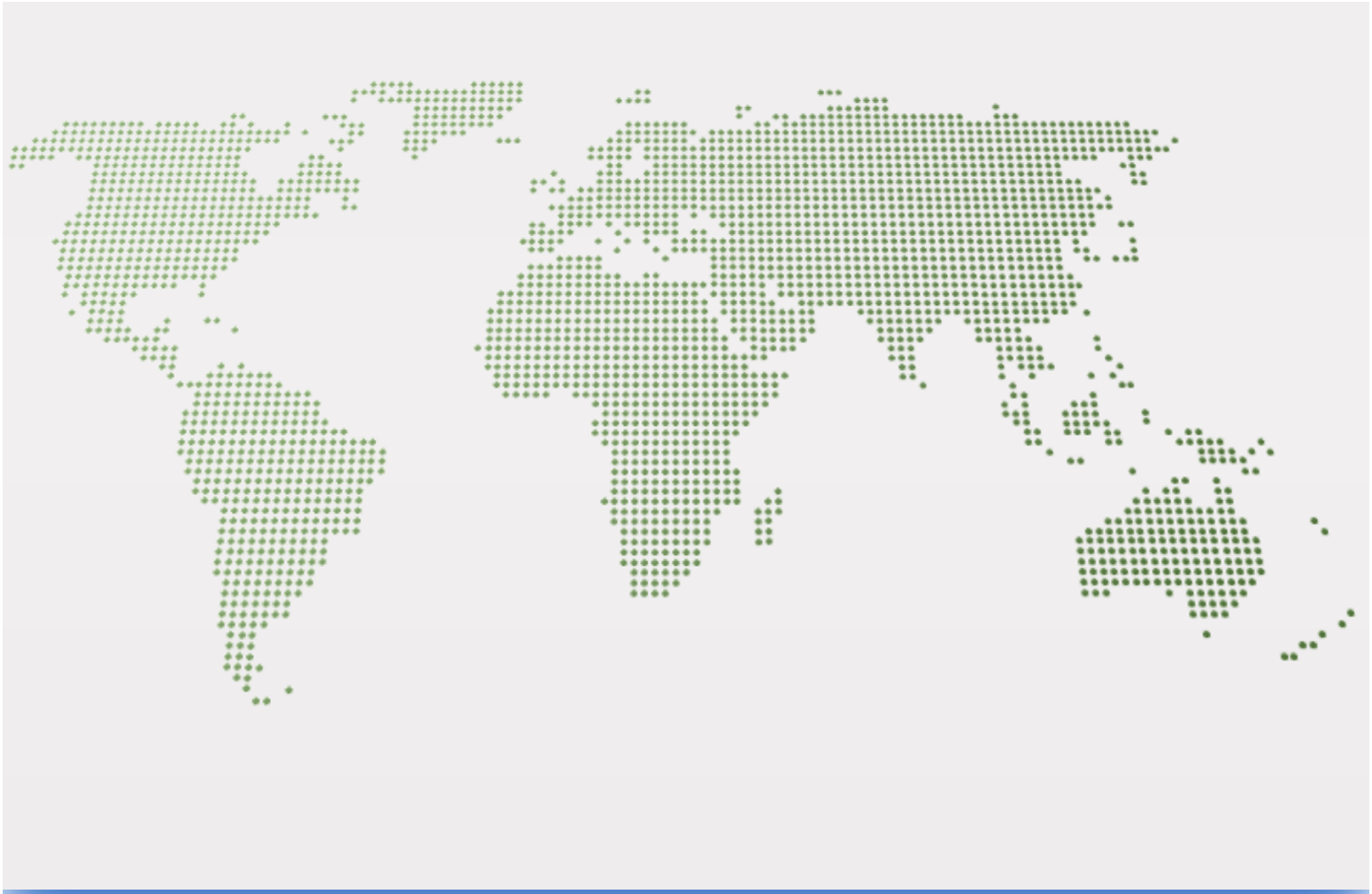


MINIMIZING IMPACT OF THE PANDEMIC

Compassionate action during Corona Crisis

An Initiative by

Kalinga Institute of Social Sciences (KISS) Deemed to be University

Bhubaneswar, Odisha, India

IMPORTANCE OF COMPASSION

The purpose of life is to be happy. This is what all human beings have in common—the wish to lead a happy life. Many think that happiness is to be found outside us in material things, but actually it is something that comes from within. From Compassion and concern for others, man amplifies his social being and to live happily in the community. There is an intimate connection between love and compassion, on the one hand, and genuine happiness, on the other. Compassion touches us all, from the very first day of our lives, when we are wholly dependent on the love of our mother or some other caregiver. In times of crisis, there is a shift from 'I' to 'We'. It's not a YOU versus US. Corona Pandemic has turned the world upside down. Everything has changed. We witnessed a war against an invisible enemy. People throughout this planet are trying to cope with pandemic, whose scale and magnitude have never been experienced. We owe a debt of gratitude to doctors, nurses, police, sanitary workers, administrators behind the scene, and women in Self-help Groups. We as human being ought to show our humanitarian self. This journey together will lead to a world of happiness sans pain and suffering.

Dr. ACHYUTA SAMANTA-THE CRUSADER

Education is the most powerful driver for effective socio-economic change. Dreams of New India can be realized only by the strength of well-educated, skilled and energetic human resources. Guided by the vision of making the world free from poverty through education, Dr. Achyuta Samanta has founded Kalinga Institute of Industrial Technology and Kalinga Institute of Social Sciences. He has incessantly worked towards a world free from hunger, poverty, illiteracy and ignorance. The enormous engagement in practice has led to fulfilling United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. The recent being working as a frontline warrior against COVID-19 pandemic.

Dr. Samanta has been a frontline worker in the times of Corona. In the midst of the Pandemic, Dr. Achyuta Samanta opines that:

