THE THIRD VOICE REALITY AND VISION
RNI No. : ODIENG/2019/79183
Volume-II, Issue-I, June 2020

Engaging Oriya (Odia) Diaspora in the Development Process: Perspectives and Possibilities

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Introduction: Conceptualising Diaspora

Etymologically derived from the Greek term *diaspeirein*, from *dia*, "across" and *speirein*, "to sow or scatter seeds", diaspora may be perceived as the naming of the 'other' which carries a sense of 'displacement'; that is, communities of people who have been dislocated or separated from their native homeland or nation due to colonial expansion, forced migration, immigration, exile or free and voluntary aspiration to leave the country and these people contemplating a hope, or at least a desire, to return to their homeland at some point, if the "homeland" still exists in any meaningful sense. As a social construct the term has shifted its meaning and coverage over time. The term 'diaspora' refers not only to such classic groups as Jews, Greeks and Armenians, but to much wider categories which reflect processes of uprooting and moving of populations, voluntary migration, global communications and transport. The term has acquired a broad semantic domain and now encompasses a motley array of groups such as political refugees, alien residents, guest workers, immigrants, expellees, ethnic and racial minorities, and overseas communities. Sometimes, Diaspora results in a loss of nostalgia for a single home as people "re-root" in a series of meaningful displacements. In this perception diasporic beings may have 'multiple homes' (at least in the broad compass of their mental horizon) throughout their diaspora, with different reasons for maintaining some form of attachment to each.

In the postmodern parlance, the term 'Diaspora' has moved from its traditional notion of homeland, national or ethnic identity, and geographical location to being conceptualised in terms of hybridity or heterogeneity – cultural, linguistic, ethnic, and national. The postmodern diasporic subjects are marked by traversal of the boundaries demarcating nation and diaspora, hence experiencing double, and even plural identifications. As Stuart Hall (1990) claims, the diaspora experience "is defined, not by essence or purity, but by the recognition of a necessary heterogeneity and diversity; by a conception of identity which lives in and through, not despite, difference; by hybridity." Hybrid identities are positioned with other identity categories; for Urgo (1995), diasporas do not transcend differences of race, class, gender, and sexuality; nor can diaspora stand alone as an epistemological or historical category of analysis, separate and distinct from these inter-related categories.

Again diaspora has no longer remained as the monopoly subject matter of any one particular branch of study and various scholars belonging to different disciplines like, sociology, anthropology, history, humanities etc. have studied diaspora in manifold ways. In his reference to modern diasporas, Sheffer (1986: 3) proposes that "Modern diasporas are ethnic minority groups of migrant origins residing and acting in host countries but maintaining strong sentimental and material links with their countries of origin – their homelands." Robin Cohen (1997) speaks of victim diasporas, labour and imperial diasporas, trade diasporas, cultural diasporas, global-de-territorialised-diasporas, and each of this kind has been caused by a different set of precipitating conditions which result in varied social contexts, mythologies, ethnicities and propositions of

solidarity. In their analysis of the term 'diaspora,' Safran (1991), Sheffer (1993), Bruneau (1994) and Cohen (1997) propose that diaspora should encompass an ethnic consciousness; sustain an active associative life; maintain contacts with the land of origin in various forms, real or imaginary; and uphold and espouse cordial and friendly relationship with other groups of the same ethnic origin spread over the world.

Trans-nationalism and globalisation also provides notions in conceptualising theoretical discourse on diaspora study. In this era of globalisation, open borders, mobile job markets, international division of labour, increased accessibility of modern means of communication and transportation technologies and accelerated dispersal of information and images across boundaries and cultures make possible ongoing communication and contact of immigrants with their countries of origin and with significant others there (Shuval 2007: 32).

Social and cultural networks and associations also play quite significant roles in supporting and promoting immigration as well as help in the maintenance of relations between immigrants and their homelands, and preservance of socio-cultural patterns and norms. It is mostly found that people, who live in close physical proximity, may share less on a cultural level than they do with dispersed people elsewhere, in an increasingly interconnected world (Shuval and Lesham 1998; Shuval 1998).

