


# Achyuta Samanta



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**Member of Parliament,  
Lok Sabha, Kandhamal  
Founder, KIIT and KISS**



## Prof. Achyuta Samanta Profile at a Glance

- Born in 1965, obtained Master' Degree in Chemistry in 1987 from Utkal University, Doctorate Degree in Social Sciences and started teaching at the age of 22. He has 33 years of teaching experience and counting
- Youngest Chancellor of any Indian University as chronicled by Limca Book of Records
- Founder Chancellor of KISS University (first Tribal University in the world) and the first person to be a Chancellor of any Tribal University in the world
- He has been the elected Member of Parliament, Rajya Sabha in 2018-19. Currently, he is the Member of Parliament, Lok Sabha from Biju Janta Dal
- Served as a member of three Apex Educational bodies of India, University Grants Commission (UGC) for two consecutive terms (2008-11 & 2011-2014), Executive Committee of All Indian Council for Technical Education (AICTE) and National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE)
- Served as a Member of several other Govt. of India bodies like NCTE, ISTE, ISCA, COIR BOARD, CAPART etc besides being a member of the Academic Council of Central University of Assam and Odisha
- Former Principal Advisor to the Department of Education, Govt. of Manipur nominated by the Governor of Manipur
- Served as a General President of Indian Science Congress Association (ISCA) - 2017-18 and president of XXXIX World Congress of Poets (2018-19). Currently, he is the President of Volleyball Federation of India, Designated President (India) of Democracy without Borders. He has also founded Parliamentarians for Indigenous People's
- Honoured with National Award for the welfare of children 2016 by Shri Ram Nath Kovind, Hon'ble President of India
- Awarded Personality of the year 2019 by FICCI Higher Education Awards
- Conferred with Green Activist Award by Indian Federation of Green Energy
- Conferred with Jeevan Gaurav Puraskar (Lifetime Achievement Award) at 4th National Teachers' Congress by MIT World Peace University , Pune. (2020)
- Conferred with 46 Honoris Causa Doctorate Awards from prestigious Universities across the globe
- Received 4 National and International Fellowships - ISTE, CSI, ICA & APACH
- Conferred with Golden Gavel by World Academy of Arts and Culture ( WAAC) recognised by UNESCO
- Decorated with Gusi Peace Prize International, Manila (Asia's Peace Prize)
- Received ISA Award for service to Humanity, the Highest Civilian Award with One Million Dollar Cash Prize from the Kingdom of Bahrain
- Conferred with the highest civilian award from Mongolia and Bahrain besides over 50 National and International and over 200 State Honors and accolades
- Founder of KIIT Deemed to be University, no. 1 University in India and Kalinga Institute of Social Sciences (KISS-Deemed University), Bhubaneswar
- Prof. Samanta started KIIT and KISS with only Rs. 5000/- (100 USD) in a two-room rented house. KIIT has now grown into one of the most promising Universities with global acclaim having 30,000 students from India and abroad
- KISS has become the largest Residential Tribal Institute in the world providing free Education from Kindergarten to Post Graduation, a home for 60,000 tribal children (30,000 students in KISS Bhubaneswar 20,000 Alumni, 10,000 in 10 satellite centers in 10 districts of Odisha)
- Social service, spiritualism and sports by creating unparalleled sports infrastructure and promoting sportspersons and sports
- Transformed the remote village 'Kalarabanka', Cuttack into a Smart Village and the entire Manpur Panchayat into a Model Panchayat (cluster of villages)
- Working to establish 20 branches of KISS in different districts of Odisha and another 20 branches across the country. He has established KISS-Delhi in 2013 for the underprivileged sections of the society and 2 branches of KISS in Bangladesh
- Providing employment to around 15,000 people directly and over two hundred thousand and indirectly created 100 successful Entrepreneurs across the country
- Prof. Samanta has been working relentlessly to achieve Zero Poverty, Zero Hunger and Zero Illiteracy since 1987

