧିକ ଥାଏ । ଜୁନ୍‌ମାସରୁ ଅଗଷ୍ଟ ମାସ ପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ ତାର ସ୍କୁଲ୍‌କାମର ତାପ ନଥିବ । ସେଇ ସମୟରେ ସୋନି ପ୍ରତିଦିନ ନାଚ ଅଭ୍ୟାସ କଲେ, ଆସନ୍ତା ବର୍ଷରେ ମଞ୍ଚପ୍ରବେଶ ପାଇଁ ତୟାର ହୋଇପାରିବନି କାହିଁକି ?”

- “କିନ୍ତୁ ମୁଁ ଯେ ଜୁଲାଇ, ଅଗଷ୍ଟରେ ଛୁଟି ନେଇ ବାହାରକୁ ଯିବି । ତାପରେ ଯେତିକି ଦିନ ବି ଅଛି, ମୋର ପୁରୁଣା ଛାତ୍ରୀମାନେ ସବୁ ଛୁଟିରେ ଘରକୁ ଫେରିବେ ଓ ମୋ ପାଖକୁ ନାଚ ଶିଖିବାକୁ ଆସିବେ ।” - ଚିତ୍ରା ଜଣାଇଲା ।

ସୁଧା ବୁଝିପାରିପାରିଲାନି କି ଉତ୍ତର ଦେବ । ହଠାତ୍ ତା ମନକୁ ଆସିଲା ଯେ ଚିତ୍ରାର ପୁରୁଣା ଛାତ୍ରୀମାନେ ବି ତ ସୋନିକୁ ତାଲିମ କରିବାରେ ସାହାଯ୍ୟ କରିପାରନ୍ତେ । ତେଣୁ ସେ ଉତ୍ତରଦେଲା, “ଖରାଛୁଟିରେ ତମର କୌଣସି ଛାତ୍ରୀମାନେ ବି ତ ସୋନିକୁ ତାଲିମଦେବାରେ ସାହାଯ୍ୟ କରିପାରନ୍ତେ ?”

ସୁଧାର ଏ ପରାମର୍ଶ ଚିତ୍ରାକୁ ଭଲଲାଗିଲାନି । ସେ କହିଲା, “ମଞ୍ଚପ୍ରବେଶ ପାଇଁ ମୁଁ ହିଁ କେବଳ ତାଲିମ ଦେବି । ମୋର କୌଣସି ଛାତ୍ରୀ ନୁହେଁ । ସେଥିପାଇଁ ମୁଁ ପରାମର୍ଶ ଦେଉଛି ଯେ ସୋନି ତା’ ହାଇସ୍କୁଲ୍ ସରିବାପରେ କଲେଜପାର୍କରେ ହିଁ କଲେଜ ଯାଉ । ଆସନ୍ତାବର୍ଷ ନହୋଇ ପାରିଲେ ବି ମୁଁ ୨୦୦୭ ରେ ତାର ମଞ୍ଚପ୍ରବେଶ କରାଇବାକୁ ଚେଷ୍ଟାକରିବି ।”

ଚିତ୍ରାର ପରାମର୍ଶରେ ସୁଧା ରାଗିଗଲା । ନାଚପାଇଁ ପାଠପଢ଼ାର ଲକ୍ଷ୍ୟକୁ ନିର୍ଦ୍ଧାରିତ କରିବାଟା ତା’ ପାଇଁ ଅଗ୍ରାହ୍ୟ ଥିଲା । ତେଣୁ ସେ ଜବାବଦେଲା, “ନାଚକୁ ଯଦିଓ ସୋନି ଭଲପାଏ ଓ ଏକ ଉତ୍ତମ ଓଡ଼ିଶୀ ନୃତ୍ୟଶିଳ୍ପୀ ହେବା ସୋନିର ଲକ୍ଷ୍ୟ, କିନ୍ତୁ ସେଇଟା ତା ଜୀବନର ପରମ ଉଦ୍ଦେଶ୍ୟ ନୁହେଁ । ଭଲ ପାଠପଢ଼ି ତାଙ୍କରାଣୀ ହେବା ତାର ଲକ୍ଷ୍ୟ । ତେଣୁ ନାଚପାଇଁ କଲେଜ ବାଛିବାଟା ଅସମୀଚନ ।”

ସେଦିନ ଘରକୁ ଫେରି ସୁଧାର ମନଭିତରେ ତୋମ୍ମନ ସୃଷ୍ଟିହେଲା । ସୁବ୍ରତ ସେଇ ସମୟରେ ସାନଝିଅ ବିନି ଓ ମିନିକୁ ନେଇ ଓଡ଼ିଶା ଯାଇଥାନ୍ତି ଚନ୍ଦନଯାତ୍ରା ଉତ୍ସବ ପାଳନ କରିବାପାଇଁ । ସୋନିପାଇଁ ଓଡ଼ିଶୀ ପରିଧାନ ଓ ଗହଣା ପାଇଁ ବଜନା ଦେଇସାରିଥାନ୍ତି । ଏଣେ ମେ ମାସ ଶେଷବେଳକୁ ସୋନିର ଆତ୍ମଭୀତି ପ୍ରେସ୍‌ମେଣ୍ଟର ପରୀକ୍ଷା ସବୁ ଆସୁଥାଏ । ଚିତ୍ରାର ଏ ମତାମତ ସୋନିର ମନଭିତରେ ବି ହତାଶା ଖେଳାଇଦେଇଥାଏ ।

ଏଇତ ଠିକ୍ ପାଞ୍ଚମାସ ତଳର କଥା । ୨୦୦୪ ଆରମ୍ଭ ହୋଇଥାଏ । ନୂଆବର୍ଷରେ ନୂଆ ସପନ ଦେଖାଇ ଜାନୁୟାରୀ ୭ ତାରିଖ ଦିନ ଚିତ୍ରା ସେମାନଙ୍କୁ ଡାକି ସୋନିର ମଞ୍ଚପ୍ରବେଶ ପାଇଁ ପ୍ରସ୍ତାବ ଦେଇଥିଲା । ଗହଣା କେଉଁଠାରୁ କିଣାହେବ ଓ ପୋଷାକ କେଉଁଠାରୁ କିଣାହେବ, କେତେ ଖର୍ଚ୍ଚହେବ, ସେ ସବୁର ତାଲିକା ମଧ୍ୟ ଧରାଇ ଦେଇଥିଲା । ସେଇଦିନରୁ ସୋନି ସତ୍ୟହୃଦେ ତିନିଦିନ ନାଚ ଶିଖିବାକୁ ଆସୁଥିଲା ଚିତ୍ରାଠାରୁ । କଲମ୍ବିଆରୁ ଘଣ୍ଟାଏ ଲେଖାଏଁ ଡ୍ରାଇଭ୍ କରି ସେମାନେ ସୋନିକୁ ପୋଟୋମାକ୍ ଆଣୁଥିଲେ । ସେଥିରେ ପୁଣି ବେଳେବେଳେ ଟ୍ରାଫିକ୍‌ଜାମ୍, ବରଫପାତ ଓ ଝଡ଼ବର୍ଷା । ସୋନିର ପାଠପଢ଼ା ସାଙ୍ଗକୁ ଅନ୍ୟସବୁ ସ୍କୁଲ୍ ସମ୍ପର୍କୀୟ କାର୍ଯ୍ୟକ୍ରମରେ

ତାର ନାଚକ୍ଳାସ୍ ପାଇଁ ସମୟଦେବା ବହୁତ କଷ୍ଟସାଧ୍ୟ ଥିଲା । ତଥାପି ମଞ୍ଚପ୍ରବେଶ କରିବାର ବିଶେଷ ଲକ୍ଷ୍ୟ ନେଇ ସୋନି ଧୈର୍ଯ୍ୟର ସହିତ ନାଚ ଅଭ୍ୟାସ ବଜାୟ ରଖୁଥିଲା । ଏତେ କଷ୍ଟପରେ ଚିତ୍ରା ଏମିତି ଯେ ଗୋଟିଏ ବାକ୍ୟରେ ସେମାନଙ୍କର ସବୁ ସ୍ୱପ୍ନକୁ ତୁରନ୍ତ କରିଦେବ, ସେଇଟା ସୁଧାକୁ ବହୁତ ଆଘାତ ଦେଇଥିଲା । ତାର ମନେ ହୋଇଥିଲା ଯେମିତି ସୋନି ସେଠି ଶିଶୁପାଳ ହୋଇଯାଇଛି ।

ସୁଧା ଓ ସୁବ୍ରତ ନିଜ ଜୀବନରେ କେବେ କଳାକାର ହେବାର ଚାଲିମ୍ ପାଇନଥିଲେ । ତେବେ କଳା ପାଇଁ ଉଭୟଙ୍କ ମନରେ ତୀବ୍ର ସ୍ନେହ ଥିଲା ଓ ସେଥିପାଇଁ ନିଜ ଝିଅମାନଙ୍କୁ ନୃତ୍ୟକଳା, ସଙ୍ଗୀତକଳା ଇତ୍ୟାଦି ଶିକ୍ଷାଦେବାର ସମସ୍ତ ବ୍ୟବସ୍ଥା ସେମାନେ କରିଥିଲେ । ସୋନି ଚିତ୍ରାପାଖରୁ ୬ ବର୍ଷବେଳରୁ ଓଡ଼ିଶୀ ଶିଖିବା ଆରମ୍ଭ କରିଥିଲା । ସେତେବେଳକୁ ଡ୍ରାଗିଂଟନ୍ ଡି-ସି-ରେ ଅନ୍ୟ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ପିଲାମାନେ କେହି ଓଡ଼ିଶୀ ଶିଖୁନଥିଲେ । ସୋନି ଶିଖିବା ଆରମ୍ଭ କରିବା ପରେପରେ ଅନ୍ୟମାନେ ଓଡ଼ିଶୀ ପ୍ରତି ଆକୃଷ୍ଟ ହେଲେ ଓ ଚିତ୍ରାର ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଛାତ୍ରୀମାନଙ୍କ ସଂଖ୍ୟା ବଢ଼ିଥିଲା । ସୁଧାର ଅନ୍ୟ ଦୁଇ ଝିଅ ବିନି ଓ ମିନି ମଧ୍ୟ ପାଞ୍ଚ ବର୍ଷ କାଳରୁ ଓଡ଼ିଶୀର ଛାତ୍ରୀ ହୋଇଥିଲେ । ତେବେ ସେଇ ଚିତ୍ରା ଯେ ହଠାତ୍ ସୋନି ପ୍ରତି ଏମିତି ବିବେଚନାହୀନ ହୋଇପାରିବ, ସେକଥା ସୁଧାର ବିଶ୍ୱାସ ହେଉନଥିଲା ।

