

**National Conference on  
TRANSFORMING ODISHA:  
POLICIES, INSTITUTIONS AND INNOVATIONS  
Center for Study of Contemporary Societies  
Bhubaneswar, Odisha, March 3-4, 2018**

**The Context:**

Odisha is nature's paradise. Out of total 60,000 square miles, a good 37 percent is covered with forests. The Eastern coastal belt of Odisha has rich alluvial soil and the abundance of water. According to the National Commission on Agriculture, Odisha, with 4 percent of India's geographical area has 10 percent of the country's water resources. The inland region of the state is endowed with extensive mineral resources. Odisha accounts for a large share in the stock of different minerals in the country. It has been estimated that 92 percent of chromites, 52 percent of bauxite, 35 percent of manganese, 33 percent of the iron ore, 92 percent of nickel, 24 percent of coal deposits of India are located in Odisha (Economic Survey 2016-17, Government of Odisha). Odisha stands second in the country, after Jharkhand, in terms of percapita value of minerals (Economic Survey 2016-17, Government of India). The Chilika Lake, with 450 square miles of shallow back waters, combined with an extended coastline of 500 kilometers on the Bay of Bengal make Odisha a treasure house of marine resources.

It would be logical to assume from this impressive inventory that Odisha must be one of the most prosperous States of India. Unfortunately, the reality is quite the contrary. In the mid-19th Century, British administrators described the Odisha region as the most backward area of the Bengal Presidency. One Hundred and Fifty Years later, Odisha retains the unhappy distinction of remaining among the most economically backward state in the country. Though the State made significant improvement in recent years, nearly one third of State's populations are still under poverty as per the latest estimate. Odisha is the 3<sup>rd</sup> poorest state in the country, after Bihar and Madhya Pradesh. In terms of per-capita income (Rs. 52516, for the year 2014-15 at constant prices) the State fares better than few other states though it's lower than the national average (Rs. 72889). Importantly, the poverty in Odisha has a regional variation, far starker in southern region than other regions in the state. Also, the incidence of poverty is worse among the Scheduled Tribes and Scheduled Castes and the women.

When it comes to other indicators like maternal mortality and infant mortality rates, the state continues to have high maternal mortality (2.22 per 1,000 live births against the national average of 1.67 in 2013) and infant mortality (49 per 1,000 live births against the national average of 39 in 2014), in the country despite better allocation of resources in social sector. In terms of total literacy, although the state is pretty closer to national average, there are wide disparities across regions and social groups. The SCs, STs and the women greatly lag behind in literacy attainment. The growth of infrastructure has been slow and inadequate. Though the road density in the State is marginally higher than the national average, it lags behind in the density of surfaced roads

with around 1/5<sup>th</sup> of the total roads being surfaced roads. The rail density in the state is also lower than the national average. In the overall human development index, the state ranks a lowly 22<sup>nd</sup> place in the all India level.

State's poverty and poor human development showing has direct links different socioeconomic indicators and also with its continued overdependence on the agricultural sector. Although the share of agriculture sector in Net State Domestic product (NSDP) has declined to 18 percent, it continues to be the largest employer (62 percent). However, since Odisha's agriculture is predominantly rain-fed, erratic behaviors of the monsoons and frequent natural calamities continue to negatively impact the sector and the overall growth rate of the State's economy. The farmer suicides in Odisha in recent years expose the distress among the farming community. Between 2001 to 2011, some 2600 farmers committed suicide in state. Unlike other states, most of the farmers committing suicide in the state were paddy growing farmers and this exposes the deep malaise in the farming sector. The employment growth in the state has gone down drastically and consequently unemployment rate has gone up sharply making it one of the highest in the country. The stories on owes of migrants laborers from Odisha make to the headlines of state and national media often.

The state of industry in Odisha is even more revealing. From 1885 to 1947, Odisha had only 2 industries, a paper mill and a cotton mill. By 1962, after two Five Year Plans, there were around 15 industries including the Public Sector Rourkela Steel Plant. By 1993, some 300 large and medium industries had been established. Although post 1990s period has seen an upturn in industrial scene with state government signing number of MoUs in steel, aluminum and power sector, the net industrial scene has not diversified much. The small and medium sector which are seen as biggest employers are yet to get serious attention. The MSME Policy 2016 if implemented in true spirit may help in this regard. NCAER's State Investment Potential Index 2016 ranks Odisha at 11<sup>th</sup> among 21 major Indian states. Though Odisha is among the top 5 states when it comes to labour in this ranking, the state lags behind in all other indicators.

While some of these key statistics briefly sum up the state of development in Odisha, they do not tell the entire story particularly the positive sides. Although the industrial growth is far below the national average, the current industrial outlook of the State seems to hold promises. Thanks to the heavy concentration of minerals resources and significant investment in infrastructure, in the recent times many industrial houses have shown interest to invest in the state. The state seen signing of host of large MoUs for setting up steel plants and other plants in last one and half decades but many of them are yet to materialize. If guided and nurtured properly, Odisha may see a U-turn in its industrial fortune. Another area that has seen an impressive surge is that of the information technologies sector. Odisha has been slowly but steadily asserting its position on the IT map of the country. The state, particularly the capital city also emerged as a hub of professional education and hence holding the promise for the knowledge based industries. The state's tourism sector looks quite promising. Also, there enough signs of positive development in key infrastructure particularly road, port and rail. In short, there are good signs of state making a

turn around in its development record. Given the high rural population, urbanization also could be a driver of growth.

