



THE ODISHA SOCIETY OF THE AMERICAS
A Non-profit 501 (C) (3) Organization
TAX ID# 62-1105102

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To
Honorable Sri Naveen Patnaik
Chief Minister
Govt. of Odisha

6/29/2019

Re: Request to expedite the implementation of "Rules notification for Odisha Public Library Act, 2001" for a "Well-integrated Modern Public Library System in Odisha"

Dear Honorable Chief Minister Sri Patnaik,

Warmest congratulations on your victory for the record 5th consecutive term CM of Odisha and wish you the best for a prosperous and developed Odisha.

Based on Non-Resident Odias(NROs) direct exposure and experience on modern public library system in USA, Canada, the NROs believe a "Well-integrated Modern Public Library System in Odisha/India" will empower individuals, build a stronger community and improve the socio-economic, cultural and educational system in Odisha, in a most cost-effective way and build a new economy based on modern public library ecosystem. The Odisha Society of Americas (OSA) is committed for and eager to support such a system in Odisha.

The public library is the most democratic public institution that will promote Literacy including early childhood Literacy, Digital Literacy, Education, Health and wellness, Skill Development, Employment, Entrepreneurship, e-Governance, Civic engagement, e-Commerce, Social inclusion and Democratic values. In addition, the public libraries will support many aspects of the United Nation 2030 (UN 2030) vision and Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) that are aimed at ending poverty in all its forms. *We also take this opportunity to thank you and your administration once again for your support to our prior proposal in establishing Odisha's first digital public library in Berhampur successfully with similar objectives.*

While we welcome and appreciate the cabinet approval of "Odisha Public Library Rules by culture department"(The Odisha Gazette dated 7th Sept 2016) and last year's Panchayat Raj department circular (No. 17 NREG-11-1165-18657/PR&DW Date: 28-09-2018) to BDOs for building edutainment centers-cum-libraries, we are equally concerned on the delay in implementation of "Odisha Public Library Act-2001" that has been pending for many years that's adversely affecting public interest and growth of our state towards a knowledge based society. In this context, on behalf of the North American Odia Diaspora, we request you to have a timely implementation of "Rules notification for Odisha Public Library Act, 2001" for a "Well-integrated Modern Public Library System in Odisha". The said public library system will not only create the ecosystem to transform Odisha towards a "Knowledge based society", but also develop an "Internet based economy" to meet the growing demands of the 21st century, and make Odisha truly the leading state with higher "Human Development Index(HDI) - a measure of life expectancy, education, and per capita income indicator used to rank states and countries".

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We have been heartened by the recent announcement by State Government that state will set up Panchayat Library-cum-infotainment Center in each Gram Panchayat to cater to the need of the people of rural area. Keeping this in mind, on 27th Dec 2018, the Odisha Society of Americas (OSA) had organized “**All Odisha Public Library Conference-2018**”, in collaboration with Praful Library, in KIIT University Bhubaneswar. We greatly appreciate the presence, support and commitment of former hon'ble minister Sri Surya Narayan Patra, and former hon'ble MLA Sri Priyadarshi Mishra towards the modern public library system. We had many dignitaries, academicians, experts, activists, thought leaders, librarians of Odisha and NROs attended and provided thoughtful insights for making an effective modern public library ecosystem a reality.

For your kind reference, our proposals and recommendations are attached herewith to establish, and transform the public libraries to function as **Community Centers, Edutainment Centers, Knowledge Centers, Skill Development Centers, Information Centers** leveraging **Information and Communication Technology (ICT)** and best practices around the world. It may be noted, the Odisha Public e-Library, Berhampur was inaugurated on August 31, 2017 in your honorable presence, subsequently has started operating since 4th April 2018, and just completed one year of service with higher membership growth (currently at ~200 vs. 40 in the beginning) and increased the library hours. This should serve as a model for future digital public libraries in Odisha, in bringing best practices both in rural and urban settings.

In summary, we request you to expedite the implementation of “**Rules notification for Odisha Public Library Act, 2001**”, that has been long overdue, and the recommendations by the OPLI team and the eminent panelists present at the last “**All Odisha Public Library Conference**” for a better, stronger, developed and empowered Odisha.