- “ତୁ କିଛି ଚିନ୍ତା କରନି ସୋନି । ତୋର ମଞ୍ଚପ୍ରବେଶ ୨୦୦୫ରେ ହିଁ ହେବ । ମୁଁ ସେଥିପାଇଁ ସମସ୍ତ ଚେଷ୍ଟା କରିବି ।”

- “କେମିତି ହେବ ମାମା ? ଦଶବର୍ଷ ଧରି ମୁଁ ଚିତ୍ରାଆଖିଙ୍କଠାରୁ ନାଚ ଶିଖିଆସୁଥିଲି, ସିଏ ଯଦି ମୋର ମଞ୍ଚପ୍ରବେଶ ପାଇଁ ଆଗ୍ରହ କରିଲେନି, ଆଉ ସେଇଟା କେମିତି ହୋଇପାରିବ ?”

- “ମୁଁ ତତେ ଓଡ଼ିଶୀ ପଠାଇବି ।” - ସୁଧା କହିଲା ସିନା, ହେଲେ କାହା ପାଖକୁ ପଠାଇବ, କେଉଁଠାକୁ ପଠାଇବ, କିଛି ଜାଣିନଥିଲା । ହେଲେ ସେ ହାରିଯିବନି । ଯଦିଓ ତାଙ୍କରାଣୀ ହେବାକୁ ଇଚ୍ଛା ରଖୁଥିବା ଝିଅଟି ଓଡ଼ିଶୀକୁ ଜୀବିକା ରୂପେ କେବେ ଗ୍ରହଣ କରିବନି, ତେବେ ମାନସିକ ସ୍ତରରେ ଏକ ଉତ୍ତମ ନୃତ୍ୟଶିଳ୍ପୀ ହେବାର ଆନନ୍ଦ ହିଁ ତା’ର ଲକ୍ଷ୍ୟ ଥିଲା । ତେବେ ସେଥିପାଇଁ ମଞ୍ଚପ୍ରବେଶ କରାଇବାର ଗୁରୁତ୍ୱ ବିଷୟରେ ବିଶ୍ଳେଷଣ କରି ସୁଧା ବେଳେବେଳେ ନିଜର ଖୁଆଲ ଉପରେ ସନ୍ଦେହ କରୁଥିଲା । ଭବିଷ୍ୟତ ଜୀବିକା ପାଇଁ ଗୁରୁତ୍ୱ ଆଉ କି ନଥାଉ, ସୋନିର ଆତ୍ମବିଶ୍ୱାସ ଫେରାଇ ଆଣିବାରେ ଯେ ତାର ମଞ୍ଚପ୍ରବେଶର ଗୁରୁତ୍ୱ ରହିଥିଲା, ସେଇଟା ସୁଧା ଭଲଭାବେ ବୁଝିଥିଲା । ସୋନିର ଅନ୍ୟ ସାଙ୍ଗମାନଙ୍କୁ ସୁଯୋଗ ଦେଉଥିବା ବେଳେ, ଚିତ୍ରା ଯେ ସୋନି ପାଇଁ ସଂପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ ଦାୟିତ୍ୱହୀନ ହୋଇଗଲା, ସେଇଟା ସ୍ୱୀକାର କରିବା ସୁଧା ପକ୍ଷେ ଅସମ୍ଭବ ଥିଲା । ଶେଷତକ ଯାହା ବି ହେଉ, ସୁଧା ନିଜ ପ୍ରଚେଷ୍ଟା ଜାରି ରଖିବ, ଏକ ଦୃଢ଼ ବିଶ୍ୱାସ ନେଇ ସୁଧା ଆରମ୍ଭକଲା ତାର ପରବର୍ତ୍ତୀ ଯୋଜନା ।

ଆମେରିକାରେ ରହୁଥିବା ସମସ୍ତ ଓଡ଼ିଶୀ ନୃତ୍ୟଶିଳ୍ପୀ ମାନଙ୍କର ଠିକଣା ସେ ଇଣ୍ଟରନେଟ୍‌ରୁ ସଂଗ୍ରହକଲା । ଓଡ଼ିଶାରେ ରହୁଥିବା ସମସ୍ତ ଓଡ଼ିଶୀ ଶିକ୍ଷକ ଓ ଶିକ୍ଷାକେନ୍ଦ୍ର ମାନଙ୍କର ଠିକଣା ମଧ୍ୟ ସେ ଇଣ୍ଟରନେଟ୍‌ରୁ ଖୋଜି ବାହାରକଲା । ତା’ ମନରେ ବିଭିନ୍ନ ରକମର ସୂତ୍ର ସବୁ ରୂପ ନେଉଥିଲେ । ତେବେ କେଉଁ ସୂତ୍ରଟି କାର୍ଯ୍ୟକାରୀ ହୋଇପାରିବ ଓ କେଉଁଟି ଅବାସ୍ତବ, ସେସବୁ ସଠିକ୍ ଭାବେ ନିର୍ଦ୍ଧାରଣ କରିବା ସେଇ ମୁହୂର୍ତ୍ତରେ କଠିନ ଥିଲା ।

- “ସୋନିକୁ କାଲିଫର୍ଣ୍ଣିଆ ପଠେଇବି, ନମିତା ବେହେରା ପାଖରୁ ସେ ଯାଇ ଗ୍ରୀଷ୍ମଋତୁରେ ନାଚ ଶିଖିଆସିବ । ଏମିତି ଛୁଟି ସମୟରେ ସେ କାଲିଫର୍ଣ୍ଣିଆ ଯାଉଥିବ ଓ ବେଳେବେଳେ ନମିତା ବି ଆସି ତାକୁ ଯଦି ନାଚ ଶିଖାଇ ଯାଇ ପାରିବ, ତେବେ ଅଗଷ୍ଟ ୨୦୦୫ ବେଳକୁ ସୋନିର ମଞ୍ଚପ୍ରବେଶ ସମ୍ଭବ ହୋଇପାରିବ ।”

- “ସୋନିକୁ ନହେଲେ ଏଲୋରା ପାଖକୁ କାନାଡାକୁ ପଠାଇବି ଛୁଟିରେ ।”

- “ନିୟୁଜର୍ସ ଅନିମିତାକୁ ତାକି ପଚାରିବି କି? ସେ ତ ଭଲ ଜଣାଶୁଣା ମୋର । ସୋନି ଯଦି ଯାଇ ତା’ ପାଖରେ ରହି ନାଚ ଶିଖିପାରିବ ।”

ଏମିତି କେତେକେତେ ଚିନ୍ତା ଆସିଲା ସୁଧାର ମୁଣ୍ଡରେ । ତେବେ ସୋନି ଯେ ଜଣେ ଝିଅ ପିଲା ଓ ତାର ନିରାପତ୍ନୀ ହିଁ ଆଉ ଏକ ଚିନ୍ତାର ବିଷୟ, ସେ ବିଷୟରେ ମଧ୍ୟ ଭାବିବାକୁ ପଡ଼ିବ । ଓଡ଼ିଶାର ଲଳିନୀ ସିତାରିଞ୍ଜ୍ ଓ ମୀରା ଦାସ୍‌ଙ୍କୁ ମଧ୍ୟ ସୁଧା ଇମେଲରେ ଚିଠି ଲେଖିଲା । ଉଭୟ ଲଳିନୀ ଓ ମୀରା ସୋନିକୁ ଟ୍ରେନିଙ୍ଗ୍ ଦେଇପାରିବେ ବୋଲି ଜଣାଇଲେ । ହେଲେ ଏଇ ପ୍ରସ୍ତାବଟିକୁ କେମିତି ଭାବେ କାର୍ଯ୍ୟକାରୀ କରାଯାଇ ପାରିବ ସେ ନେଇ ଚିନ୍ତିତହୁଏଲା ସୁଧା ।

