

To: Shri Dharmendra Pradhan  
Cabinet Minister of Petroleum, and Natural Gas; and  
Cabinet Minister of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship

Dear Esteemed Dharmendra Pradhan ji:

Jai Jagannath!

We really appreciate what you have been doing for Odisha as a central minister in Delhi. You have been the de-facto eyes and ears of the central government in Odisha, as well as the voice for (the development of) Odisha at the center.

We would like your active support in our effort to pursue with the PM of India for establishing a central university in Puri (Odisha) on the line of BHU (Banaras Hindu University) with all the modern disciplines (liberal arts, languages, science, commerce, management, engineering, medicine, dentistry, pharmacy, design, architecture, law, education, visual arts, performance arts, agriculture, etc.) as well as cross-cutting disciplines that interface with traditional Indian knowledge, arts, culture and heritage. Such a university does not currently exist in Odisha.

This goal is a not a fancy dream, but a real aspiration of people of Puri and Odisha with support from all over the world. This is evident from the various signatories to this letter.

The reason behind our quest for a BHU type university in Puri is as follows. Puri, the aboard of Lord Jagannath is the heart and soul of all Odias; Puri has been a center of knowledge for centuries where various sages and scholars came to Puri in pursuit of spirituality and knowledge; In recognition of that Puri is one of the chaar dhaams (four pilgrimage centers) institutionalized by Adi Sankara and revered by Hindus; yet Puri has been neglected and is currently way behind Kashi (Varanasi) and Tirupati as a knowledge center, with BHU and an IIT in Kashi and IIT and IISER in Tirupati.

Hence, to bring back the glory of Puri as a center of knowledge, to preserve the knowledge that emanated from here and to let it interact with the modern knowledge to take India forward, we request that a BHU type central university be established in Puri, and we hope you will take our message to the central leadership and make this happen. Our letter to the PM with additional details is attached.

We know that a Central University was established in Koraput, Odisha in 2009 and some detractors might use that as a ruse to oppose our request. However, it should be noted that since 2009 six different centrally funded universities have been given (or suggested by the center) for Bihar. They are in Gaya, Motihari, Kishanganj (a center of Aligarh Muslim University), Nalanda, Pusa and Vikramshila.

Hence, our request for a BHU type central university for Puri, is reasonable. In fact we suggest that such universities should be established in each of the chaar dhaams of India.

Finally, we understand that your party BJP has big aims for Odisha and it is obvious that for its success in Odisha, BJP needs to get the blessings of Lord Jagannath and Puri. We believe that the starting point for BJP's quest for Odisha should be the announcement of a BHU type central university in Puri, the abode of Lord Jagannath.

Jai Jagannath!

sincerely,