Sincerely,

President, OSA

On behalf of the OSA Families and Committee for OSA Public Library Initiative (OPLI)

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Recommendations for “Well-integrated Modern Public Library System in Odisha”

The public library will function as Community Center, Seminar Room, Edutainment Center, Skill Development Center, Information Super House, and Resource Center to promote Literacy including early childhood Literacy, Education, Digital Literacy, Health and wellness, Skill Development, Employment, Entrepreneurship, e-Governance, Civic engagement, e-Commerce, Social inclusion and Democratic values. In addition, it will meet many aspects of the United Nation 2030 (**UN 2030**) vision and Sustainable Development Goals (**SDG**) that is aimed at ending poverty in all its forms.

1. Library Services needed in public libraries

1.1. Broadband Internet Room:

Provide computing facility/platform networked with High Speed Broadband Internet Service for access to world of information, knowledge, and resources.

1.2. Digital Contents/Media

- Provide access to e-books, e-magazines, recorded video lectures of common interests like Job-seeking skills, Personal/Career development, Information Technology (IT), Agriculture, Disaster preparedness, Odia literature. Also, there are free world class study materials available from [Khan Academy](#), MIT, Harvard and many more universities around the world. Various children's educational/games software like Etoys(etoysillinois.org) are available to encourage self-learning, creativity.
- Provide access to productivity software of common interest like Microsoft Office, Adobe Reader etc.
- Provide secure and safe environment with Parental control, Anti-virus software
- Provide library management software to better understand user need
- Provide pay-per-use printing, FAX, scanning service that would be helpful to students in rural Odisha

1.3 Community Center:

Provide Internet-audio-video enabled facility that would function as Community Center, Seminar Room, Edutainment Center, Skill Development Center, Information Center, and Resource Center. The library should be designed to function as a happening place and a second home for the people. The library will provide Remote Video Conferencing facility (like Skype) so that the beneficiaries will have interactive access to lectures/coaching's/trainings from administration approved experts/volunteers from anywhere in the world over the broadband internet.

1.4 Library Activities

- Make provisions to conduct and support various educational information sessions, seminars, workshops of public interest regularly in every week by respective Govt officials, available educationists, professionals, experts.

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- Conduct mentoring programs for the youth, students for better career, employment opportunists and improve literary skills.
- Conduct workshops, seminars to empower people for self-employment, start new business.
- Enable libraries to provide services targeting rural needs like Agriculture, Monsoon forecasting, Telemedicine, Livelihood Generation, Marketization of agricultural products.
- Enable libraries to educate people to take advantage of various central and state Govt. [schemes](#) like Mission Shakti Odisha, Bhagabat Tungi, Niramaya Scheme and many more etc.
- Make the public libraries *accessible by people with disability* and involve disability experts
- Make some of libraries as *Disaster recovery centers* in strategic locations by imparting training to the staff

1.5 Reading Room:

Provide *reading room facility* for access to major newspapers, magazines, journals, books etc while accommodating all sections of people children, teens, students, women, youth, and adults

2. Library Management/Board

- 2.1 Appoint the interim "State Public Library Council" immediately to initiate the process to form an effective "Public Library Board/Public Library Council" in the state to guide and drive the implementation of "Modern Public Library System in Odisha"
- 2.2 Establish well-defined organizational structure of Odisha Public Libraries for proper ownership and accountability by various departments like Culture, Panchayat Raj, Urban Development, Information Technology (IT), Education department.
- 2.3 Invite and involve the international experts/consultants in building modern public libraries in Odisha
- 2.4 Appoint the required Directors, District Library Officers, Librarians, support staff, and experts/consultants in state, district, block level for smooth implementation
- 2.5 Make provisions for representation of eminent/award winning educationists, academicians from premiere schools, colleges, universities, library experts, ICT experts, disability experts, skill development experts, eminent social activists to support the broader vision
- 2.6 Publish a clear roadmap/plan with schedule for implementation of "Odisha Public Library Rules" to cover all districts, and blocks across the state.
- 2.7 Make provisions to form core committee at district level to supplement the need of district and block level libraries.
- 2.8 Publish the *detail schemes for establishment, operation and management* of the public libraries
- 2.9 Prioritize and support in organizing *annual conference to promote the public libraries and bring awareness on the impact*
- 2.10 Support and strengthen the *Odisha Public Library Network* in the interest of public libraries in Odisha
- 2.11 Make provisions to make public library services more *direct library user driven* with guidance from local management committee.
- 2.12 Provide *support infrastructure* to provide faster response to public request on library developments