However, things do not look as easy as one can see it from the surface. There are number of challenges that the state need to address if the policy makers of the state would like to turn the tide in its favor and maximize from India's growth story. The foremost challenge is about making a massive turn around in agricultural sector which continues to be the backbone of the state's economy. The challenge is how to make agriculture a profitable and commercially viable venture through application of modern farming technologies, encouraging entrepreneurship in the sector, establishing agro-based and food processing industries and diversifying the contours of the sector through an elaborate arrangement of irrigation, credits, and adequate agricultural extension services. Secondly, how the state could utilize the advantages of having abundance mineral resources? Although the state has come out with a proactive and investor's friendly industrial policy since 2001 which has in a way attracted large scale foreign direct investments in critical sector like steel, aluminum and power, most of them have not materialized for some or other reasons. May be it requires more proactive public investment in supportive infrastructures like power, ports, road network, railways and telecommunications. A study of the Infrastructure Index, which takes into account the power, communications and transport indices, shows that Odisha's at 10<sup>th</sup> position among major Indian states. Third, in the IT and other service sector, despite advantages of having skilled manpower, state has not really encashed in the manner other states have done. In addition, a number of other critical issues that needs to be addressed in order to see Odisha making a positive turn around. Not only the state's economy has to grow faster, it has to address the issue of regional disparities, social equity and environmental sustainability. More importantly, how to make the growth inclusive and sustainable?

### **Conference Objectives**

The purpose of the conference is to provide a platform for researchers, policy makers, development experts, government officials, legislators, intellectuals and all others interested in the cause of development of the state to exchange and share information and to discuss strategies for achieving a developed Odisha. Panelists and participants for the conference will be from diverse sectors: universities and research bodies, practitioners, donor agencies, media and civil society.

The specific objectives of this two day conference are to facilitate exchange of ideas and sharing of experiences related to Odisha's current social and economic outlook, problems and possible roadmap. The conference would be more of a curtain raiser on Odisha particularly on the aspects of economic and social development, although it would not shy away of addressing other interrelated issues. While it would not be able provide a clear roadmap, the key endeavor would be to help build a critical support base of academics, intellectuals, administrators and policy makers to invest their valuable time and attention on tomorrow's resurgent Odisha.

Some of the questions that the conference aims at deliberating are: Is the State geared up to take advantage of opportunities that the new economy offers? Does the state have enabling institutions and capacity to harness the growth potentials? What challenges do different sectors face for a turn around? What kind of policies and institutions will put the state in the path of a transformation? What kind of institutions, incentives and innovations will address the skilling requirements of the new economy? Does the State need to take the same path that the other successful states travelled in their development journey? Does the State have a choice to prioritize economic growth over social equity and environmental sustainability or have to pursue all three goals simultaneously? Does the new economy provide an opportunity for the State to leapfrog? Does the State has a vision or can it re-imagine itself to the new ordering?

**Conference Themes:**

The conferences invite papers and panels related to themes and subthemes but not limited to the following areas:

- General Socio-Economic Issues: Poverty, Employment, Human Development, State Finance, Domestic and Foreign Investment, Industries and Services, Infrastructure, Skill Development, Urbanization and Smart Cities.
- Agriculture and Rural Development: Irrigation, Storage, Marketing, Credits, Crop Diversification, Agro-industries, Food Processing, Farmer’s Distress and Suicide, Tribal Development, Sustainable Livelihoods, Migration
- Governance and Institutions: Policies, Institutions, Incentives, Innovations, Smart Governance, , Participatory Governance
- Environmental Concerns: Pollution, Resource Management-Minerals, Land, Water and Forest, Climate Change, Management of Disaster and Extreme Events

**Important Dates:**

<b>Last date for submission of Abstracts</b>	January 31, 2018
<b>Communication about selection of Abstract</b>	February 7, 2018
<b>Submission of the Full Paper</b>	February 25, 2018
<b>Conference</b>	March 3-4, 2018

**Travel and Accommodation Support:**

Travel and accommodation support will be provided to limited number of paper presenters. Please specify if you need travel support while submitting the abstract/paper.

**Submission of Abstract/Paper:**

Interested participants may submit the abstract/full paper and panel proposal (500 words) may be mailed to [contactus@cscsindia.org](mailto:contactus@cscsindia.org), with copy to: [mohantykishore75@gmail.com](mailto:mohantykishore75@gmail.com), [bibhu.hyd@gmail.com](mailto:bibhu.hyd@gmail.com). The abstracts/papers will be reviewed by the conference scientific committee and acceptance of abstract/paper will be intimated as per the schedule mentioned above. On acceptance of the abstract, a soft copy of the full paper must be submitted as per the following guidelines along with the registration form.

- The paper should be submitted in English
- Paper should be properly typed with A4 size paper, having single line space in Times New Roman 12 font.
- The word limit for abstract is 500 words and 5000 words for the full paper.
- The first page of the paper should carry Title of the paper, Name of Author/Authors, Designation, institutional affiliation, e-mail address, and contact no.,

**Click here to download the conference registration form**

For any further details please contact:

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\* Interested participants are requested to download the Registration Form by [Click Here](#).

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