“As it is said that you can never understand someone unless you are in their shoes; my tryst with life at the age of 4, when I lost my father and was brought up by my mother along with 6 other siblings facing extreme poverty and hardship, has made me realise today what being in the margin feels like. In the present COVID-19 pandemic scenario, when we are all overwhelmed with the situation, helping others has provided me with a sense of control, stability and comfort. As the founder of KIIT Group of Institutions (KIIT University, Kalinga Institute of Social Sciences (KISS), KIIT International School and Kalinga Institute of Medical Sciences) and Member of Parliament (MP), we have extended our services to the most vulnerable and marginalised. We have also collaborated with the State Government to assist them in relief, rehabilitation and other varied aspects”.

ABOUT KALINGA INSTITUTE OF SOCIAL SCIENCES (KISS) DEEMED TO BE UNIVERSITY

The Kalinga Institute of Social Sciences (KISS), Bhubaneswar, India, is an educational institute, 70,000 strong, powered by the belief that a better world - free from hunger, poverty and illiteracy - is possible. We provide free of cost education, accommodation, food and healthcare to over 30,000 tribal students currently studying at our main campus in Bhubaneswar, in addition to 30,000 alumni working at the grassroots as changemakers in their underserved communities, and an additional 10,000 students spread across our satellite campuses. It was founded in the year 1992-93 by Dr. Achyuta Samanta and is located in Bhubaneswar, the state capital of Odisha, India. KISS promotes sustainability of tribal community by empowering poor tribal with quality, free education.

KISS was granted Deemed to be University Status by the Ministry of Human Resource Development, Govt. of India vide its letter No F.9-14/2011-U-3(A) dated 25 August 2017. KISS is the recipient of special consultative status from United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) since 2015 and associated with different UN agencies and international organisations. KISS is the true replication of SDGs through its different initiatives. KISS has been conferred with UNESCO King Sejong International Literacy Prize 2022, for promoting inclusive learning spaces through introducing Mother Tongue Based Multi Lingual Education (MTBMLE) programme.