Studies on diaspora have been conceptualised from many diverse points of departure – East Asian, South Asian, Southeast Asian, Asia-Pacific, Caribbean, South American, Latin American, African, and European etc. Again these broader rubrics have been divided and subdivided into many categories and subcategories. For example, South Asian Diaspora includes Indian, Pakistani, Sri Lankan, Nepalese diasporas etc. Again Indian Diaspora has been subcategorised into Gujarati diaspora, Kerala diaspora, Punjabi diaspora, Oriya diaspora etc. These subcategories have also been grouped into Sikh diaspora, Hindu diaspora, Muslim diaspora etc. This subcategorisation of diaspora into different units does not demean or distract itself from the broader point of reference, rather it helps in understanding the broader unit (here Indian diaspora) more comprehensively, and at the same time it speaks of the diasporic identity based on ethnicity, religion, language and territory.

As has been mentioned above, people from literature, sociology, anthropology, film studies, queer theory, area studies, and ethnic studies have studied diaspora in their own ways and this makes it difficult to ascertain the critical scholarship deployed in it. It is often used as a catch-all phrase to speak of and for all movements, however privileged, and for all dislocations, even symbolic ones (Braziel and Mannur 2003: 3). So, the application of the term "diaspora" to any and all contexts of global migration or displacement should be cautioned.

With these conceptualisations of varied approaches of diaspora in view, this present study examines, within an inter-disciplinary frame, both the historical phenomena of migrations and diasporas and how these movements inflect identity formation in relation to ethnicity, culture, diversity, pluralism etc. This study takes into account of the changing reality in which diasporas exist. It also reflects the fluid nature of social processes in diaspora. This study is structured around three principal actors – homeland, diaspora group, and the host – who interact in a multi-faceted, changing set of relationships which may be viewed on a bifocal or trifocal level. Therefore, diaspora has to be studied through multi-dimensional and multi-faceted approaches and parametres with many variables playing a role.

Phases of Diasporic Migration

The diasporic study makes reference to the gypsies, who are assumed and read as the absolute instance of a nomadic tribe. So, the trajectory of the diasporic study begins with the Jewish people whose profound historicity provides them a specially privileged position. Then, the diasporic theory uses the Jewish example as the ethnic model for purposes of analysis or at least as its point of departure. The other early historical

reference is the Black African diaspora. The slave trade began in the sixteenth century and dragged the Africans out of their native lands and dispersed them into the "New World" – parts of North and South America, the Caribbean and other parts of the globe. Some scholars estimate that as many as twelve million West Africans were sold into slavery and forcibly exiled to the "New World" during the almost 400-year period of legalised slavery which began in 1502 and ended in the mid-nineteenth century (Braziel and Mannur 2003: 2). This dispersion of the African slaves in different parts of the "New World" resulted in numerous fractured diasporas. The abolition of African slavery in the 1830s sees another phase in the diaspora history, which starts with the transportation of indenture labour from Asia, especially from the Indian subcontinent to mitigate the labour demands for expansion of the colonial economy. Endorsing the views of Kaplan (1996), one can say that these early historical references reveal that diaspora is not always voluntary. In the 1960s and 70s the modern globalised world has experienced (experiencing) another phase of the diaspora, especially the migration of skilled labour from the former colonies to the metropolitan centres. So, in this rapidly changing globalised and trans-national world diaspora speaks of diverse groups of displaced persons and communities moving across the globe.

Contextualising Indian Diaspora

On the basis of the historical conditions that has produced the trajectory of diaspora, Indian diaspora can critically be studied and analysed from the binary perception of 'old' and 'new.' These two perceptions traverse two quite different kinds of topography; the old refers to the early modern, classic capitalist or, more specifically, nineteenth century indenture migration and the new is the late modern or late capitalist phase of migration to the developed industrial countries. These two dichotomies are also labelled by some scholars as colonial and postcolonial phases of Indian diaspora.

