

## Open letter to the Prime minister

**To:**

**Dr. Manmohan Singh**  
**South Block,**  
**Raisina Hill,**  
**New Delhi, India-110011.**  
**Telephone: 91-11-23012312.**  
**Fax: 91-11-23019545 /91-11-23016857.**  
**email: <http://pmindia.nic.in/write.htm>**

**cc:**

**Smt. Sonia Gandhi**  
**President: INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS**  
**24, Akbar Road, New Delhi – 110011 ,**  
**INDIA TEL : 91-11-23019080**  
**FAX : 91-11-23017047**  
**email: [aicc@congress.org.in](mailto:aicc@congress.org.in)**

**Subject: Gross injustice to ORISSA by removing Bhubaneswar from the NIS/IISER list**

**Dear Esteemed Prime minister:**

On 9th December 2003, the then HRD minister Professor M. M. Joshi had announced that UGC had established steps to initiate four National Institute of Sciences at Bhubaneswar, Chennai, Pune and Allahabad. This is documented in the UGC web document [4] and the press release [5] by the Ministry of Human Resource Development and Science & Technology, dated 10th December, 2003. As of today both are available, directly or in archival sites, in the Internet.

Sir, Recently on September 28, 2005 [6] you have announced the setting up of an Indian Institute of Science for Education and Research (IISER) at Pune and Kolkata, respectively.

Sir, The aim of the National Institute of Sciences that Professor Joshi had announced in December 2003 is the same as the proposed IISERs. Thus, NIS and IISER, though they defer in their names; as proposed institutions, both refer to the same concept. In fact the CM of West Bengal has referred to it [10] as National Institute of Sciences.

Sir, It is extremely unfair on your part, and gross injustice to Orissa that previously announced Bhubaneswar is excluded from your list of announced IISERs. Perhaps, the other announced (and now unmentioned in the context of IISER) locations Chennai and Allahabad are not as much concerned as they already have an IIT and an IIIT respectively, or perhaps they have been placated with promises. But for Bhubaneswar and Orissa this is a matter of survival [7,8], as Orissa does not have any central university [1], any institution of national importance [2] (such as IITs, ISI, etc.), any reputed centrally funded institute such as an IIM, or any centrally funded IIIT or IIITM. It also does not have an autonomous science and technology institution of the department of science and technology as listed in [3]. Moreover, there is a high likelihood that when additional IISERs are established, Bhubaneswar will not be one of them as many would then argue for a regional balance. Thus this wrong needs to be corrected now.

Sir, It is unacceptable of a government of India and Prime minister of India to change an educational investment decision made by an earlier government, especially related to a state like Orissa which has historically very little central government investment in higher education.

Sir, if every new central government callously changed the decision of the previous Government, seemingly based on the (lack of) strength of the ruling party representation of that state, and particularly in the area of long term projects like the IISER; it will set a wrong precedent, and will be disastrous in the long run because no decisions will be final and binding. And such reversal of decisions will lead to perpetual friction among the regional groups and interests leading to reversal of forces of national integration. Thus the negation of the NIS decisions made by the previous government, besides being a gross injustice to Orissa, is a big blow to India's democracy and regional balance and all round development. It is reported in [9] that you recently (around the same time as [6]) addressed the regional imbalance issue in terms of educational institutions and said "I trust our government as well the state governments will take note of these findings and evolve policies to remedy these regional imbalances." In light of this your Government's action of excluding the announced and planned for NIS/IISER in Bhubaneswar is utterly inexplicable, and makes your word sound hollow.

Sir, our Indian system of proportional representation makes smaller states like Orissa susceptible to such injustice and neglect. That is where we expect statesman like you, Smt. Sonia Gandhi, and Mr. Arjun Singh to lead, rise above politics, and make sure resources are fairly distributed across the country and comparatively smaller and weaker states are protected and not bullied by power centers with larger representations.

Sir, according to newspaper reports, our chief minister wrote to you about this, but to no avail, so far.

Sir, Orissa has been severely wronged by your recent action of ignoring previously announced Bhubaneswar for an NIS/IISER. As an admirer of your simplicity, honesty, fairness, and erudition, I am deeply disturbed and disappointed by this action of your Government. With tears in my eyes, I sincerely request you to reconsider your decision

and at least add back Bhubaneswar to the initial list of IISERs, thus bringing back dignity and a sense of fair play to the Government of India, and rescuing Orissa from successive central Government's neglect in the higher education arena.