## Why should one read the next few pages?

*It is a must read because it is about a person born in poverty and struggle who grows up to be a self-made man to dedicate his life to people, society and the nation. He has never thought about himself, his luxury or extended any favors to his own family. He has always kept the interest of the society above self. All his growing up days he struggled against hunger. When he grew up he is still struggling to fight hunger, not his hunger, but to alleviate the hunger of the millions of poor around the world. His struggle has been continuing.*

*Prof. Achyuta Samanta doesn't mind this, however. He continues to strive with his mission without resting even for a day. In 31 years (1987- till date) of his yeoman's service, he has not even spent 31 hours for*

*himself. He has risen from nowhere. He has fulfilled the dreams and aspirations of Mahatma Gandhi, Swami Vivekananda, Dr. Ambedkar, Rabindra Nath Tagore in letter and spirit. He is working to alleviating poverty and hunger through quality Education for the last 26 years, one of the most important goals of UN Sustainable Development Goals. His contribution in the field of Education, Health, Sports, Research and Development, Tribal Empowerment, Women Rights, Art, Culture, Literature, Media and Spiritualism is unparalleled. People love him not for his achievements and institutions he has created but simplicity, honesty, transparency, dedication and passion. After all the accomplishments and achievements, he still leads a modest lifestyle and maintains honesty and integrity to himself and the people.*

## From a Leaf-picker to a Policy-maker

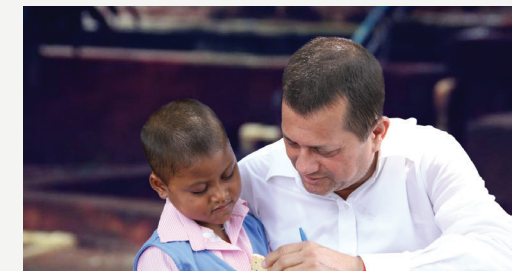
**N**o one could ever imagine that a poor boy who struggled for food, education and survival would accomplish mighty tasks and grow up to be a self made man. The same person who has received profound appreciation for unique initiatives has lived a life of struggle and miseries. The life story of Prof. Achyuta Samanta is unique and unparalleled if one considers the vast journey of struggles that he has traversed in 50 years of his life. Professor Samanta is one of the greatest educationists, social workers, social activists, humanists and philanthropists in the contemporary times to have blessed this world with his dedications, sacrifices and extraordinary vision for freeing this world from poverty, hunger, illiteracy, social alienation, and ensuring much needed human capital development.

Prof. Achyuta Samanta was born to Late Neelima Rani Samanta and Late Shri Anadi Charan Samanta. But, unlike most children blessed with endless care, comfort and compassionate nurture in the lap of their

parents, Achyuta Samanta's childhood was the most difficult, grief-stricken and struggle-full.

He was four when his father died in a tragic train accident. He failed to understand when his family was bereaved of the only bread earner. At such a tender age, because of the stroke of misfortune, he began to understand the pains of poverty that the family had to face. His father, a petty worker, exhausted the limited money he earned and took a huge amount of hand loan to support his seven children and wife. The family bequeathed debts and poverty after father's untimely death and had to face humiliation. They struggled for one square meal and the mother did not have second pair of saree to change after bath.

After the death of his father, they shifted to





**Kalarabanka, a remote village near Cuttack in Odisha. He did not have a single hand of solace and consolation to guide, advise and motivate.**

Such helplessness did not deter him to help his mother in the menial work and augment the family income which did not ever make both the ends meet. He got his primary education from the village school by the mercy of the local headmaster. He completed his undergraduate, graduate and doctoral programme with dedication and belief that Education empowers and has a power to transform his life and others.

He barely had begun his career as an academic when in 1992, appalled to realise how the youth of Odisha lacked access to quality education and were deprived of the skills necessary to compete in India's formal, competitive job market, he quit his job and started two modest institutions: Kalinga Institute of Industrial Technology and Kalinga Institute of Social Sciences. He started them with a meager investment of USD 100 (INR 5000) and both the institutions initially operated in rented accommodations before moving into its own building. He ventured into an area where even the big corporates wouldn't dare.

**The two institutions today have grown into world class organizations with global repute and acknowledgement.**



The first institution was dedicated to help the youth of Odisha, his own state that lagged in comparison to other Indian states.