ମେ ୧୭ ତାରିଖରେ ଓଡ଼ିଶାରୁ ଫେରି ଆସିଥିଲେ ସୁବ୍ରତ । ଚିତ୍ରାର ସିଦ୍ଧାନ୍ତ ଶୁଣି ସେ ମର୍ମାହତ ହେଲେ ଓ ସୋନିର ମଞ୍ଚପ୍ରବେଶ ଉପରୁ ଆଗ୍ରହ ତ୍ୟାଗ କରି ଅନ୍ୟ ଦୁଇଝିଅଙ୍କର ନାଚ ବି ବନ୍ଦ କରାଇବାକୁ ପରାମର୍ଶ ଦେଲେ ସେ । ଚିତ୍ରାକୁ ଇମେଲ୍ ଲେଖି ପିଲାମାନେ ଆଉ ନାଚ ଶିଖିବାକୁ ଆସିବେନି ବୋଲି ଜଣାଇଦେଲେ । ସୁଧା ମର୍ମାହତ ହେଲା ଓ ସିଏ ସ୍ଥିର କରିଥିବା ଯୋଜନା ବିଷୟରେ ଜଣାଇଲା । ସୁବ୍ରତଙ୍କୁ ଯୋଜନାଟି ଭଲଲାଗିଲା । ଲଳିନୀ ଓ ମୀରାଙ୍କ ଭିତରୁ କାହାକୁ ବାଛିବ, ସେ ବିଷୟରେ ଯେଉଁ ଦ୍ଵନ୍ଦ୍ଵ ଥିଲା, ସେଇଟା ବି ସିଏ ତତ୍ତ୍ଵଶାତ୍ ପରିଷ୍କାର କରିଦେଲେ । କଟକରେ ରହୁଥିଲେ ସୁବ୍ରତଙ୍କର ଉପର ଭାଇ । ତେଣୁ କଟକ ଫେନ୍ଦ୍ କରି ସେ ଭାଇଙ୍କ ଠାରୁ ମୀରା ଦାସ୍ ବିଷୟରେ ତଥ୍ୟ ସଂଗ୍ରହକଲେ । ଓକାହୋମାର ଶାନ୍ତନୁ ମୀରା ଦାସ୍‌ଙ୍କର ପ୍ରୋଗ୍ରାମ୍ ପୂର୍ବରୁ ଆୟୋଜନ କରାଇଥିଲା । ସେ ତେଣୁ ଶାନ୍ତନୁକୁ ମଧ୍ୟ ତାକି ପଚାରିଲେ ଓ ଶେଷରେ ମୀରା ଦାସ୍‌ଙ୍କ ସହିତ କଥାବାତ୍ସା କଲେ । ସ୍ଥିର କରାଗଲା ମୀରା ପାଇଁ ଭିସା ସ୍ଵନ୍-ସର୍ କରାଇବା ଓ ମୀରା ଯଦି ଶୀତଛୁଟିରେ କିଛିଦିନ ପାଇଁ ଆସି ସୋନିକୁ ନାଚ ଶିଖାଇପାରିବ ଓ ସୋନି ୨୦୦୫ ଗ୍ରୀଷ୍ମ ଛୁଟିରେ ଯାଇ ଓଡ଼ିଶାରେ ନାଚ ଶିଖି ଆସିପାରିବ, ତେବେ ତାର ମଞ୍ଚପ୍ରବେଶ ହେବାରେ କୌଣସି ଅସୁବିଧା ହେବନି ।

ହେଲେ ନାଚ ସହିତ ନିୟମିତତା ରଖିବା ଥିଲା ଆଉ ଏକ ସମସ୍ୟା । ନିୟମିତତା ପାଇଁ ଡ୍ରାଗିଂଟନ୍ ଡି-ସି ଅଞ୍ଚଳରେ ଜଣେ ଶିକ୍ଷୟିତ୍ରୀ ରହିବାର ଅନେକ ଆବଶ୍ୟକତା ରହିଛି । ତାପରେ ମୀରାକୁ ଭିସା ମିଳିବ, ନ ମିଳିବ, ସେ ବି ଥିଲା ଆଉ ଏକ ସମସ୍ୟା । ସୁଧା ପୁଣି ଇଣ୍ଟରନେଟ୍ ଖୋଜି ଚାଲିଲା ଡ୍ରାଗିଂଟନ୍ ଡି-ସି ଅଞ୍ଚଳର ଓଡ଼ିଶା ଶିକ୍ଷକ, ଶିକ୍ଷୟିତ୍ରୀ ମାନଙ୍କୁ ଜାଣିବା ପାଇଁ । ସିଏ ଯଦିଓ ଆଉ ଦୁଇଜଣ ଶିକ୍ଷୟିତ୍ରୀଙ୍କ ବିଷୟରେ ଶୁଣିଥିଲା, ତେବେ ସେମାନେ ଶିଖାଉଥିବା ସ୍ଥାନ ସବୁ ସୁଧାର ଘରଠାରୁ ବହୁତ ଦୂରରେ ଥିଲା । ହେଲେ ଇଣ୍ଟରନେଟ୍‌ରୁ ସେଦିନ ସେ କୋଣାର୍କ ତ୍ୟାନସ୍ ସ୍କୁଲ୍ ମେରୀକାଣ୍ଡରେ ନାଚ ଶିଖାଉଥିବା ସମ୍ବାଦ ପାଇଲା । ସଙ୍ଗେ ସଙ୍ଗେ ସେ କୋଣାର୍କ ତ୍ୟାନସ୍ ସ୍କୁଲ୍ ତାଲରେକ୍ଟର୍ ଜୟନ୍ତୀ ପେନ୍‌ଙ୍କୁ ଇମେଲ୍ ଦେଲା । ଜୟନ୍ତୀ ପେନ୍ ତା ଇମେଲ୍‌ର ଉତ୍ତର ଦେଇ ତା ସହିତ ଦେଖା କରିବାକୁ ଚାହିଁଲେ । ସବୁଠାରୁ ଭଲ ଖବର ଥିଲା ଯେ ଜୟନ୍ତୀ ପେନ୍ ଶିଖାଉଥିବା ସ୍ଥାନଟି ସୁଧାର କାର୍ଯ୍ୟକ୍ଷେତ୍ରରୁ ମାତ୍ର ଦଶମିନିଟ୍ ବାଟ; ସୁଧାର ଘରଠାରୁ ବି ଅଧଘଣ୍ଟାବର ବାଟ । ତେଣୁ ସୁଧା ବହୁତ ଖୁସି ହେଲା ଓ ଜୟନ୍ତୀ ପେନ୍‌ଙ୍କୁ ଦେଖା କରି, ପିଲାମାନଙ୍କୁ ସେଇଠାକୁ ପଠାଇବାର ସିଦ୍ଧାନ୍ତ ନେଲା ।

ସୁବ୍ରତ କିନ୍ତୁ ବୁଝୁନଥିଲେ । “ଜୟନ୍ତୀକୁ ସିଧା ସିଧା ପଚାରେ ସିଏ ସୋନିକୁ ମଞ୍ଚପ୍ରବେଶ ପାଇଁ ଗାଇଡ୍ କରିପାରିବ କି ନା । ଯଦି ସିଏ ରାଜି ନହୁଏ ତେବେ ଅର୍ଥହାନି ଓ ପ୍ରାଣପୀଡ଼ାର କିଛି ଆବଶ୍ୟକତା ନାହିଁ । କଣ ମଞ୍ଚପ୍ରବେଶ ନହେଲେ ବେଦ ଅଶୁଭ ହୋଇଯିବ ? ନାଚ ତ ସେମାନଙ୍କର ଜୀବିକା ହେବନି । କାହିଁକି ତେବେ ଆମେ ବୃଥାରେ ଏତେ ହଇରାଣ ହେବା ?”

ସୁବ୍ରତଙ୍କ କଥାରେ ସତ୍ୟତା ଥିଲା ଯଦିଓ, ସୁଧାର ଯୁକ୍ତି ଥିଲା ଅଲଗା । “ଯେ କୌଣସି କାର୍ଯ୍ୟ ଆମେ ଆରମ୍ଭ କରିବା, ତାର ଶେଷ ପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ ଯିବା ।” - ଏହାହିଁ ଥିଲା ସୁଧାର ବିଚାର ।

ଚିତ୍ରାର ମନ୍ତବ୍ୟ ଶୁଣି ସୋନିର ନିଜ ଉପରୁ ଭରସା ତୁଟି ଯାଇଥିଲା । ବାପାଙ୍କ କଥା ଶୁଣି ତାର ମନ ଆହୁରି ନିରୁତ୍ସାହିତ ହୋଇଗଲା । “ମୁଁ ଦୁଃଖ ଭଲ ନୃତ୍ୟଶିଳ୍ପୀ ନୁହେଁ । ସେଥିପାଇଁ ଚିତ୍ରା ଆଣ୍ଟି ମୋ ମଞ୍ଚପ୍ରବେଶ ପାଇଁ ଆଗ୍ରହ କଲେନି ଓ ମୋର ଅନ୍ୟ ଡିନି ସାଙ୍ଗଙ୍କର ମଞ୍ଚପ୍ରବେଶ କରାଇବାକୁ ଯତ୍ନଶୀଳ ହେଲେ । ତମେ କାହିଁକି ଏତେ ବ୍ୟସ୍ତ ହେଉଛ ମାମା ? ଚିତ୍ରା ଆଣ୍ଟି ଆୟୋଜନ କରିଥିଲେ ମଞ୍ଚପ୍ରବେଶଟି ଯେମିତି ହୋଇଥାନ୍ତା, ସେମିତି ତ ଆଉ ହେବନି । ଆମେ କାହିଁକି ବୃଥାରେ ଏତେ ଅର୍ଥ ଖର୍ଚ୍ଚ କରିବା ?”