ABOUT KISS FOUNDATION – THE BENEVOLENT

KISS Foundation was incorporated with the purpose of working exclusively for charitable and education cause. KISS Foundation supports the education of impoverished children and young people in India and other countries. It also supports the provision of healthcare, accommodation and training to children and young people in dire need. KISS foundation as a charitable umbrella Kalinga Institute of Social Sciences, extends helping hands to the needy and runs various developmental activities in different pressing challenges- from education to environment, gender equity, promoting employment in Odisha and different places. KISS Foundation is also registered in USA and UK to sensitize organizations and individual about its different initiatives and promote partnership for providing education to the marginalized and other charitable initiatives.

KISS DEEMED TO BE UNIVERSITY and SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN THE TIMES OF COVID-19

Sustainable development has been at the core of KISS Deemed to be University's DNA since its inception. Not only is it clearly at the heart of our vision, mission and values, but our students and staff also propagate it as they journey through the experience, as well as by our various institutional and corporate partners. This means KISS actively addresses the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the United Nations in all its activities and achievements: education, projects, trainings, research, collaborations etc. In this overview, we outline some of our contributions to each of the 17 SDGs: -

- *'Kanya Kiran', an initiative was launched in collaboration with UN Women and Kalinga Fellowship in all the 30 districts of Odisha state with the aim of curbing violence against women and girl children.*
- *'Go Green', a mega plantation drive is run by KISS Deemed to be University for protecting environment AND sensitizing people on plantation.*
- *'Nua Maa', a community media prototype on infant and Young Child Nutrition (IYCN) and Wash and Sanitation(WASH) being initiative by KISS in collaboration with SAKHA, a CBO of transgender network.*
- *Life Skills based Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH) Education Program is being run in collaboration with UNFPA.*
- *KISS has started an initiative on Mother Tongue Based Multi Lingual Education. MTB-MLE is an educational approach in which tribal children start learning in their mother tongue in early grades with a gradual transition to second and other languages. with this approach, children develop strong competence in their mother tongue which becomes helpful for them to learn second and other languages at higher levels. The initiative has been conferred with UNESCO King Sejong International Literacy Prize 2022.*
- *KISS emphasizes on creating space for education of tribal girl child from remote hinterland areas to make them as social change agents.*
- *KISS has worked on reducing forced labour, modern slavery and human trafficking through holistic education and state-wide social campaigns.*
- *KISS emphasizes on providing employment to candidates from underprivileged communities, transgender employees and strict use of non-discriminative policies, equal opportunities and pay for male, female and third gender employees.*
- *In collaboration with United Nations System Staff College, Bonn and KIIT University KISS has organised capacity building workshop on localizing SDGs for UN volunteers working in India and state governments.*

COVID-19 AND ITS IMPACT IN THE VULNERABLE COMMUNITY

COVID-19 has upended all aspects of life. The world has also received a serious jolt with the Corona Pandemic and its subsequent effects - lockdown, social distancing and isolation. India is experiencing a surge in an upward trend in cases and fatalities despite its stringent lockdown. India is going in a geometric linear way and will witness its peak in the next 3-4 weeks. The worst-affected due to the lockdown, subsequent to the coronavirus outbreak, have been ones who were on a daily wage regime, with no backup funds or a steady salary that they can depend on times like these.

COMPASSIONATE INITIATIVE FROM KISS DEEMED TO BE UNIVERSITY DURING COVID-19 CRISIS

At KISS, we also tried to play an active role to become the forerunners in the crisis. However, the work we do is a Drop in the Ocean. Keeping view of the situation, a series of initiatives were taken by KISS Deemed to be University to help citizens of Odisha and providing support to the state government in the battle against COVID-19. We will highlight the accomplished work of KISS during Corona Crisis:

MAJOR INITIATIVES:

Leaving No one Behind – Providing relief material and other necessities to homeless, stranded migrants, slum dwellers, daily wagers, transgenders, sex workers, beggars, Tibetan monks and animals on street, frontline workers and other vulnerable people. It is putting forth to the Government needs of the poor and indigenous communities.