**He was convinced that quality education would bring in the required transformation and human capital development.**

KIIT became the fore-running, path-finder educational hub imparting Industrial Trade skills, Engineering, Medicine, Law, Management, Rural Management, Architecture and much more.

KIIT has always been setting the quality benchmark since its inception in 1997. Established in 1997, but within 5 years it got accreditation from NAAC (UGC) and NBA (AICTE) with 'A' grade in 2002. Since then KIIT Deemed University has been getting excellent gradation and remarks in every 5 years of its all renewal of accreditation by NAAC and NBA and Deemed University by UGC. It is one among the six institutes / Deemed Universities among the Government and Private to get the Washington Accord accreditation from NBA (AICTE). It has got IET accreditation from the UK rated as the 2nd highest accreditation in the world and only 2nd Deemed University in the country. KIIT has been accorded with 'Institution of Eminence' tag by Ministry of Human Resource Development, GOI.

It has been recognised as an 'Institution of Eminence' by the Govt. of India. KIIT has been ranked No. 1 among self-financing institutions of the country in the Atal Ranking of Institutions on Innovation Achievements (ARIIA), 2020 of the Ministry of Education, Govt. of India. KIIT's Computer Science Faculty has been ranked in the band of 501-600 by The Times Higher Education World University Rankings 2021. It is also pertinent to mention that KIIT has been ranked in 601-800 band for its Engineering and Technology streams. KIIT has also won The Times Higher Education (THE) Awards Asia 2020 for 'Workplace of the Year'. KIIT has won silver

for the successful 'Implementation of SAP' in the 13th Quality Council of India -DL Shah Quality Award 2020.

Credibility of this university is very high among the students', parents and public. Its huge infrastructure is unparalleled to any university. Besides KIIT has created huge sports infrastructure available in any university in India among the Government and Private.

It has produced Olympian and also number of students qualified in Civil Services including 9 th



*KIIT & KISS Bhubaneswar*

position in last Civil Service Examination. This is the only Deemed University in the country where the Chancellor post has been occupied by the renowned academicians like the UGC Chairman and renowned Legal Luminary, renowned academicians since its inception. This is the only university in the country, which has been visited by more than 22 Nobel Laureates in the last 10 years. Besides all the policy makers and academicians including Hon'ble President, Vice President, Prime Minister of India and other

countries. Ministry of HRD, Government of India awarded KIIT for setting up Innovation Council under AICTE, New Delhi.

KIIT School of Law has been awarded the Best Innovative Law School in India 2018 by the Vice President of India. KIIT School of Management ranked 22nd as per the National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF), MHRD, Government of India, 2018 in B-School Rankings. More than 600 students are pursuing their profession education from 60 countries and KIIT has signed MoU with more than 180 universities. Its outreach work for social cause is next to none in entire globe.

As KIIT grew, its sister organization, Kalinga Institute of Social Sciences (KISS) also grew at equal pace. Educate, Empower and Enable", has been the "3E" formula devised by Prof. Achyuta Samanta to turn tribal alienation, poverty and illiteracy upside down through the tool of Inclusive Education. It is considered as World's largest intervention wherein 60,000 children from the deprived indigenous communities of Odisha and neighbouring states are empowered with holistic Education from Kindergarten to Post -Graduation along with boarding facilities, clothing, healthcare, vocational and life skills free of cost. KISS has strong Alumni of 20,000 empowered people, well placed and driving change for themselves, their families and communities. 10,000 tribal boys and girls study in the satellite centers of KISS in 10 districts of Odisha. What started as a dream and passion with modest means has now emerged into a revolution in the lives of tribal people.

With a student strength that rose from a mere 150 in 1992-93, KISS has grown to over 50,000 by 2018 with both indigenous poor tribal students, those from other Indian states, and quite a few indigenous students from many foreign countries. In 2017, Kalinga Institute of Social Sciences was granted the status of Deemed-to-be- University by Government of India. With that it has become world's first

University for indigenous aboriginal students.