- “ଚିତ୍ରା ଯେଉଁମାନଙ୍କର ମଞ୍ଚପ୍ରବେଶ କରାଇବା ପାଇଁ ସ୍ଥିର କରିଛି, ତୁ ସେମାନଙ୍କଠାରୁ ଭଲ ନାତୁ । ନିଜ ଉପରୁ କେବେ ଭରସା ଛାଡ଼ିବେନି । ଚିତ୍ରା ତୋ ପ୍ରତି ଅନ୍ୟାୟ କରିଛି । ଆମର ତା’ ଉପରେ ଅଧିକାର ନାହିଁ ବୋଲି ଆମେ ସେ ଅନ୍ୟାୟର

ପ୍ରତିବାଦ କରିପାରିଲେନି । ତେବେ ଆମେ ଚେଷ୍ଟାରୁ ବିରତ ହେବା ନାହିଁ । କଞ୍ଚ ନକଲେ କୃଷ୍ଣ ମିଳନ୍ତିନି । ଆଶା ରଖ, ଦୁଃସତ ଜୟନ୍ତୀ ତତେ ଗାଈତ୍ କରିପାରିବ ।”

ହେଲେ ଜୟନ୍ତୀ ପାଖରେ ସୋନିକୁ ସହଜ ହେବାକୁ ବହୁତ ଦିନ ଲାଗିଥିଲା । ତ୍ରୀଭଙ୍ଗୀ, ଚୌକ, ଅନ୍ୟ ସବୁ ନୃତ୍ୟର ଭଙ୍ଗୀ ଓ ଶୈଳୀ, ସବୁ କିଛି ବାଛିଲା ଜୟନ୍ତୀ । ଏମିତିକି ଦିନେଦିନେ ସୋନି କାନ୍ଦୁଥିଲା ବହୁତ । ସୁଧା ତାକୁ ବୁଝାଉଥିଲା, “ଯଦି ଶିକ୍ଷ୍ୟୟିତ୍ରୀ ଭୁଲ୍ ଜିନିଷଟାକୁ ଭୁଲ୍ କହି ଠିକ୍‌ଟା ନ ଶିଖାଇବ, ତେବେ ତ ତୋ ଭୁଲ୍ ସେମିତି ଭୁଲ୍ ହୋଇ ରହିବ । ଧୈର୍ଯ୍ୟ ଧର । ସବୁ କିଛି ଠିକ୍ ହୋଇଯିବ ।”

ଏମିତି ଆଶା, ନିରାଶା ମଧ୍ୟ ଦେଇ ସୋନିର ନାଚଶିକ୍ଷା ଚାଲୁ ରହିଲା । ତେଣେ ମୀରାର ଭିସାପାଇଁ ପ୍ରଚେଷ୍ଟା ଚାଲିଯାଏ । ହେଲେ କଲିକତାର ଆମେରିକାନ୍ ଏମ୍ପାସୀ ଆଫିସ୍ ମୀରାକୁ ଭିସା ଦେବାକୁ ମନା କରିଦେଲେ । ସ୍ୱପ୍ନଟା ସେଇଠି ସ୍ଥିର ହୋଇଗଲା ବୋଲି ମନେ ହୋଇଥିଲା ସୁଧାର । ତା ସାଙ୍ଗକୁ ଜୟନ୍ତୀର ମା’ ହେବାକୁ ଯାଉଥିବା ଖବର ସୁଧାର ସ୍ୱପ୍ନଟିକୁ ସେଇଠାରେ ହିଁ ଅଟଳ କରିଦେଲା । ହେଲେ ଚେଷ୍ଟାରୁ ବିରତ ହୋଇ ନଥିଲେ ସେମାନେ । ଜୟନ୍ତୀର ପ୍ରସବ ପୂର୍ବରୁ ଯେତିକିଟା ସମ୍ଭବ, ସେସବୁ ଶିଖିବାର ଯୋଜନା କଲା ସୁଧା । ସ୍ୱରୂପ ମୀରାର ଭିସା ପାଇଁ ଚେଷ୍ଟା ଚାଲୁରଖିଲେ ଓ ମେରୀଲାଣ୍ଡର ସିନେଟରଙ୍କ ପାଖକୁ ଏ ବିଷୟରେ ଚିଠିଲେଖିଲେ ।

ସୁଖ, ଦୁଃଖ, ସ୍ୱପ୍ନ ଓ ହତାଶା ମଧ୍ୟ ଦେଇ ଆଉ କେତେଟି ମାସ ସେମିତି ବିତିଗଲା । ମଞ୍ଚପ୍ରବେଶ କରିବା, ନ କରିବା ନେଇ ଘରେ ସେମିତି ଦ୍ୱନ୍ଦ୍ୱ ଲାଗିରହିଲା । ଧରାପୃଷ୍ଠରୁ ବିଦାୟ ନେଇଥିଲା ୨୦୦୪ ମସିହା ଓ ନୂଆ ଆଶାର କିରଣ ବୁଣି ଆଗମନ କରିଥିଲା ୨୦୦୫ ମସିହା । ଶେଷରେ ଭିସା ମିଳିଥିଲା ମୀରାକୁ । ମାର୍ଚ୍ଚମାସରେ ଆସିବାର ସ୍ଥିର ହେଲା ମୀରାର । ହେଲେ ସେଇ ସମୟରେ ହୋରି ପାଳନ, ସେଥିପାଇଁ ତାମା ଅଭ୍ୟାସ, ଗୀତ ଅଭ୍ୟାସ, ନାଚ ଅଭ୍ୟାସ ଇତ୍ୟାଦିରେ ଅନେକ ସମୟ ବିତୁଥିଲା । ଜୟନ୍ତୀ ମଧ୍ୟ ମାର୍ଚ୍ଚ ଶେଷକୁ ତା’ ସ୍କୁଲର ବାର୍ଷିକ ଉତ୍ସବ ରଖିଥାଏ ଓ ସେଥିପାଇଁ ନାଚ ଅଭ୍ୟାସ ଚାଲିଯାଏ । ଏ ସବୁ ଭିତରେ ସୋନିକୁ ସମୟ କମ୍ ମିଳୁଥିଲା । ତଥାପି ସେ ଭିତରେ ମୀରା ସୋନିକୁ ବର୍ତ୍ତୁ ଓ ଶଙ୍ଖରାଭରଣମ୍ ପଲ୍ଲବୀ ଶିଖାଇପାରିଥିଲା । କେବଳ ସେତିକି ନୁହେଁ, ସୋନିକୁ ପ୍ରତିଦିନ ବ୍ୟାୟାମ କରାଇ ଓ ବିଭିନ୍ନ ନାଚ ଭଙ୍ଗୀର ଅଭ୍ୟାସ କରାଇ ସେ ତାର ଏକ ଉତ୍ତମ ନୃତ୍ୟଶିଳ୍ପୀ ହେବାର ଭିତ୍ତିଭୂମି ପ୍ରତିଷ୍ଠା କରିଦେଲା । ଜୟନ୍ତୀର ସମସ୍ୟାକୁ ବିଚାର କରି ମୀରା ଓ ଜୟନ୍ତୀଙ୍କ ମଧ୍ୟରେ ଏକ ମିଟିଙ୍ଗ୍‌ର ବ୍ୟବସ୍ଥା କରାଇଥିଲା ସୁଧା । ଜୟନ୍ତୀଠାରୁ ସୋନି ସେତେବେଳକୁ ଗୋଟିଏ ମଙ୍ଗଳାଚରଣ ଓ ବିଲାହାରୀ ପଲ୍ଲବୀ ଶିଖି ସାରିଥାଏ । ସ୍ଥିର ହେଲା ଯେ ଜୟନ୍ତୀ ସୋନିକୁ ଗୀତଗୋବିନ୍ଦର ନାଚଟିଏ ଶିଖାଇବ । ସୋନି ଜୁନମାସରେ ଓଡିଶା ଯାଇ ମୀରାଠାରୁ ଆଉ ଦୁଇଟି ଆଇଟମ୍ ଶିଖି ଆସିବ । ଯଦିଓ ସୋନି ଚିତ୍ରାଠାରୁ ଅନେକ ଆଇଟମ୍ ଶିଖିସାରିଥିଲା, ଦୁଇଟା ମଙ୍ଗଳାଚରଣ, ତିନିଟା ପଲ୍ଲବୀ, ତିନିଟି ଅଭିନୟ, ବର୍ତ୍ତୁ, ମୋକ୍ଷ ସବୁକିଛି, ତେବେ ସେସବୁ ଆଇଟମ୍‌କୁ ମଞ୍ଚପ୍ରବେଶରେ ବ୍ୟବହାର କରାଇବାକୁ ଉଭୟ ଜୟନ୍ତୀ ଓ ମୀରା ମନାକଲେ । ସେମାନଙ୍କର ମନାକରିବାରେ ପ୍ରଥମ କାରଣ ଥିଲା ସେସବୁ ନାଚ ମାନଙ୍କରେ ଅଙ୍ଗଭଙ୍ଗର ଭୁଲ୍ ଓ ଦ୍ୱିତୀୟ କାରଣ ଥିଲା ଚିତ୍ରାର ମତାମତ ଆଣିବା । ସୋନିକୁ ତା ସାଙ୍ଗମାନଙ୍କ ତୁଳନାରେ ଅଧିକ ପରିଶ୍ରମ କରିବାକୁ ପଡିଲା । ହେଲେ ଏକ ଉତ୍ତମ ଶିକ୍ଷ୍ୟୟିତ୍ରୀର ତତ୍ତ୍ୱାବଧାନରେ ସୋନି ଭଲି ପରିଶ୍ରମୀ ହିଅଟି ଯେ ଖୁବ୍ ଶୀଘ୍ର ଅଙ୍ଗଭଙ୍ଗର ଭୁଲ୍‌କୁ ସଂଶୋଧନ କରି ଉତ୍ତମ ଶୈଳୀ ଶିଖିପାରିବ, ସେ ବିଷୟରେ ନିଃସନ୍ଦେହ ମତାମତ ଦେଇଥିଲେ ଉଭୟ ମୀରା ଓ ଜୟନ୍ତୀ ।