But, before the onset of this old or colonial phase of Indian diaspora, one comes across in the history of ancient India about the Buddhist *bhikus* who travelled into the interiors of Central and Eastern Asia preaching the gospels of Lord Buddha. Ancient India had a glorious maritime history and in the records of ancient India's maritime history one finds the contacts and trade between the kingdoms of Coromandel Coast and South East Asia. Similarly, the contacts of the Palas of Bengal with the Sailendra kings of Indonesia and the expeditions of the South Indian Cholas which vanquished the great Indonesia empire of Sri Vijay are repeatedly referred to by scholars (Quoted in Jayaram 1998: 5). Some of the sparks of Indian Hindu and Buddhist culture can be traced out in Thailand and Bali and some other parts of South-East Asia. Ancient India also shared a very sound trade relationship with the East African countries. Indian traders, especially from Gujarat region of India were engaged with a very profitable trade with these countries. Some scholars point out that a colony of Indian merchants lived permanently in Memphis, Egypt from about 500 BC (Quoted in Jayaram 1998: 5). Though in ancient India people had these contacts with the South East Asian and East African countries yet none of these contacts led to a distinctive settlement of Indian population overseas (Tinker 1977: 1). So, the Indian diasporic trajectory begins with the reference to the 'old' Indian diaspora.

In the old diasporic spaces, Indian diaspora had to develop and maintain communication and relationship by and large with other same destined colonised people with whom they had to share a complex relationship of power and privilege as one finds in Fiji, South Africa, Malaysia, Mauritius, Trinidad, Guyana and Surinam. In the 1960s and 70s, in search of a better prospect in the career, profession and also monetary concerns, a number of skilled professionals from India entered into the 'established' developed and industrialised metropolitan zones such as Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the USA. Unlike the old diaspora, new Indian diaspora did not enter into a complex relationship with the white majority for power, as by this time 'power' was already established. But Indian diaspora remained in a competition with other ethnic or

immigrant communities for privilege. Through their hard work and professional acumen they created space for themselves.

However, this binary perception of 'old' and 'new' does not isolate communities nor put them in nonnegotiable or exclusive frames; rather the 'old' has become part of the 'new' through remigrations such as Caribbean Indians to Canada or African Indians to UK or the USA. Another important aspect is that in this globalised world, the act of displacement now makes diasporic subject travellers on the move, their homeland contained in the simulacral world of visual media where the 'net' constitutes the 'self' and quite unlike the earlier diaspora where imagination was triggered by the contents in gunny sacks: a Ganesh icon, a dog eared copy of the *Râmâyana* or the *Qur*ân, an old *sari* or other *deshi* outfit, a photograph of a pilgrimage, and so on (Mishra 2007: 4).

Oriya (Odia) Diaspora

As has been mentioned above, studies on diaspora have been conceptualised from many diverse points of departure. So, at the outset it should be noted that Oriya diaspora has to be studied as a subcategorisation of Indian diaspora and the parameters and frameworks mentioned above to conceptualise and study Indian diaspora can also be used to analyse different contours of Oriya diaspora. Among the category of Indian diasporic communities, Oriya diaspora stands only next to Sikhs, Gujaratis, Tamils and Telugus. The diasporic Oriyas are spread in several countries around the globe and their number varies from country to country. They are quite considerable in number in countries like, United States, Canada, Australia, UK, Gulf countries, Singapore, and South Africa and some other countries in Africa. Though not so significant in number, the presences of Oriyas are also found in several other countries of the world. In the ancient period Orissa had tremendous trade relationship with Indonesia, Java, Sumatra, and some other Southeast Asian countries, and some Buddhist *bhikus* from Orissa might have gone to Sri Lanka and some Southeast Asian countries to preach and spread Buddhism there. So, socio-cultural traces can be found out in those countries, but very few, rather no comprehensive research has been made in this regard.