Mobilizing adequate and well-directed financing– Reaching out to Good Samaritans, corporate houses, national and international organizations, We have diversified our work and mobilised financial and human resources for relief to the needy, distribution of hygiene products to women and girls, IEC material for wider dissemination (including in local and tribal languages) and setting up quarantine facilities and India's first dedicated COVID-19 hospitals by utilizing the existing infrastructure facilities. In partnership with Government, needs and requirements of people is being identified and feedback loop to government for action has been established.

Strengthening institutions for integrated solutions and effective implementation - Working with the state Government and local self-government institutions (urban and rural) to find solutions for the present crisis. Apart from enabling the state government to utilize our existing infrastructure, KISS has bolstered local action by utilizing its staff and students as a volunteer force across Odisha. In this process, strong communication packages are being implemented to reach the most vulnerable and marginalized.

Harnessing science, technology and innovation for achieving sustainable development – The science and technology hub is devising innovative and sustainable solutions and influencing government strategies.

- **COVID HEALTHCARE INFRASTRUCTURE AND FRONTLINE COVID RESPONSE TEAM**



India's first standalone COVID Hospital with 500 beds and 50 critical care units was setup at at Kalinga Institute of Medical Sciences (KIMS), the sister concern of Kalinga Institute of Social Sciences. Odisha COVID hospital at KIMS is tertiary care Government COVID hospital and was commissioned in 02/04/2020 in collaboration with Government of Odisha. This institute has been designated for isolation and management including critical care of confirmed and suspected COVID-19 cases detected and referred from community surveillance by public health authorities in the endemic areas of Odisha state. This COVID Hospital was functioning from a block of KIMS with a dedicated team of doctors, nurses, paramedics and housekeeping staff. KIMS had also setup a testing laboratory for COVID-19 with a capacity of 2000 tests per day.

Infrastructure facilities available at Balangir and Mayurbhanj campus of Kalinga Institute of Social Sciences were also functioned as COVID 19 hospitals, along with a further dedicated COVID-19 hospital in Kandhamal district in association with the district administration. These were each 200 bedded hospitals managed by KIMS and round the clock service following WHO and ICMR guidelines.



- **SHOWING SOLIDARITY FOR THE STRANDED PEOPLE (ENSURING FOOD SECURITY FOR MIGRANT LABOURERS AND VULNERABLE COMMUNITIES)**

A team has also been engaged in distributing family survival packets that comprise of essential food items – rice, pulses, cooking oil etc. to disadvantaged people living in slums, needy, poor and children. KISS Deemed to be University extended the helping hand to villages. KISS has also reached out to the red-light areas in Bhubaneswar and distributed dry food items. 15 districts are covered by KISS. Over 3,00,000 food packets were served to vulnerable people and 500 poor people in the locality are fed every day. At Kandhamal, one of the aspirational district of Odisha, KISS helped all orphanages, old age homes, and youth clubs/ centers with dry groceries - almost 40 of them. After some areas in Bhubaneswar were marked as containment areas, KISS distributed food and essential items to those people stranded in these specific clusters, so that they have no need to venture out and risk themselves and others. KISS had distributed cooked meals to migrant labours from various states of India, who are stuck in Odisha besides taking care of food security and health safety of many Odia migrant labours stuck in New Delhi, Hyderabad, Bengaluru, West Bengal and Maharashtra. Migrant labourers who were coming to Odisha primarily by bus were given cooked food packets at various bus terminals of Bhubaneswar. KISS and Sakha have joined hands to provide ration and essential items to Transgender Community in Bhubaneswar and Rayagada.



- **HELPING TIBETAN COMMUNITIES AND MONKS AT CHANDRAGIRI, ODISHA TO FIGHT CORONA CRISIS**



Though the COVID-19 pandemic is not an immediate concern in this far-flung area of Odisha, hunger and poverty remain an issue in many Tibetan settlements in and around Chandragiri. Responding to this KISS has adopted the old age home in Chandragiri - a Tibetan settlement area in Eastern Odisha. KISS Deemed to be University have provided food rations to the Tibetan population and monks in Chandragiri and Padmasambhava Monastery in Jiranga, Odisha. It also played a pivotal role in supporting a hospital in collaboration with KIMS in Jiranga and provided PPE to the healthcare workers.