ମୀରା ଓ ଜୟନ୍ତୀଙ୍କ ସହିତ ପରାମର୍ଶ କରି ଶେଷରେ ଅଗଷ୍ଟ ୬ ତାରିଖରେ ହାଡ୍‌ଫର୍ଟ କାଉଣ୍ଟି କମ୍ୟୁନିଟି କଲେଜ୍‌ର ସ୍ଥିତ ଥିଏଟରରେ ସୋନିର ମଞ୍ଚପ୍ରବେଶ କରାଇବାର ଦିନ ନିର୍ଦ୍ଧାରଣ କରାଗଲା ।

ମେ ମାସର ଶେଷ ଆଡକୁ ଜୟନ୍ତୀର ଡେଲିଭରି ହେବାର ତାରିଖ ଥିଲା । ହେଲେ ଜୟନ୍ତୀର ସ୍ୱାସ୍ଥ୍ୟ ପ୍ରତି ଧ୍ୟାନ ଦେଇ ମେ ମାସର ମଝିରେ ତା’ର ଡେଲିଭରି କରାଇଦେବାକୁ ଡାକ୍ତର ସ୍ଥିର କଲେ । ସୋନିକୁ ଜୟନ୍ତୀଠାରୁ ଗୀତଗୋବିନ୍ଦର ଚନ୍ଦନଚର୍ଚ୍ଚିତ ନାଚଟି ଶିଖିବାକୁ ଅବସର ମିଳିଲାନି । ଜୁନ୍‌ରେ ସୋନିର ଓଡିଶା ଯିବା ଠିକ୍ ହୋଇଥିଲେ ବି ଗୋଟିଏ ମାସର ରହଣୀରେ ଚାରିଟି ନାଚ ଶିଖିବା ସମ୍ଭବ ହୋଇପାରିବ କି ନା ସେ ବିଷୟରେ ସମିହାନ ଥିଲା ସୁଧା । ତେବେ ଭଗବାନଙ୍କର ଇଚ୍ଛା ବିରୁଦ୍ଧରେ ଯିବାର ଶକ୍ତି ବା କାହାର ଅଛି ? “ଯାହା ହେବାର ଅଛି ହେବ । ଆମେ ଆମ ଚେଷ୍ଟା ଜାରି ରଖିବା ।” - ଏହି ତତ୍ତ୍ୱକୁ ଆଧାର କରି ସୁଧା ନିଜକୁ ବୁଝାଉଥିଲା ।

ସୋନି ଓଡ଼ିଶା ଗଲା ଜୁନ୍ ୧୨ ତାରିଖରେ । ବମ୍ବେରେ ତା'ର ବଡ଼ବାପାଙ୍କ ଝିଅ ଭଉଣୀ ପାଖରେ ଦୁଇଦିନ ରହି ଓଡ଼ିଶାରେ ୧୬ ତାରିଖରେ ପହଞ୍ଚିଲା । ଓଡ଼ିଶାରେ ପହଞ୍ଚି ସେ ଅସୁସ୍ଥ ରହିଲା । ଜୁନ୍‌ମାସର ପ୍ରବଳ ଗରମ ତା' ଦେହରେ ଗଲାନି । ପ୍ରତିଦିନ ଟେଲିଫୋନ୍ କରି ରୁଖୁଥିଲା ସୁଧା । ଝାଡ଼ା, ବାନ୍ତି ଏମିତି ହୋଇ ସୋନିର ନାଚ ଶିକ୍ଷାରେ ବିଳମ୍ବ ହେଉଥିଲା । ଏଣେ ସୁଧାର ହୃତ୍‌ପିଣ୍ଡରେ ସବୁଦିନେ ଲାଗୁଥିଲା ଧକ୍କା । “ହେ ଭଗବାନ, ଜଗନ୍ନାଥ, ସୋନିକୁ ଭଲ କରିଦିଅ ପ୍ରଭୁ । ସେ ଯେଉଁ ଉଦ୍ଦେଶ୍ୟ ପାଇଁ ଏକା ସାହସ କରି ଓଡ଼ିଶା ଯାଇଛି ତାର ଏ ଉଦ୍ଦେଶ୍ୟ ସଫଳ କର ପ୍ରଭୁ ।”

ସୁଧାର ପ୍ରାର୍ଥନା ଜଗନ୍ନାଥ ଶୁଣିଲେ । ଓଡ଼ିଶାରେ ବର୍ଷା ଆରମ୍ଭ ହେଲା । ଗରମ କମିବା ପରେ ସୋନିର ନାଚ ଯେଠି ଭଲଭାବେ ହୋଇପାରିଲା ଓ ଫେନ୍‌ରେ ସେ ନାଚର ଅଗ୍ରଗତି ବିଷୟରେ ସମ୍ବାଦ ଦେଉଥିଲା ।

- “ଆଜି ମୁଁ ଲଳିତ ଲବଙ୍ଗ ଶେଷ କଲି ମାମା ।”
- “ମୀରା ମାଉସୀଙ୍କର ତୋ ନାଚ ଉପରେ ମତାମତ କଣ ?”
- “ମୁଁ ଏଇ ନାଚଟିକୁ ଖୁବ୍ କମ୍ ଦିନରେ ଶେଷ କଲି । ସଂଗ୍ରାମ ଭାଇ ସେଥିପାଇଁ ବହୁତ ପ୍ରଭାବିତ । ମୀରା ମାଉସୀ ବି ବହୁତ ଖୁସି ।”
- “ହଉ ଭଲ ହେଲା । ତା'ପରେ କେଉଁ ନାଚଟି ଶିଖିବୁ ତୁ ?”
- “ମୁଁ କାଲି ତମ ଲେଖା ନାଚଟି ଶିଖିବି ।”

ସୁଧା ହୋରୀ ଉପରେ ଗୋଟିଏ ଗୀତ ଲେଖୁଥିଲା ଯେଉଁଟିକୁ ମୀରା ଓଡ଼ିଶୀ ନୃତ୍ୟ ରୂପ ଦେଇଥିଲା । ସୋନି ପ୍ରତିଦିନ ଯାହା ଶିଖୁଥିଲା, ଫେନ୍‌ରେ ତାର ଚିତ୍ରପଟୀ ଦେଉଥିଲା । ସେସବୁ ଶୁଭଖବର ପାଇ ସୁଧାର ମନରେ ଆଶାତରୁ ପଲ୍ଲବୀତ ହୋଇଉଠୁଥିଲେ ।

ହେଲେ ଦୁର୍ଭାଗ୍ୟ କେବେ ପିଛା ଛାଡ଼େନି ସୁଧାର । ଜୟନ୍ତୀର ଜୀବନରେ ଦୁର୍ଭାଗ୍ୟ ଆସିଲା । ସେ ଦୁର୍ଭାଗ୍ୟ ସୁଧାର ଜୀବନରେ ବି ପ୍ରଭାବ ପକାଇଲା । ଜୟନ୍ତୀର ବାପାଙ୍କର କୋମା, ହସ୍ପିଟାଲ୍ ରହଣୀ ଓ ଶେଷରେ ମୃତ୍ୟୁ ଖବର ବେଡ଼ି ଉପରେ କୋରଡ଼ା ଭଳି ସୁଧାର ସମସ୍ୟାକୁ ଆହୁରି ବଜାଇଦେଲେ । ଜୟନ୍ତୀର ମା' ମଧ୍ୟ ଅସୁସ୍ଥ ରହୁଥିଲେ; ତା' ସାଙ୍ଗକୁ ତାର ନବଜାତ ଶିଶୁଟିଏ । ଅତଏବ ମଞ୍ଚପ୍ରବେଶର ସମସ୍ତ ଆୟୋଜନର ଭାର ସୁଧାକୁ ହିଁ ବହନ କରିବାକୁ ପଡ଼ିବ ।

କେତେବେଳେ ଆଶା, କେତେବେଳେ ହତାଶା, ଏମିତି ଦୁନ୍ଦ୍ୱମୟ ପରିବେଶ ମଧ୍ୟରେ ମଞ୍ଚପ୍ରବେଶର ଦିନ ପାଖେଇ ଆସୁଥିଲା । ସାଜସଜ୍ଜା ପାଇଁ ମଞ୍ଜୁଭାଇ ଓ ସଙ୍ଗୀତ ଦାୟିତ୍ୱ ନେଇଥିଲେ । ଖାଦ୍ୟ ପାଇଁ ଆକବର ରେଷ୍ଟୁରାଣ୍ଟରେ ଅର୍ଡର କରାଯାଇଥିଲା । ସୋନି ଓଡ଼ିଶାରୁ ଫେରିଥିଲା ଜୁନ୍ ଅଠର ତାରିଖରେ । ଓଡ଼ିଶାରୁ ଫେରି ସେ ସବୁଦିନ ନାଚ ଅଭ୍ୟାସ କରୁଥିଲା ଓ ତାର ନାଚର ନିଖୁଣତା ଦେଖି ସୁଧା ଆନନ୍ଦିତ ହେଉଥିଲା । ବିଶେଷତଃ ସୁଧା ଲେଖୁଥିବା ଗୀତଟିକୁ ସୁମନ୍ତ ମହାନ୍ତି ବହୁତ ସୁନ୍ଦର ଭାବେ ଓଡ଼ିଶୀ ତାଳରେ ଗୀତରୂପ ଦେଇଥିଲେ । ତା' ସାଙ୍ଗକୁ ମୀରାର ନୃତ୍ୟ ନିର୍ଦ୍ଦେଶନା ଓ ସୋନିର ଭାବପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ ଅଭିନୟ ଦେଖି ସୁଧା ବିଦୁଳିତ ହୋଇଯାଉଥିଲା । ମୀରା ଆସି ପହଞ୍ଚିଲା ଜୁଲାଇ ୩୧ ତାରିଖରେ । ସବୁକିଛି ଠିକ୍‌ଥିଲା ଓ ମଞ୍ଚପ୍ରବେଶଟି ଭଲରେ ହେବ ବୋଲି ସୁଧା ମନରେ ବିଶ୍ୱାସ ଜମିଆସୁଥିଲା ।