Like the Indian diaspora, Oriya diaspora can be perceived and analysed from the binary perception of 'old' and 'new' or colonial and postcolonial. But before the onset of this 'old' and 'new' diaspora, which is evident, another phase in the Oriya history delineating the contacts and presence of Oriyas outside the state can be traced out. From the ancient time, being a coastal state, maritime trade played a very significant role in generating treasure of revenues, and hence contributing to the economic development of the state. Ancient Orissa's trade, cultural, commercial and political contacts especially with Southeast Asian countries, particularly Burma, Malaysia and Indonesia was remarkable. Archaeological evidence from Sisupalgarh in Orissa suggests that the trade contact between ancient Orissa and Rome date back to the first and second century AD. The trade contacts between eastern India and Thailand date as far as back as the 3rd and 4th century. Kongoda Dynasty from central Orissa migrated to Malaysia and Indonesia around the 7th century AD. In his study, Tome Pires finds out that, Oriya and the Portuguese merchant traders were active at the ports of Southeast Asia during ancient time (Quoted in Sahoo 2008: 4). Huen Tsang's chronicles points out Orissa's overseas contacts in the 7th century, and by the 10th century Orissa's trade with the east began to proliferate (Quoted in Sahoo 2008: 4). During the period of Sailodbhava dynasty, merchants from Orissa developed trade contacts with Sri Lanka, Burma, Thailand, Java, Bali, Sumatra, Borneo, Malaya and Cambodia. Historians point out that the links between the Sailodbhavas of Orissa and Sailendras of South East Asia dates back to antiquity. The rituals of *Balijatra* and *Khuduru Kuni Osa* in Orissa today are the best example of the great maritime past of Orissa.[1]**(Footnotes)**

Another phase in India's as well as Orissa's diaspora history can be traced in the 1830s. After the abolition of African slavery in the first half of the nineteenth century, the European colonial powers were in mad pursuits for cheap and productive labour force in order to carry forward their imperialist expansion with its new industrial and commercial ventures and to run their plantations in the West Indies, Fiji, Ceylon, Malaya, Mauritius, and South Africa. India with its huge population, millions living close to destitution, became the main alternative source of labour. In the 1830s started the unskilled labour migration under three prime categories of labour migration namely, (a). Indentured (especially from northern, eastern, and central part of India to West Indies and Fiji); (b). Kangani and Maistry (from Madras Presidency and southern parts of India to Ceylon, Malaya and Burma); and (c). Passage or Free (from Gujarat and Punjab to South Africa and East Africa, and from South India to Southeast Asia). India's climate was not unlike that of these countries; most of its people were accustomed to agricultural work; and most part of the sub-continent was under British control, which facilitated negotiations with foreign governments. These aspects greatly facilitated the migration. In order to persuade and trap people for migration, the officers or labour recruiters or *arkathis* went to remote villages in the interiors of the country stricken by drought and famine or during a season when those working as tenant farmers or agricultural labourers were unemployed. Though these labours from Indian subcontinent had to bear untold and unimaginable sufferings, yet they provided a stable and manageable labour force on plantations in Mauritius, the Caribbean, Fiji and other parts of the colonial dominion.

As is mentioned above, under the Indenture system labours from northern, eastern and central parts of India were exported to Fiji and the Caribbean countries like, Trinidad, Guyana, Surinam, Jamaica and several other countries. Sheila Rampersed (1998: 1) claims that "migration to the Caribbean took place mainly from northern India, 90 percent migrated from the Gangetic Plane, the former United Provinces, Central Provinces and Oudh, Orissa and Bihar, a few were from Bengal, the North West Provinces, and the South" (Rampersad, 1998: 1). In the following diagram, John La Guerra (1974) states the number of people migrating to Trinidad from 1845 to 1947.