- **FOOD AND CARE FOR STRAY ANIMALS**



This crisis has also an impact in the life of stray animals. Looking into this a team was set up a to source and distribute fruits, vegetables, biscuits and other food materials to animals in and around Bhubaneswar urban area– such as monkeys, stray dogs, cattle. This food distributed to those who are reliant on us happened twice a day. In addition to that KISS have also adopted 140 peacocks in Bhubaneswar and took care of these beautiful birds during the pandemic.

- **SENSITIZATION DRIVE AMONG COMMUNITIES IN REMOTE AREAS WITH UNFPA**



The students of KISS Deemed to be University and UDAY volunteers were conducted awareness programmes on Social Distancing, washing hands and respiratory hygiene in their respective districts. Besides that, massive awareness campaigns have been organised at market places and through door to door campaigning on Social Distancing, hand washing and proper usage of masks. 500 volunteers were involved for this purpose and 220 villages in aspirational districts of Rayagada, Koraput Malkangiri, and Kandhamal. They were also helped the state government in monitoring and administering Quarantine Centers. Our work covers 6 aspirational Districts of Odisha: Rayagada, Malkangiri, Koraput, Kandhamal, Balangir, Gajpati and 2.5 lakh population have reached so far.

- **DISTRIBUTING SANITARY PRODUCTS:**

KISS Deemed to be University distributed sanitary hygienic products like sanitary napkins and masks to women and girls in all the districts of Odisha. Over 1 lakh units have been distributed. Sanitary napkins were also provided to returnee migrant workers. N-5 masks and food have been provided to police personnel and volunteers those were working as frontline COVID warriors in the testing times.



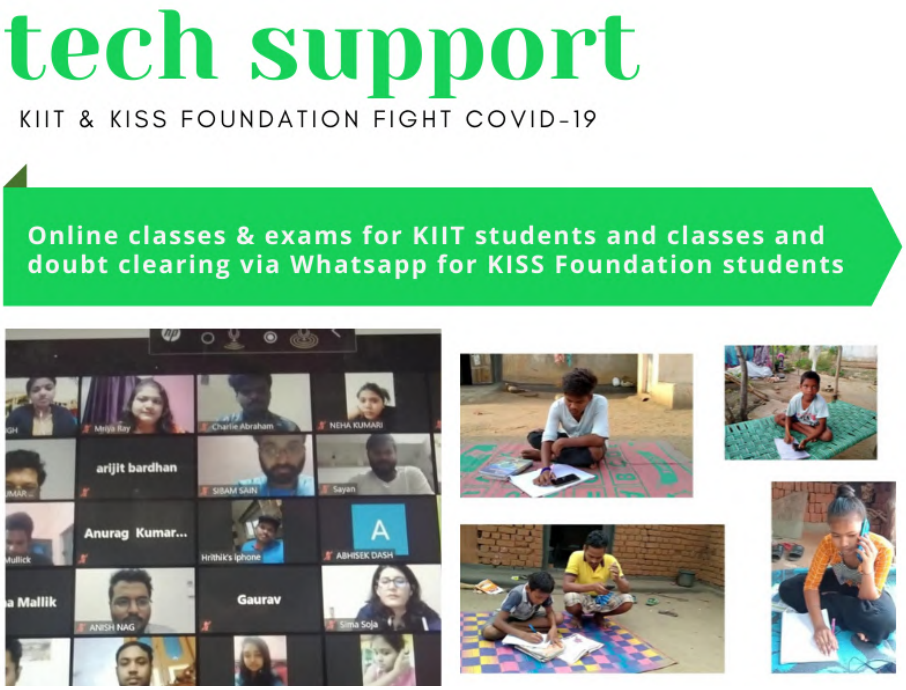
- **PSYCHO-SOCIAL COUNSELLING SUPPORT TO PEOPLE DURING CORONA CRISIS**



This Corona crisis was not anticipated and has impacts in every aspect of life. People were living under stress situation because of different impacts of this crisis. Keeping in view of that, Tele Counselling Cell was set up to provide support for the people including frontline COVID workers and people experiencing stress during trying pandemic times. Psychologists, psycho-analysts and psychiatrists were deployed to deal with psychological repercussions in the time of social distancing and lockdowns.