ପୁଣି ଆରମ୍ଭହେଲା ସମସ୍ୟା । ଅଗଷ୍ଟ ଦୁଇତାରିଖ, ମଙ୍ଗଳବାର ଦିନ ସନ୍ଧ୍ୟାରେ ଘରକୁ ଫେରି ସୁଧା ଦେଖିଲା ଯେ ଉଭୟ ମୀରା ଓ ସୋନି ଚିତ୍ତିତ ହୋଇ ବସିଛନ୍ତି ।

- “କଣ ହେଲା ? ନାଚ ଅଭ୍ୟାସ କରିକରି କ୍ଳାନ୍ତ ହୋଇପଡ଼ିଲ ନା କଣ ?”
- “ସୋନିର ଗୋଡ଼ ଦରଜ ହୋଇଯାଇଛି, ସିଏ ନାଚ କରିପାରୁନି ।” - ମୀରାର କଣ୍ଠରେ ହତାଶା ଥିଲା ।
- “ହେ ଭଗବାନ । କଣ କରିବା ତେବେ ? ସିଏ ତ ଓଡ଼ିଶାରେ ଏତେ ପ୍ରାକ୍ଟିସ୍ କରୁଥିଲା, ତାର କିଛି ହେଉନଥିଲା ।”
- “ଏ କାଠ ଚଟାଣ ଉପରେ ବେଶି ସମୟ ପ୍ରାକ୍ଟିସ୍ କରିହେଉନି ।” - ମୀରା କହିଲା ।

ମଞ୍ଚପ୍ରବେଶ ପାଇଁ ଆଉ ମାତ୍ର ତିନିଟି ଦିନ ମଝିରେ । “ହେ ଭଗବାନ । ଏ ପୁଣି କି ପରୀକ୍ଷା ?” ସୋନିକୁ ଯନ୍ତ୍ରଣାର ଉପଶମ ପାଇଁ ଆଡ଼ଭିଲ୍ ଖାଇବାକୁ ଦେଇ, ତା ଅକ୍ଷ ଆଉ ଗୋଡ଼ରେ ଗରମପାଣି ସେକ ଦେଇ ମଲମ ଲଗାଇଲା ସୁଧା । ମୀରା ବି ଚିତ୍ତିତ

ଥିଲା ଓ ସୋନି ପାଇଁ ମା' ତାରିଣୀଙ୍କ ପାଖରେ ମାନସିକ ରଖିଲା । ହେଲେ ଏମିତିକି ଶୁକ୍ରବାର ଦିନ ପ୍ରାକ୍‌ତସ୍‌ରେ ମଧ୍ୟ ସୋନି ଭଲଭାବେ ବସୁ ନାଟିପାରିଲାନି । ରାତିସାରା ଅନେକ କାନ୍ଦିଲା ସୁଧା । “ହେ ପ୍ରଭୁ ମାନ ଭଙ୍ଗାରଣ, ମୋ ଧୈର୍ଯ୍ୟର ଆଉ ପରୀକ୍ଷା ନିଅନାହିଁ । ଏ ଅଭାଗିନୀର ମାନ ରଖ ଜଗନ୍ନାଥ ।”

ଅଗଷ୍ଟ ୬ ତାରିଖ ସକାଳୁ ନିଃଶ୍ୱାସ ମାରିବାକୁ ବେଳ ନାହିଁ । ବିନି ଓ ମିନି ଏମ୍-ସି-ରୋଲ୍ କରୁଥିଲେ । ସେମାନଙ୍କର ବନ୍ଧବ୍ୟ ବାରମ୍ବାର ଅଭ୍ୟାସ କରାଇଲା ସୁଧା । ମଞ୍ଚପ୍ରବେଶ ପାଇଁ ଦରକାର ଅନ୍ୟାନ୍ୟ ସମସ୍ତ ସରଞ୍ଜାମ ଗୋଟିଗୋଟି କରି ସଜାଇ ରଖିଲା । ତା’ପରେ ଘରେ ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କ ପାଇଁ ରୋଷେଇ ଓ ଖୁଆପିଆର ବ୍ୟବସ୍ଥା ମଧ୍ୟ ।

ସ୍ଥିତ୍‌ ଥିଏଟରରେ ସମୟ କେମିତି ବିତିଗଲା, ଜଣାପଡିଲାନି । ଗୋଟିକ ପରେ ଗୋଟିଏ ନାଟ ଅତି ନିଖୁଣ ଭାବେ ନାଟିଥିଲା ସୋନି । ତା’ ଗୋଡରେ ଦୁଃଖ ଯନ୍ତ୍ରଣା ଥାଇପାରେ, ହେଲେ ନୃତ୍ୟରେ ତାର ଥିଲା ଲାଳିତ୍ୟ ଓ ଚାତୁର୍ଯ୍ୟ ଯାହାକି ଉପସ୍ଥିତ ସମସ୍ତ ଦର୍ଶକବୃନ୍ଦଙ୍କୁ ଆକର୍ଷ୍ୟାନ୍ୱିତ ଓ ସମ୍ମୋହିତ କରାଇପାରିଥିଲା । ପ୍ରତି ନାଟର ଆରମ୍ଭରେ ସୁଧାର ହୃଦ୍‌ପିଣ୍ଡରୁ ରକ୍ତ ପଖରଗତିରେ ପ୍ରବାହିତ ହେଉଥିଲା ଓ ନାଟ ଶେଷରେ ପୁଣି ସ୍ଥିର ଓ ନିୟମିତ ହୋଇଯାଉଥିଲା । ଦର୍ଶକ ମାନଙ୍କ ଗହଣରେ ଥିଲେ ଡ୍ରାଗିଂଟନ୍ ଡି-ସି-ଅକ୍ସଲର ତିନିଜଣ ଓଡିଶୀ ନୃତ୍ୟ ଶିକ୍ଷୟିତ୍ରୀ, ତିତ୍ତା କ୍ରିଷ୍ଣମୂର୍ତ୍ତି (ସୋନିର ପୂର୍ବତନ ନୃତ୍ୟଗୁରୁ), ଜୟନ୍ତୀ ପେନ୍ (ସୋନିର ସେ ସମୟର ନୃତ୍ୟଗୁରୁ) ଓ ସୁକନ୍ୟା ମୁଖାର୍ଜୀ । ଓଡିଶାର ଖ୍ୟାତନାମା ନୃତ୍ୟଗୁରୁ ଗଙ୍ଗଧର ପ୍ରଧାନ ଓ ବହୁ ଓଡିଶୀ ସଙ୍ଗୀତ ଶିଳ୍ପୀମାନେ ମଧ୍ୟ ଏ ଉତ୍ସବରେ ଯୋଗଦାନ କରିଥିଲେ । ସବୁକିଛି ଚାଲିଥିଲା ଠିକ୍‌ଠାକ୍‌; ସୁନ୍ଦର ଭାବେ ।

ଶେଷ ନୃତ୍ୟ ମୋକ୍ଷ ସରିଯାଇଥିଲା ଓ ଶେଷ ବନ୍ଧବ୍ୟ ଦେବାର ଥିଲା ସୁଧାର । ଇଚ୍ଛା ହେଉଥିଲା ସୁଧା ସେଇ ମୁହୂର୍ତ୍ତରେ ଅନେକ କାନ୍ଦନ୍ତା ଓ କାନ୍ଦିକାନ୍ଦି ଲୋଟିଯାନ୍ତା ଜଗନ୍ନାଥଙ୍କର ଶ୍ରୀଚରଣ ତଳେ । ଏଇ ମଞ୍ଚପ୍ରବେଶଟି ସେ ଅନ୍ୟମାନଙ୍କ ପାଇଁ ଏତେ ସହଜସାଧ୍ୟ କଲେ; କିନ୍ତୁ ସୋନି ପାଇଁ, ସୁଧା ପାଇଁ ପ୍ରତି ପଦକ୍ଷେପରେ ଖଞ୍ଜିଦେଲେ ବିରାଟ ପଥର ସବୁ । ସୁଧା ସେଇସବୁ ଭାବନା ଭିତରେ ନିଜର ବନ୍ଧବ୍ୟ ଶେଷ କରି ଉପସ୍ଥିତ ଜନତାଙ୍କୁ ଧନ୍ୟବାଦ ଜଣାଇଥିଲା । ବିଶେଷତଃ ମୀରା ପାଇଁ ସେ ଏ ମଞ୍ଚପ୍ରବେଶଟି ସମ୍ଭବ ହୋଇଛି, ତାହା କହିବାକୁ ଭୁଲିନଥିଲା ସେ ।