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3. Library Building Infrastructure

- 3.1 **Rural Libraries:** Rajiv Gandhi Seva Kendras(RGSK), under MGNREGA scheme, can be used. Also, this is in line with Panchayat Raj dept. Circular No. 17 NREG-11-1165-18657/PR&DW Date: 28-09-2018
- 3.2 **Urban Libraries:** Municipality can provide existing or new infrastructure from city budget
- 3.3 **Pre-existing Private Libraries:** Private libraries that have excellent track record of performance and proven contribution in the community may be adopted based on their interest
- 3.4 **School Libraries:** All school libraries need to be converted to digital libraries at Panchayat Level, with custodians and Librarians in place for better management of the Library System

4 Library Information & Communication Technology (ICT) Infrastructure

- 4.1 Provide **computing facility** in the public libraries for public access. “Thin Client Computing” solution can be leveraged.
- 4.2 Provide **High Speed Broadband Internet** connectivity to every public library. As per National Telecom Policy of 2012 and 2018, all Panchayats are entitled to have Broadband Internet.
- 4.3 Provide **Library Automation Service** using National Informatics Center (NIC)’s e-Granthalaya free software for better public library management
- 4.4 Develop a professionally managed web portal to provide better insights about the public library system across Odisha
- 4.5 Connect all public libraries across the state via a reliable network
- 4.6 Build a comprehensive database of the public libraries in Odisha using modern technology (cloud computing) that’s scalable and can be used for “statistical performance analysis” of the libraries.
- 4.7 Build a repository of digital contents accessible to public libraries. Older documents of importance and Pothis can be Digitized in a phased manner.
- 4.8 Define the requirements and schemes for **Internet-audio-video enabled Community Center** that will be used in the libraries
- 4.9 Define the requirements and schemes for digital contents (e-books, e-magazines, productive, educational software etc) to be available to the public

5. Library Staffing

- 5.1 Make provisions to provide “Skilled Library Staff” to address library user’s need effectively and get the staff trained regularly
- 5.2 Make provisions to generate high quality library professionals, technical support staff from the universities to meet the demand and to support the public library system in Odisha
- 5.3 Establish a well-defined process for recruiting the library staff from time to time and define the reporting structure
- 5.4 Make necessary steps to attract the youth to make a career in library science and introduce volunteering mechanism for students to get trained in library volunteer service.

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6. Library Funding and Expense

- 6.1 Establish State Public Library Fund:
- 6.2 Make provisions to redirect minimum 10% of MPLAD and minimum 10% of MLALAD funds towards "Library Fund"
- 6.3 Allocate funding from state budget every year and impose 1% CESS as appropriate.
- 6.4 Encourage and/or incentivize corporates to contribute certain percentage to libraries via their Corporate Social Responsible (CSR) Programs
- 6.5 Establish clear guidelines, schemes for allocating funds to rural, urban public libraries

7. Transparency and Accountability

- 7.1 Define key parameters to assess the libraries across the state to better understand current state, issues, challenges, and impacts
- 7.2 Collect comprehensive data about libraries based on the above parameters across the state
- 7.3 Build an online secure database with the collected data
- 7.4 Provide web infrastructure to search and retrieve online content of all public libraries across the state
- 7.5 Publish library funding and budget details in web portal
- 7.6 Establish a "Public Library Ranking System" to rate the libraries by people to measure the performance effectively
- 7.7 Provide Right-To-Information (RTI) details for library related issues in library authority web site
- 7.8 Establish well-defined Monitoring Procedure to track the progress towards the public library system
- 7.9 Establish Communication Procedure using Print Media, Web sites, Social Network, TV Channels, Press Release to bring transparency. Publish Semi-annual and annual report.
- 7.10 Recognize libraries, librarians every year for the contributions and impact they make in the community

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