



OSHWAL EDUCATION & RELIEF BOARD

ઓશવાળ કેળવણી અને રાહત બોર્ડ

P. O. BOX 49633, 00100, NAIROBI, KENYA - TEL: 0772-264485-7 / 0735-888845

E-MAIL: administrator@oerb.org

Date: 19 August 2015.

Ref. OERB/Archives/02/2015

To: Hon. Secretaries of:
All Oshwal Centres in East Africa,
All Oshwal Central Bodies in India, U.K., Canada, USA and Australia,

Individual Oshwals across the world.

Re: ESTABLISHMENT OF OSHWAL HISTORY & ARCHIVES DEPARTMENT

We are pleased to inform you that Oshwal Education & Relief Board (OE&RB) has set up a department under the name of **'HISTORY & ARCHIVES DEPARTMENT'**.

Its main function/activity would be to record the History of OE&RB since its founding in 1941, almost 75 years ago. As we all know, OE&RB has played a significant role in the development and progress of our community members, through its education and welfare activities. To-day we are proud to tell the world how this was achieved and how Oshwal name has become synonymous with success, progress and one that all Oshwals can be proud of. From humble beginnings to giants of industry and education – just like a huge oak tree grows from an acorn.

Many Oshwals have written about our origins, movements and challenges and successes. But we are also conscious that there is still much that remains in our records and unwritten stories that needs to be told to our younger generation. People without history are like nomads without a permanent home and thus can be wiped out from the canvas of this world any time. It is our aspiration that we record a complete history of Oshwals that is available from any sources and store it in archives, for present and future generations to refer to.

We are therefore requesting all Oshwals to make available records and photographs of interest that can be stored in our Archives dept. and at the same time, from which sources, a fuller Oshwal story can emerge. We shall be approaching this project from several angles:

1. **Community records** – Oshwal communities of all towns – existing ones and those that closed down, due to changing circumstances in the country. Many such towns closed down without leaving their records (files) with the parent body, OERB. This will be one of the most difficult tasks. However, many Oshwals from the smaller towns, who either moved to bigger towns like Nairobi or migrated to U.K., U.S.A., Canada and Australia, can assist us in building of the 'lost' records.
2. **Committee records** – Main communities, including OERB, work through their respective Managing Committees and several sub-committees. Here, we are appealing to all such committees to send copies of their records for reference and storage in the central OERB Archives. They can retain their originals in their respective Community Archives Dept.



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- School records** – Oshwal Boarding/Hostels and schools are in existence since early 1940s and even earlier, in Halar villages. Their records, too, are very important as they have played a central role in the advancement of education of Oshwals. We need stories and records that you have to tell us about.
- Individuals/Family records** – We All have a story to tell. Each individual, family and business/industry has a story to tell. To-day, more and more Oshwals are compiling their family histories, especially from records from senior members. We want to see that this history is captured quickly, before the senior members leave for their heavenly abode. Each paper, family letters, other documents, are sources of rich history.
- Archives** – Oshwal History will not be limited to the last 75 years of existence of OERB. It will also capture history of individual Oshwal Community Centres from big towns like Nairobi and Mombasa to smaller towns like Nanyuki, Meru, Migori, etc. (some towns where there are no Oshwals now). We have a dream. And that is to finally have an Archives Dept. and an Oshwal Museum, where we can showcase traditional and modern life of some 70,000 Oshwals spread across the world. Our heritage must be preserved. That is one binding force for all Oshwals. And this can be achieved if our new generation is made aware of our rich and glorious past and present history and achievements.

What we have said above is not limiting. As they say, Sky is the limit. We shall build on our story as we go along. We are therefore inviting all Oshwals to make available whatever records (copies) they have for our Archives Dept. We invite your views on this subject.

We are also attaching simple Fill-in Forms for individuals and businesses and request that you take some time to write down your story and forward it to the History & Archives Dept. of Oshwal Education & Relief Board, Nairobi, at the following e-mail: archives-manager@oerb.org.

We shall be approaching our senior members individually to record their stories, contribution and their opinions of OERB and how it has transformed their lives.

Please feel free to contact Navin B. Shah, who will head this new History & Archives Department, for any questions/queries that you may have.

Jai Oshwal.

Yours sincerely

For Oshwal Education & Relief Board

Mayur L. Shah

Hon. Gen. Secretary