ନାଟ ପରେ ହାଡ୍‌ଫାଟ୍ କାଉଣ୍ଟି କମ୍ୟୁନିଟି କଲେଜ୍‌ର ମଲ୍‌ଟିପଲ୍‌ପୋଇନ୍‌ ହଲ୍‌ରେ ରିସେପ୍‌ସନ୍‌ ଚାଲିଥାଏ । ସୁଧା ପହଞ୍ଚିବା ମାତ୍ରେ ସମସ୍ତେ କନ୍‌ଗ୍ରାତୁଲେସନ୍‌ କହି ସମ୍ବର୍ଦ୍ଧନାର ରଞ୍ଜନ ପର୍ଦ୍ଦାରେ ଆଛାଦିତ କରି ପକେଇଥିଲେ ତାକୁ । ସମସ୍ତେ ସୋନିର ନାଟର ଭୁରିଭୁରି ପ୍ରଶଂସା କରୁଥିଲେ । ଡ୍ରାଗିଂଟନ୍ ଡି-ସି-ଅକ୍ସଲରେ ସେଇ ବର୍ଷ ତା’ ପୂର୍ବରୁ ଚାରିଟି ଓଡିଶୀ ମଞ୍ଚପ୍ରବେଶ ହୋଇସାରିଥିଲା । ସେସବୁ ମଞ୍ଚପ୍ରବେଶ ସହିତ ତୁଳନା କରି ଅନ୍ୟମାନେ ସୋନିର ନାଟପ୍ରଣାଳୀର ତାରିଫ୍‌ କରିବା ସଙ୍ଗେସଙ୍ଗେ ଅତିଶୋଭିତମ୍ଭର ଯାଜସଜ୍ଞା ଓ ଖାଦ୍ୟପେୟ ସବୁକିଛିର ପ୍ରଶଂସା କରୁଥିଲେ । ସୁଧା ସେତେବେଳେ ଭାବୁଥିଲା ତାର ସଂଘର୍ଷମୟ ଅନୁଭୂତି ବିଷୟରେ । ସେଇ ମୁହୂର୍ତ୍ତରେ ସୁଧାର ମନେ ହୋଇଥିଲା ଦୁଃଖ “ଇଶ୍ଵର ଯାହା କରନ୍ତି ପ୍ରାଣୀର ମଙ୍ଗଳ ପାଇଁ” ତତ୍ତ୍ଵର ଯଥାର୍ଥରେ ସତ୍ୟତା ରହିଛି । ତିତ୍ତା ଯଦିଓ ସୋନିକୁ ଓ ସୁଧାକୁ ଚାଲେଞ୍ଜି ଦେଲା, ତେବେ ସେଇ ଚାଲେଞ୍ଜି ପାଇଁ ସେ ଜୟନ୍ତୀ ଭଳି ଜଣେ ଦରଦୀ ମନର ମଣିଷ ଓ ମୀରା ଭଳି ଏକ ଦୃଢ଼ମନା, ଗୁଣୀ ଓ ଉଚ୍ଚକୋଟୀର ଓଡିଶୀ ନୃତ୍ୟଶିଳ୍ପୀକୁ ଜାଣିବାର ସୁଯୋଗ ପାଇଲା । ମୀରା ପାଇଁ ସୋନିର ନୃତ୍ୟ ଶୈଳୀ ପରିମାର୍ଜିତ ହୋଇପାରିଲା ଓ ତାର ମଞ୍ଚପ୍ରବେଶ ଉଚ୍ଚକୋଟୀର ହୋଇପାରିଲା । ଭଗବାନ ତିତ୍ତା ମାଧ୍ୟମରେ ତା ପଥରେ ପଥର ଖଞ୍ଜିଦେଲେ ଯଦିଓ, ମୀରା ମାଧ୍ୟମରେ ପଥର ହଟାଇବାର ଶକ୍ତି ପ୍ରଦାନ କରି ମଞ୍ଚପ୍ରବେଶର ଦର୍ଶକମଣ୍ଡଳୀଙ୍କ ମନରେ ସୃଷ୍ଟି କରାଇଲେ ସୋନି ପାଇଁ ଅନେକ ଉଚ୍ଚବିନ୍ଦା । ସେଇ ପରମପିତାଙ୍କ ଉଦ୍ଦେଶ୍ୟରେ ଅନ୍ତରର ଭକ୍ତି ପୁଷ୍ପାଞ୍ଜଳି ନୀରବରେ ସମର୍ପଣ କରି କଥୋପକଥନରେ ମଜିଗଲା ସୁଧା ।

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ତକଟର ବିଜ୍ଞାନୀ ଦାସ କଲମ୍‌ନିଆ, ମେରୀଲାଣ୍ଡରେ ରହନ୍ତି ଓ ନାସା, ଗଡାଟ୍‌ ସେକ୍ଟରରେ କାର୍ଯ୍ୟକରନ୍ତି । ଯଦିଓ ଏକ ଗାଣିତିକା ହିସାବରେ ସେ ଉଚ୍ଚଶିକ୍ଷା ଓ ତାଲିମ୍‌ ପ୍ରାପ୍ତ, ତେବେ ମନରେ ଉଠୁଥିବା ଭାବନାର ତରଙ୍ଗକୁ ଲେଖାଲେଖି ଓ ଅଭିନୟ ମାଧ୍ୟମରେ ପ୍ରକାଶ କରିବାକୁ ସେ ସର୍ବଦା ଚେଷ୍ଟିତ । ଏତଦ୍‌ ବ୍ୟତୀତ ନୃତ୍ୟ, ଗୀତ ଓ ବହୁମିଳନରେ ତାଙ୍କର ବିଶେଷ ଆଗ୍ରହ । ଏଇ ଗଳ୍ପଟି ସେ ତାଙ୍କ ଜ୍ୟେଷ୍ଠା କନ୍ୟା ବାଗ୍ମୀର ମଞ୍ଚପ୍ରବେଶର ଅଭିଜ୍ଞତାରୁ ଲେଖିଛନ୍ତି ।

Our Children, Our Future, Convention Theme Presentation

Little kids dressed in beautiful traditional costumes belonging to some 13 states of India came up on stage looking like little flowers in the garden. It was Julie Acharya Ray who had worked with these kids from Washington DC getting them ready with the “My Name is Madhavi..” show. At the end of the dance, all the children held hands with mother India and sang “Saare Jahhan se Achha”. These were our children, our future. Eva Mohanty of New Jersey had trained a magnificent number of 40 kids to perform in “Kanchi Abhijaan” that again exemplified the spirit of working for a cause and showcasing our children who are our future.

Chapter Events and Pramod Patnaik Inter-chapter Competition Sisters Natasha and Shibani Mohapatra, previous Subrina Biswal award winners, danced to the Bollywood tunes of “Desh Rangila “throwing sparks of enthusiasm throughout the audience. Dynamic and beautiful were the words used by the audience to describe their performance. The sisters were representing North-West chapter. In the same light, Supriya Jena represented Ohio chapter with a beautiful dance to a very beautiful Oriya song “Nai Chi Chi Na Asa Piek” from Manini.

“Natara Gobardhana” a hilarious drama based on inter-caste marriage was presented by NYNJ chapter. Directed by Ullasini Kar and supported by many well known performers of NYNJ chapter with beautiful background music, it was a great show. Music was provided by Sarang Mahatwo. The participants were: Rajashree Tripathy, Itishree Mishra, Ullasini Kar, Pradeep Mohapatra, Pradip Tripathy, Sridhar Rana and Antaryami Panigrahi.

The drama cum reality show “Sarbousadhi” by DC chapter directed by Pratap Dash was another sparking event. The participants were: Pratap Dash, Debaki Chowdhury, Meera Mohapatra, Surendra Ray, Gatikrishna Tripathy, Siddharth Mohapatra, Alok Mohanty, Debanjan Chowdhury, Satish Mishra, Pradeep Behera. It was a big hit.



Mahamoha, the Prime Time Odissi Presentation by Gunjan Dance Academy

Like Goddess Laxmi emerging from the lotus, Meera Das emerges from the pink rays of light to the sounds of “Ahalya! Ahalya! Ahalya!”. Mardala player Sachidananda Das has gone back in time to Goutam Maharshi’s Ashram and is visualizing all the events happening in Ahalya’s life. Vocalist Sumant Mohanty enralls the audience with his rich resonant voice to the Orissi abhinanya. Gunjan’s presentation of Oddisi sparkled with several acrobatic 'Bandha' movements, great light management by the technician Narendra Kumar Sahoo and a talented group of musicians Sumant Mohanty (vocalist), Ramesh Ch. Das (Violin), Abhiram Nanda (Flute), Jyotindra Prasad Mishra (Sitar), and Sachidananda Das (Tabla) presented the audience of OSA Convention 2006 with some extremely culturally fulfilling moments.

For the first time in OSA history Odissi was presented live in its annual convention.

The charming dancers Meera Das (director and choreographer), Shibangi Mohapatra, Isha Satapathy, Sharmishtha Raichoudhury, and Ritika Mandal with their graceful movements and style performed "Mangalacharan with Pure dance", Billahari Pallabi, Abhinaya "Mahamoha" and Mokshya.



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gSurasangam with Music Master Tansen Singh

His smile, style, voice and appearance are combined together to enthrall the audience with gazals like "Akhi Akhi Akhi, Luhara Jharana Akhi" and some romantic duets with Julie Acharya Ray "Chandana Tume Taara" and "Mita Tume Bhala Pai". "I may be sixty by age but I am thirty when on stage". That's how Shri Tansen Singh describes himself. The secret of his dynamic and melodious voice was because of his values and principles in life such as not touching alcohol and always trying to be in a joyous mood. Tansen Singh enthralled the audience both days, July 1st and 2nd. With his jokes and humorous anecdotes he proved himself the best musical entertainer of his time.



Bhajan

The Bhajan program in OSA was held from 7 AM to 8 AM on July 1st and from 7.30 AM to 8 AM on July 2nd. The program was attended by a number of OSA -2006 participants such as Dr. Prasanna Pati of Salem, Mr. Prakash Patro of KS. Paramahansa Prajñanananda gave yogic discourses that was enjoyed by the audience on both the days.