Each dot in the diagram represents about 150-200 persons from different parts of India were shipped to Trinidad from 1845-1917. As the diagram shows, though there were not a large number of people from Orissa migrating to Trinidad, yet their number was quite modest.

Source: John La Guerra (1974), *Calcutta to Caroni The East Indians of Trinidad*

Indenture was basically a contract by which the emigrant agreed to work for a given employer for a period of five years for a specified wage and at the end of five years, the emigrant was free to reindenture or to work elsewhere in the same colony; and at the end of ten years he/she was entitled to a subsidised return passage. The fulfillment of the contract was governed by an immigration ordinance enacted in the country of destination. The only qualification required was physical fitness and experience of agricultural work. Initially almost all these recruits were male, and later a quota of forty per cent females per each ship-load was imposed by the colonial government. Once the emigration officer was satisfied with the emigrant he used to issue an emigration certificate making him or her eligible to immigrate to the country of destination.

In the 1830s, many Oriyas had migrated to the West Indies and Fiji and some other parts of the European colonial dominion as indentured labours. A very senior professor from Trinidad, whose ancestors from India had migrated to the West Indies, told me in our informal conversation that his *nani* (maternal grandmother) was from Orissa, though he was not able to trace out from which part of Orissa. Government of India helps the generation of the indenture diaspora to trace out their roots in India. Government of

Orissa should work in co-operation with Government of India helping the generation of indentured Oriyas to trace out their roots in Orissa.

In the1960s and 1970s, a large number of professionally qualified Oriyas migrated to the industrially developed countries like, the USA, UK, Australia, New Zealand and some other European countries. They have formed their regional associations in almost every country of their residence (like, The Orissa Society of the Americas) to put forth their issues. This modern Oriya diaspora has excelled in the field of academics, science and technology, medicine, economies, business management etc. This diaspora is not only rich but also has helped the state in its crisis. The way diaspora helped the devastated state aftermath of the super cyclone in 1999 is quite exemplary. To rebuild Orissa again, the Oriya NRIs played an important role by raising funds from all over the world through institutions, associations, and personal networks. They feel very much proud of their Oriya identity, and have remained very fondly attached to their rich cultural heritage. The ethnic Oriya festivals and ceremonies like, Rath Yatra, Holi, and Diwali, are celeberated with great pomp and splendour. The Oriya diaspora feels proud and nostalgic while watching the Oriya traditional dance and theatre forms like, Oddissi dance, Bhanja Sangeet, Chhau dance, Gotipua Nacha and enactment of Sarala Mahabharata etc. Specialised cultural troupes are invited from Orissa by the diaspora to perform in several special occasions. These cultural nuances, enactments and practices not only remind them of the rich cultural and civilisational society of which they are a part but also renew their ethnic consciousness. Every success of Orissa or of an Oriya is a great proud moment for an Oriya diasporic being. The rise in the transnational networks and communication technologies in the modern times has facilitated communication and attachment in a broader and meaningful way of the diaspora with the people back home and the state. Many Oriya news portals and the prominent Oriya newspapers running their e-versions (the Samaja, Dharitri etc.) serve as significant sources for the diaspora to gain information about the news and development in Orissa, and in a way these enewspapers and portals connect the diaspora with the state.

Engaging the Oriya (Odia) Diaspora

From the above it becomes quite clear that there are certainly two phases in the Oriya diaspora, which falls under the broad rubrics of 'old' Oriya diaspora and the 'new' or modern Oriya diaspora. To engage this Oriya diaspora in the all round development process is a bigger prospect and a new vista for the state. It is likely that with the rise in the professionally qualified workforce in the state, human capital flows from the state to developed countries may increase in the coming decades. Here, the question arises, how the diaspora, and this increase in the level of migration flows that will add to the number of diasporic Oriyas (will) affect the state. Certainly, this diaspora can be substantial sources and facilitators of trade and investment, purveyors of remittances and 'brain banks.' So, the state needs the formulation of a concrete policy framework to adopt the diaspora and use their sources in the welfare and developmental goals of the state. But at the same time there are certain issues and concerns pertaining to the welfare of the diaspora, which the government needs to take care.