- **INNOVATING THE FUTURE ACTION**

KISS Deemed to be University and KIIT University (its sister concern) has mapped the importance of the burgeoning increase of Covid cases; hence has taken immediate steps to tackle future uncertainties. KIIT-Technology Business Incubator (KIIT-TBI) is recognised was a Centre for Augmenting War



against COVID-19 Health Crisis (CAWACH) under Department of Science and Technology (DST), Government of India, along with similar institutes from IITs & other eminent Universities in India. KIIT-TBI was responsible for implementing this program in East & NE. There was a prospective testing COVID-19 centre established along with the functional KIMS hospital exclusively for the COVID-19 pandemic.



KISS Deemed to be University had started its own initiatives way before India declared a national lockdown. All the students in the various schools and University campuses were safely sent back to their homes well ahead of the lockdown. KISS Deemed to be University began online classes and online examination for its tribal children.

In KISS, we have used various electronic methods to reach the students for their study. We emphasized on teacher student interface through these methods. The teachers have produced and disseminated learning modules via electronic gadgets like mobile and television. In addition to that audio-visual content and PDF versions of classroom sessions were provided in memory chip in remote areas through which parents can show it to students, using their smart phones. It was a solution to remote places where internet connectivity was poor. The students were in contact through WhatsApp groups. All these tribal students were staying with their families in different remote locations across the state of Odisha. To ensure their uninterrupted study, we conducted their tutoring through a television channel and WhatsApp groups. In a humanitarian motive, KISS has provided dry food items, groceries, soap along with the books and study materials to all the 30,000 students at their doorsteps. It was first of its kind move by an institution in India to reach out to different remote locations across the state and connecting with the vulnerable families during the crisis. Tribal communities took lead in distributing these E-learning modules in the native villages following all social distancing norms.

- **VOLUNTEERING INITIATIVES BY KISS-DU STUDENTS DURING COVID-19**

All angels do not have wings. Some are deeply rooted to earth. KISS Deemed to be University is one of them, imparting education free of cost at grassroots, in the midst of the Corona Virus pandemic.

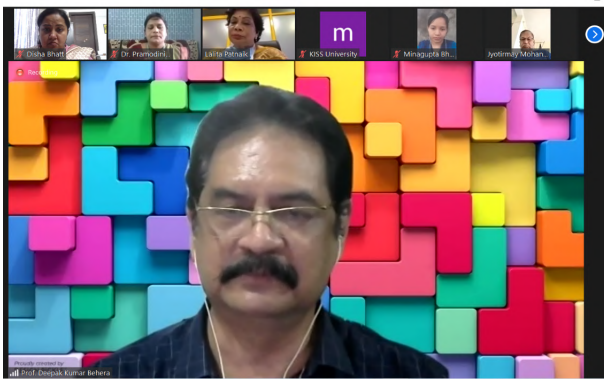


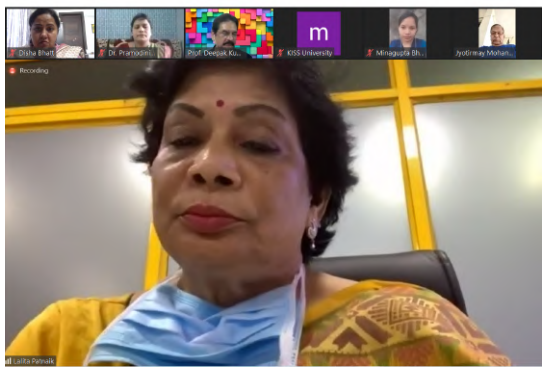


Students had gone to their villages and were helping their family in farming, agri business, entrepreneurship, making masks and sanitary napkins. But observing the plight of children around, they decided to turn an amateur tutor for the children of their tribal villages. As such, the Covid menace has taken a heavy toll on the studies of these rural students, who are even deprived of online classes due to lack of electricity and poor mobile connectivity. So converting the house into a makeshift tuition centre, or a common place where the children can have accessible education. In addition to teaching, the students of KISS-DU had contributed in spreading awareness against the Covid-19 pandemic and sensitized their community members regarding the Covid-19 guidelines and protocols issued by the World Health Organization (WHO) and the government.