Miss Surabhi Panda (Four and half years young), daughter of Mr. Hemant Panda, NJ was the youngest bhajan singer in the program. Mrs Riti Mohanty of NJ enchanted the audience with her divine melodious voice. The creative, Mr. Prashant Sahoo of NJ, who is instrumental in reviving and bringing Oriya music in portable form to the Oriyas in Orissa and abroad, sang a number of Bhajans on Karaoke, that are produced by Him (<http://oriyamus.com/>). Some of other singers were Mr. Kar of Michigan, Dr. Nrusingha Mishra and Debaki Nandan Chowdhury of Maryland. The programs concluded by NARAYAN NAMA. The photograph link is given below :-

<http://pg.photos.yahoo.com/ph/hpanda/detail?.dir=/9c5cre2&.dnm=2e1are2.jpg&.src=ph>

Asara (Mehefil) "Jibana Jamunaare Juara Oothe Re" and many other old beautiful oriya songs came alive when Debaki Nandan Chowdhury and Julie Acharya Ray carried forth the spirit of OSA Mehefil. Many old

and new voices were heard singing oriya tunes. Rabi Nanda, a guest from Orissa entertained the audience with his "Ganjei" song apart from Rama Mishra from NY, Debi Mishra from Alabama, Binod and Bandita Nayak from MD and many more from Boston and New Jersey.

Many people in their half asleep state waited on their seats for more fun and entertainment. There were tea, snacks and laddoos for the late night appetite while some attendees were busy in conversation in the corridors. The kids had a DJ for themselves and the danced, sang and socialized in the lobbies all through the night.

Subrina Biswal Competition

There were twenty-one entries for Subrina Biswal competition. According to the coordinator Deepa Parija, this was a rewarding experience. The competition was broken into two categories - classical and popular items. It was a complete repertoire - the entries ranged from Odissi dance (2) to dances from popular Hindi (4 items) & Oriya films (5 items), from instrumental (4 items) to vocal (4 items). There was one Sambaluri folk dance item. There were also solo & group items. All the participants were spirited and they took the competition very seriously. There were some last minute entries that were accommodated in the spirit of Subrina Biswal award show. It was a wonderful experience to see all the children perform so marvelously on stage and the amazing dedication of their parents, who put in a lot of effort to encourage the spirit of participation in their children, not necessarily winning. All in all, Subrina Biswal turned out to be the perfect stage where kids showcased their talents and got appreciation from everybody.

Kristina Das and Bagmi Das performed perfectly in their MC roles with impressive anecdotes to make the audience laugh.

Other Children's Events

Some children wished not to be included in the Subrina Biswal Competition. They performed solos and group items with equal interest and spirit. Leena Mishra from MD coordinated this event. Every item was performed on time and nothing was ever amiss.

Both Leena and Deepa had small babies and in spite of the challenges as mothers they were involved in multiple tasks for OSA convention 2006. They were our role models who taught us "If there is will, there is a way".

Odissi by the New Generation

Our children are born and brought up in this country. Yet they love and respect their cultural heritage. They choose to be trained in Odissi dance and using this as a medium have tried to establish links to their heritage. Some of the new generation Oriyas that presented Odissi in OSA Convention 2006 were Esha Bandopadhyaya (Abhinaya "To Laagi Gopadaanda Manna"), Sonali Mishra (Abhinaya "Madhurastakam"), Shibani Mohapatra (Basant Pallabi), Ananya Kar (Staayi), Mrunali Das and Ankita Ray (Kirbani Pallabi).

Odissi by Rudrakshya

Odissi by Rudrakshya was the prime time presentation for the second day of the convention. Another group of accomplished dancers and musicians enthralled the audience with beautiful choreography and sensational dance poses. The dancers Pabitra Kumar Pradhan, Ramesh Chandra Das, Lingaraj Pradhan, Amulya Balabantaray, Biswajit Das, Mamata Das, Sridutta Bhol, Sanjukta Dutta and Debashree Pattnaik together with the musicians Bijay Kumar Barik (mardala), Binod Behari Panda (vocalist) Nilendranath Patra



(violin), Soundaryaranjan Ray (sitar) and Jabahar Mishra (flute) under the direction of Guru Bichitrananda Swain performed with elegance, talent, vigor and grace. The audience got a long lasting impression of OSA 2006 convention.

Bhangara: An Amazing Performance

Bhangara coordinator Alpana Das says that “Bhangara” was her most rewarding experience. Satish Mishra, a very passionate second generation Oriya youth not only does his best in academics, but he takes every job seriously. Because of his seriousness in preparation, the end product became the best and maximum fun was obtained out of it.

The performers were: Kiran Kannon- Choreographer/ Captain (Incoming freshman at University of Maryland CP), Satish Mishra- Stunt man/ Co-captain (Incoming Freshman at UMBC), Ketan Kathod (Incoming freshman at CP), Nirav Shelat (Incoming freshman at UMBC), Toby Singh (Incoming freshman at UMBC), Simranjit Nepal (Incoming sophomore at UMBC) and Bagmi Das (Incoming Sophomore at Carnegie Mellon –Bagmi was a guest performer in the team).

Satish’s team has performed at two local competitions over a two-year span and has been placed second in the first and first in the second competition. They have performed for other events such as Indian Resurgent Day at Eleanor Roosevelt, Gruduaras and their school's International Nights. Their routine consists of traditional bhangra and stunts with a blend of hip/hop and punjabi music.

Satish says, “One of our goals is to start a bigger independent team at UMBC (with a few people from UMCP) so that we can perform at National competitions.”

New Discoveries

Talented and humble singer Riti Mohanty whose beautiful voice created the pleasing harmony throughout the auditorium sang several oriya songs for us on karaoke. We also explored another talented singer Prashant Sahu whose passion for music has taken him to create oriyamusic.com and reinvent Oriya music with new technology.

Chitrahaar

Oriya Chitrahaar was our innovation for OSA 2006. Old Oriya songs filled up the air and old memories came back to haunt. The minds flew with "Tora Udi Udi Jaye Kaani" by Jhili and Pradyot Behera, teased with "Mo Sange Lagna Re" by Priyaranjan and Aparna Mohapatra, romanced with "Gele Gele Gele Gori Maar Choori" by Julie and Abhijit Ray and "Tuki Buli Baharilu Sahara" by Dharitri and Joydeep Banerjee and then experienced sweet loving moments with "Aaji mate Mili gala mo Mana Mayuri" by Reema and Sudhir Raju.

Closing Song: Gitagobinda

All good things must come to an end. Two and half days of fun and entertainment came to an end with a closing last impression song "Sritakamala" from Gitagobinda.

Cultural Awards

Many awards were presented to recognize generosity and talents for which the cultural program became a success. Award coordinator Mrs Leena Mishra had organized the printing of the certificates and trophies.

Generosity award was presented to Mr Akshya Kumar Parija for being the Double Diamond sponsor of the cultural events.

Dream Team trophies were presented to Eva Mohanty of New York and Julie Acharya Ray of Maryland for working with the little children and producing theme items "Our Children, Our Future" by involving them.

Konark trophies were presented to all the children participants in the Konark Inaugural show.

Oriya Heritage trophies were presented to the children who presented an Oriya item in the cultural program.

Plaques were presented to Gunjan Team, Rudrakhsya Team, Tansen Singh, Sumant Mohanty and Jayantee Paine Ganguly.

Certificates were presented to all the participants of Konark show and all the children in other shows.

Pramod Patnaik Inter-chapter Competition: The winner was OSA Washington DC chapter. NY/NJ chapter got "Most spirited chapter presentation" award.

Subrina Biswal Competition: The winners were:

Pratik Dash: 1st Place
Ananya Kar: 2nd Place
Manisha Patra and Ayesa Kar: 3rd Place

Cultural Sponsors

We are thankful to the following people without the help of which OSA Convention 2006 cultural program would have lost its charm.

- Mr Akshya Kumar Parija – Double Diamond Sponsor – Sponsored the air fare of the artists
- Pradip and Rajashree Tripathy – Sponsored Travel Expense of Gunjan Group
- Drs Naresh and Bigyani Das, MD – Sponsored Travel Expense of Gunjan group
- Dr Ramesh and Asima Raichoudhury – Sponsored Travel Expense of Gunjan group
- Dr Sujay Singh, IMG NEX – Konark CD creation

Note: Some of the above sponsors have paid directly without going through the Convention fund and some paid through the Convention fund. Therefore those contributions paid directly are not recorded in the Convention account.

Acknowledgements

- Dr Purna Patnaik, CA: Dr Purna Patnaik provided all the guidance to help in P3 visa processing for the Gunjan Dance Academy artists and Tansen Singh
- Mr Pratap Das, MD: For sponsoring Rudrakshya's USA trip on behalf of IPAP which enabled the group to perform in OSA Convention 2006
- Mrs Jyoti Rout, CA: For permitting 3 musicians in her P3 visa to perform in OSA
- Mr Santanu Das, OK: For public relation activities through web design and for providing links with Tansen Singh
- OSA Convention 2006 Decoration Team Members, Jayashree Samal, Julie Acharya Ray, Maushumi Patnaik, Sangeeta Dey and Meera Mohapatra for stage decoration and Mehefil area decoration.
- OSA Convention Stage Management Team Members lead by Abhijit Ray.
- Mrs Sikha Sen for taking charge of Artist Relations and Artist Appreciation
- Mr Sumant Mohanty, Bhubaneswar, Orissa: For directing the music of our inauguration program "Konark: The Monumental Oriya Heritage".
- Mr Anushuman Das, NY: For providing seed money for the music creation.
- Sheraton Hotel Management and Jim Rouse Theater Management for providing us the best venues for our cultural programs.

For more pictures of the convention please visit <http://www.orissasociety.org>

Note: Thanks to the members of cultural committee and the convener Dr Joy Gopal Mohanty for reviewing the report.