States like, Kerala and Gujarat have formulated policies to engage their diasporas in the developmental process. The diasporas of these two states have invested in the different sectors of the state, contributed to the societal and humanitarian aid, and some adopting particular villages to make them model villages. In an interview Narendra Modi, Hon'ble Chief Minister of Gujarat said, "in the next ten years, Gujarat's economic growth will surpass the growth of the South-East Asian Tigers like Singapore and Malaysia." In an answer to the question, **what has been the contribution of non-resident Gujaratis for the state's growth?** he claimed that among NRIs, you will find the majority are Non Resident Gujaratis (NRG) – NRGs are spread across the world. The contribution of NRGs has been in terms of economic as well as social

activities. So far 333 industrial units have been set up by NRGs with an investment of Rs. 1294 crore in Gujarat. In terms of social contribution to the state, NRGs have been keen to adopt their own villages, for donating for various kinds of social infrastructure such as primary schools, dispensaries and village roads (www.industrialeconomist.com). Under the General Administration Department of the Government of Gujarat, there is a NRI Division, which looks after the various issues concerning the Non Resident Gujaratis. An Additional Chief Secretary heads the Department and he/she is assisted by a Deputy Secretary. There is also the Gujarat State Non-Resident Gujaratis' Foundation that takes care of the concerns of the NRGs.

There is no doubt that Kerala is the first and only state in India to prepare a broad and concrete road map and policy framework to engage its disapora in the development process as well as initiating various measures for the welfare of its diaspora. It should be mentioned that lakhs of Keralites have migrated as skilled and unskilled labours as well as white collared professionals to the Persian Gulf, Western Europe, United States, Canada, New Zealand and some other countries of the world. These Non Resident Keralites have not only connected Kerala to the world but also the inflow of foreign currency by way of remittances sent by them has positively transformed the economy of the state to a great extent. However, there have been adverse social implications to this phenomenon. The Non Resident Keralites face several sufferings and problems in the foreign countries, and their family and relatives back home also pass through many troubles.

Realising the social security of the non resident Keralites and their families and relatives back home, on 6th December 1996, Government of Kerala established the Department of Non Resident Keralites Affairs (NORKA)[2] to redress the grievances of non resident Keralites that had been left untangled. NORKA, the first department of its kind in India, is a single window outfit to carry out the assurances given by the Government of Kerala to its expatriate community. Strengthening of relation between the NRKs and the Government of Kerala and devising solutions to troubles confronted by NRK community is the basic vision and objective of the Department. It is also an attempt at institutionalizing the administrative framework. NORKA has established NORKA Roots that acts as a counsel for the Non Resident Keralites. NORKA has established the agency - Non-Resident Keralites Welfare Agency to implement schemes for the welfare and benefit of NRKs, and to channelise their expertise and resources.

NORKA has been involved in solving varied problems and issues like, taking remedial action on threats to the lives and property of those who are left at home, tracing of missing persons abroad, compensation from sponsors, harassment from sponsors, cheating by recruiting agents, education facilities for children of NRKs, introduction of more flights, etc. It provides assistance to stranded keralites through follow up action initiated on all the petitions.

The basic major function of the Department is to provide assistance to stranded Keralites; promptly take action against the complaints on non receipt of salary, accommodation etc; provide assistance in bringing the mortal remains of NRKs to Kerala, subject to certain conditions; take action against the complaints on illegal overseas recruitment agencies; provide information and facilitate the investment opportunities in Kerala; providing information on Pravasi Suraksha Kudumba Arogya Scheme; to take action against the grievances of Non Resident Keralite Housemaids and other non resident women in distress; solve problems faced by the NRKs in State Government Departments; and help in claiming of compensation and other benefits due from employers/Government;
The Non-Resident Keralites Welfare Agency's (NORKWA) proposed activities include: Introduction of a pension fund for NRKs; Rehabilitation of NRK returnees; Skill upgradation training; and Reintegration training.