National Service Scheme (NSS) Bureau of KISS Deemed to be University carried out various activities in response to COVID-19 such as virtual session on 'Coping with Stress during Covid-19', state level awareness programme on 'Covid-19 second wave' etc. These activities aided the university's action to minimize impact of the pandemic among its key stakeholders. In addition to this student volunteers of KISS DU supported the administration at grassroot level to respond the pandemic in remote tribal areas.

















- **COMMITTING AVAILABLE RESOURCES TO FIGHT WITH THE PANDEMIC**

KISS constantly worked with its available resources (Financial resources, human resources and infrastructural) to reduce the onslaught of the pandemic on the society. KISS University in collaboration with KIIT University (the sister concern of KISS) has shown its commitment to provide free education in the professional and technical courses offered by the University for the children of Covid-19 deceased parents for the two-academic session 2020-21 and 2021-22. Besides children from tribal families those lives were affected seriously because of Covid-19 crisis were assured with education at Kalinga Institute of Social Sciences. Also the foundation had shown its commitment through supporting with its resources for the athletes of Odisha state who faced challenges for preparing for the Tokyo Olympics during Covid-19. These acts certainly supported to a great extent for the family members psychologically and reduce their burden for their children's education.

KISS Deemed to be University and KIIT have donated and spent approximately Rs. 6 Crores of its financial resources for continuing its 'frontline response' initiative towards arresting Covid-19 along with the exclusively COVID-19 Hospital and its branches. Both the institutions have worked with commitment and its resources to reduce the impact of Covid-



19 on society. The organization understands that nothing can replace the human lives. This is just a benevolent gesture from KISS and KIIT.

- **SAFE EVACUATION OF INDIAN AND FOREIGN NATIONALS STUCK IN DIFFERENT PLACES**

KISS University worked closely with the American Embassy in repatriation of American and Indian American personnel who were stuck in Odisha and other adjoining areas. Also, steps were taken for evacuating Indians (students) stuck in various parts of the world



- **FORGING SOLIDARITY FROM NON-RESIDENT ODIAS SETTLED IN 30 COUNTRIES**

Synergy has been created in association with non-resident Odias to fight the pandemic. Non-resident Odias have offered their solidarity through various social media and at present are getting connected to ground realities and work. The Odias from 30 countries sang the state song “Vande Utkala Janani” to show solidarity and be a part of fight against COVID-19.

- **STRENGTHENING PARTNERSHIP WITH INSTITUTIONS AND ORGANISATIONS TO RESPOND COVID-19**

KISS University worked with the State Government of Odisha to provide support in the form of all its available resources - logistics, infrastructure, healthcare, human resources etc. in its various activities at grassroots. Also, it has partnered with organisations, corporates, & civil society organisations for leveraging resources and ensuring well-being of vulnerable people during the pandemic.



LOOKING FORWARD

Time is always moving on; nothing can stop it. We can't change the past, but we can learn from it to shape the future. Stress on ‘us’ and ‘them’ is a source of conflict. We neglect basic human qualities of kindness and compassion. Let’s work together to create a happier future and it doesn't require money. It is not limited to giving wealth, money or any worldly things; it can be in the form of some words of solace to the needy, a pat on the back, a smile back or any random act of kindness. In the times of Corona Crisis, when we have realized that we were on the same boat and all of us were fragile; we need to contribute towards the society to keep not only our family safe but also the humanity alive. Comforting the other, Compassion and Gratitude plays a vital role. In toto, KISS Deemed to be University’s founder, Dr. Samanta’s philosophy of “Art of Giving” would certainly be a game-changer and cushion for the needy and affected populace.