Prof. Samanta has single-handedly ushered in a revolution to give a new lease of life to millions at the margins. The scale, scope and speed at which he works and his institutions create change and promote peace has been appreciated and hailed by all accomplished statesmen, diplomats, state heads, country heads, legal luminaries, academicians, researchers, social activists, sociologists, media celebrities, corporates, Nobel Laureates, Magsaysay Awardees, and many others from both within and outside the country who have visited KISS and known about it. But starting it was never easy. He thought of it when there was no adequate awareness about tribal Education as an innovative model. It was a gray area where every stakeholder failed or did not muster up the courage to initiate the first step.

Odisha is one of the poorest states in India constituting almost 25% of tribal population who live in extreme poverty, misery, ignorance, superstition close to nature for centuries. They live a cycle of birth, life and decay in the forests, alienated from the forces of development. In such a scenario that exists even today, one man dared to enter the unwalked path and dared to mainstream the alienated population by empowering the first generation learners through Education with his vision, mission and passion in his youthful days when he was just 25 years old. It was the time when neither the Government nor any policymaker has devised any innovative model.



**Prof. Samanta dared to take steps that nobody thought of to bring them out from the clutches of violence and trappings of 'Naxalism' (Left Wing Extremism).**

The would-be cadres hold pen instead of swords and have appreciated the change in their lives and generations thereafter because of Education. KISS has successfully addressed the Millenium Development Goals (MDG) and has been contributing to the Sustainable Development Goals of global development for 2030 as has been envisaged in the year-2015 UN resolution. KISS was granted Special Consultative Status by the United Nations Organization in the year 2015. Through KISS's academic and tribal development mission about 30, 000 families comprising 1, 50, 000 individual members belonging to these families and an additional million of tribal in their neighbourhood have been benefitting and experiencing transformational development. The KISS model has successfully addressed and restricted the spread of the growing tribal insurgency in the tribal hinterland, and removing backwardness. Education and literacy is spreading in the tribal areas at a much faster pace than it has ever been. KISS's zero-dropout legacy is catching on the government-run schools in the tribal areas as more and more tribal children are coming out of their homes to enrol in various Government run tribal schools and general schools in the tribal hinterland and continuing their studies. KISS has stood out as a beacon of light for and an icon of tribal renaissance.

**He believes that real development has to take place from grassroots and cities can be smart only if the villages are smart. He took up the task of transforming his own village to a model village.**

He started with a vernacular school which was followed by an English medium school along with banks, ATMs, Police station, Post offices,



100 bedded dispensaries with 24\*7 medical facility, plantation centers, women's clubs, youth clubs, community hall, canteen with CCTV, public libraries, temples and other places of engagement which gave 300 men employment. This model village was inaugurated by the then Governor of Odisha in 2006 and on his request the entire panchayat was converted into a proper model panchayat turning the entire village Wi-Fi and solar energy enabled. In 2016, the then Governor of Odisha inaugurated the same as Smart Village with increased amenities.

When it comes to sports and culture, KIIT and KISS are the only two institutes providing professional education and sports to an unparalleled Level. It has produced more than 5000 players and some of them have participated and won laurels in Olympics, Commonwealth Games, Asian Games, South Asian Federation and so on. From the inception in 1992-93, KISS and KIIT has realised the potential of Sports as a Changemaker and a tool of Empowerment. Recognising this, KIIT and KISS has made arrangements to hone skills of tribal children in various organized sports. Emphasis on sports coupled with marvellous training personnel and state of the art infrastructure has made KISS as a hub of sports to groom tribal sportspersons. They are trained in modern training facilities created for rugby, football, hockey, archery, shooting, volleyball, etc under competent national and international coaches. They regularly win accolades at national and state level in various sports. Rugby

has become famous in India with the contribution from KISS. Outstanding achievements of KISS tribal students at international and national level sports meets prove the effectiveness of the KISS model of tribal empowerment. Many mega-events in Chess, Rugby, Archery, Volleyball, Cricket have been hosted at KIIT and KISS bringing players from far and wide to the land of Odisha. KISS is producing a legacy of players in Sports.