With the basic vision of providing social security to millions of NRKs who toil in different parts of the globe Government of Kerala in collaboration with other agencies has launched various schemes like, Pravasi Identity Card; Karunyam: Repatriation of dead bodies of NRKs; and Swanthwana: Non-Resident Keralites Welfare Scheme, Rehabilitation of NRK returnees, and Heritage village projects for NRKs. For the welfare of the NRKs and returnees the Government has initiated programmes like, awareness campaign on safe migration; pre-departure orientation programme; workshops for overseas job seekers at different parts of the state advising them on different aspects of overseas jobs; and skill upgradation programme combating with arising challenge.

The basic aspect that has been raised by many critics, and that needs attention is, why Orissa needs its diaspora? Firstly it is money. Oriya diaspora sends back huge money as remittances to the people back home. Overseas Oriyas are rich, and Orissa needs investment. So, the Government must create a conducive atmosphere for the overseas Oriyas to invest in the state in different sectors. Secondly, Oriya diaspora can be used as an instrument of influence and lobby for the state in the foreign countries. They (can) influence the foreign investors as well as investors from the Indian and other diasporic communities in their respective countries of settlement to invest in Orissa. The diaspora has been lobbying for POSCO and Vedanta University happen in the state. They (can) make people know about the rich cultural and architectural heritage of Orissa in the foreign countries, hence giving rise in the number of tourists to Orissa. Thirdly, the diaspora possesses managerial skills, IT skills, research and academic skills, which will definitely contribute in a very broader way to the knowledge bank of the state. Fourthly, diaspora (can) contribute(s) to the societal and humanitarian development in the state. The above mentioned Oriya diaspora's contribution to the restructuring of the state after the super cyclone is quite exemplary.

From the other end of the spectrum, what strikes the mind is, why Oriya diaspora needs Orissa. Firstly, they need social and political security for themselves in their respective countries of settlement as well for their families and relatives back home. They want the state to take a very positive and forward step in this regard. Secondly, they want to invest their money which they generally keep in banks, which go idle. And by investing the money in the place of their birth they feel good. Thirdly, they want Orissa to grow; they feel proud when Orissa is prosperous.

Some Recommendations

There is no doubt that the diaspora and the state need each other. Like the Kerala Government, Orissa Government should think in broader policy terms to engage its diaspora in a very meaningful and successful way. The Orissa Government may derive notions from the Kerala model in this regard. These are some the recommendations that the study puts forth.

Firstly, the Government should create a proper Department, may be namely, Department of Non Resident Oriyas Affairs, headed by a Secretary, and assisted by one or two Joint Secretary level officers.

Secondly, a diasporic council may be formed, comprising of senior academics from different disciplines, government officials and people from civil society organisations. This council may be in advisory in nature advising the government as well as the concerned department about various aspects pertaining to the Oriya diaspora.

Thirdly, Department on Indian Diaspora Studies with special focus on Oriya diaspora may be established in some of the premier universities and colleges in Orissa.

Fourthly, for the social and political security of the Oversaes Oriyas and their families and relatives back home, a Non-Resident Oriyas Welfare Agency may be formed by the Government. In this regard, the Government must take maximum inputs from the Kerala model.

Fifthly, a comprehensive database about Non Resident Oriyas needs to be prepared and maintained.

Sixthly, broad periodical studies on the social and cultural issues of Non Resident Oriyas should be made and steps should be taken to formulate schemes for meeting their requirements.

Last but not the least, proper studies should be made on, how to tap the technical, managerial, academic, research, professional and financial skills and resources of the Non Resident Oriyas so as to use them in the development of the human resources and economic and industrial progress of the State.

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