I must add that in a few areas your Government has been a bit more responsive to Orissa; although there is need for more. This includes decisions regarding important infrastructure matters as well as health matters. In particular, we thank your Government for continuing with the promised AIIMS-like institutions, although not much has been done in the ground yet. Please note that an AIIMS is not a broad educational institution with the breadth of an IIT, IISc or a central university. Thus, the AIIMS decision, should not be held against Orissa. \*If and only if\* someone has used or uses it against Orissa, then it should be pointed out to them that the state of West Bengal where one of the IISERs is proposed has an IIT in Kharagpur, a central University in Shanti Niketan, two additional institutes of national importance in an IIM and an Indian Statistical institute (ISI), and three autonomous science and technology institutions [3], all in Kolkata. Similarly, the state of Maharashtra where the other IISER is proposed, has the Armed Forces Medical College(AFMC) in Pune, an IIT in Mumbai, and three other autonomous science and technology institutions [3]. As mentioned earlier Orissa does not have any central university, any institute of national importance (such as an IIT, IIM, ISI, etc.), and nor any autonomous science and technology institution [3]. Just to clarify, I am not against IISERs in Kolkata and Pune; I just want your government to undo the injustice done to Orissa by not taking away from it an announced and planned for NIS/IISER.

Sir, If you have any doubts about Orissa's preparedness to help jump start an IISER at short notice or regarding Orissa's commitment and past efforts towards higher education and scientific research, we would like to point you to Orissa government's efforts in establishing the Institute of Physics and Institute of Life Sciences in Bhubaneswar. Both are now very good institutions and can together be a starting point of an IISER. For more details on such efforts, please refer to [7]. Also, I am pretty sure that our Chief Minister will be happy to allay any concerns that you may have.

sincerely,

## References:

[1]. List of central Universities

<http://www.ugc.ac.in/inside/utype.php?st=Central%20University>

<http://www.education.nic.in/htmlweb/autbod.htm>

(NONE in Orissa)

[2]. List of Institute of National Importance from

<http://www.ugc.ac.in/inside/utype.php?st=Institute%20of%20National%20Importance>

(NONE in Orissa)

[3]. List of autonomous Science and Technology Institutions from

[http://dst.gov.in/autonomous/autonomous\\_index.htm](http://dst.gov.in/autonomous/autonomous_index.htm)

(NONE in Orissa)

[4]. A document titled "Modern Technologies - the only alternative for Expansion of Higher Education" which is at

[http://www.ugc.ac.in/pub/jan\\_2004/12.htm](http://www.ugc.ac.in/pub/jan_2004/12.htm) and is archived in

It is about Prof. MM Joshi (the then HRD minister of India)'s address on 9th December 2003 and includes the following:

"Dr. Joshi also informed the members about the steps initiated by the UGC for improving the relevance and quality of teaching and research, such as introduction of utility-oriented programmes along with the traditional degree; identifying the universities with potential for excellence; to establish four National Institutes of Sciences at Bhubaneswar, Chennai, Pune and Allahabad; monitoring the universities using parameters for academic performance, research performance and governance and providing incentives to universities and colleges scoring high on these parameters."

[5]. In the Ministry of Human Resource Development and Science & Technology's Press release, dated 10th December, 2003 available at

<http://pib.nic.in/archieve/ireleng/lyr2003/rdec2003/10122003/r1012200313.html>

and titled

INFORMATION COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY TO BE USED IN A BIG  
WAY FOR  
EXPANSION OF HIGHER EDUCATION: DR JOSHI

UNIVERSITIES ASKED TO COMPLY WITH UGC REGULATIONS WITHIN

## THREE MONTHS

### CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE OF HRD MINISTRY MEETS

It includes the following:

``... The meeting was also informed of the steps initiated to improve the quality of teaching and research. It was informed that at post-graduate level a credit-based, modular approach is being introduced. UGC has recently upgraded monetary support at individual, group and department levels and has opened for colleges such incentive schemes as were earlier confined to universities. While five universities were identified this year, with potential for excellence, viz. Chennai, Hyderabad, Jadhavpur, Pune and Jawaharlal Nehru Open University, five more universities will be identified next year to promote excellence among universities especially in matters of research. Four national-level institutes are also being established at Bhubaneshwar, Chennai, Pune and Allahabad. ..."

[6]. <http://pib.nic.in/release/release.asp?relid=12305>

Wednesday,

September 28, 2005

Prime Minister's Office

PM CLEARS NEW INSTITUTES OF SCIENCE IN PUNE AND KOLKATA

20:20 IST

``Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh has approved the setting up of an Indian Institute of Science for Education and Research (IISER) at Pune and Kolkata, respectively. The Union Ministry for Human Resource Development has been authorized to fund both the institutes this year, so that they can become operational in 2006. ..."

[7]. <http://www.public.asu.edu/~cbaral/orissa/nis-why.html>

[8]. <http://www.public.asu.edu/~cbaral/orissa/iit-nis.html>

[9]. <http://in.rediff.com/news/2005/sep/28pm1.htm>

[10]. [http://www.telegraphindia.com/1051004/asp/bengal/story\\_5317968.asp](http://www.telegraphindia.com/1051004/asp/bengal/story_5317968.asp)

(last but one paragraph.)