The multifaceted Prof. Samanta has not remained contented with KIIT & KISS and has never forgotten his routes and philosophy of his life to respect mother, motherland and mother tongue. He has been constantly promoting, supporting and safe guarding the literature, art and culture of Odisha. His passion and love for language, literature, art and culture gave birth to the Kadambini Media Pvt. Ltd in the year 2000 which has been bringing out "Kadambini" the first ever family feature magazine in Odia and "Kunikatha" the first ever magazine for children in Odia. The magazine reflects Prof. Samanta's immaculate sense of refined taste and finesse and the special touch of distinction that has made the magazines household names in Odisha today. Kadambini Media Pvt. Ltd. produced 'Kathantara'; and 'Krantidhara' award winning feature films in Odia under the aegis of Kalinga Institute of Fashion and Films. His versatility is a noteworthy facet of his persona which is due to his innate commitment to the call of his heart to serve the human society. He has also patronised 'Nanhi Pari Little Miss India Competition' a talent Hunt Show for





young girls all over India.

The two institutions KIIT and KISS have brought much economic prosperity to the area surrounding the two campuses which together measure up to over 400 acres. Human habitation, business and trade in the periphery of the campus have grown in a very spectacular manner in the last two decades. The entire area provides employment to over 3,00,000 people, over and above the 10000 plus people directly employed in KIIT and KISS. An academic infrastructure doing such humongous social development was hitherto unseen anywhere in the world.

He is the promoter and Founder of Art of Giving- A philosophy of Life to spread peace and happiness, Education for all, Kanya Kiran- A flagship initiative to stop violence against women and Girl Child, New Mind New Dreams to reach out to the villages in Odisha and engage in various drives- plantation, cleanliness, Hygiene, Lifeskills. His campaign on Education for all is an initiative to create awareness about the fruits of quality education and ensuring no child is deprived of education.

Prof. Samanta has earned global recognition for his dedication and commitment to the fight for educational equity. Being a crusader of peace he was coveted in 2015 with the GUSI PEACE PRIZE, which is also otherwise known as Asia's own Nobel Prize. He was the sole Indian to

receive this prize. His humanitarian work has too been admired by the Kingdom of Bahrain which has awarded him the country's highest Citizen Award. He has also been bestowed with the Highest Civilian Award from Mongolia. Besides these, over 50 prestigious international and over 200 national awards decorate him. His contributions in the field of education and educational entrepreneurship have been recognized by over 100 universities in India and abroad, government and non-government organizations. He has been awarded over 40 honorary Honoris Causa Doctorates and Doctorate of Letters.

Despite his spectacular success and achievements, he leads a simple and dedicated life in a two room rented house as a bachelor dedicating himself to the service of humanity with patience and passion as his strength and humility, simplicity, modesty and transparency as his assets. One has to see it to believe it. But at times, even if one sees it, one can not believe his simplicity and humility, because it is indeed incredible.

**He truly blazes the trail of service to humanity with a new assignment as a Member of Parliament in Upper House from Odisha. He aspires to be the voice for the tribal and poor and bring Empowerment in their lives and indeed, his story is the saga of rise from a leaf-picker to policymaker.**



## KIIT

Kalinga Institute of Industrial Technology, known by its acronym KIIT, is one of the leading universities in India renowned for the quality of teaching and research. It was founded in 1992-93 in a rented house with 12 students and 2 teachers as an Industrial Training Institute in Bhubaneswar. It was in this period when India was moving slowly towards globalisation, and private education was unpopular. However, Prof. Achyuta Samanta envisioned an educational institution that would focus on academic expertise and provide a wealth of opportunities for students to gain holistic knowledge - all this with barely any financial backing. It is solely due to the dedication, devotion and grit of our Founder and contribution from the hardworking staff and well-wishers, that KIIT Deemed to be University has become one of the premier educational hubs in India.

With its base year in 1997 with just three programmes - Engineering, MBA & MCA, KIIT's commitment to excellence led to the grant of Deemed to be University status under Section 3 of UGC Act, 1956 by the Ministry of HRD, Govt. of India in 2004. KIIT has the distinction of being the youngest institute of the country to get a University status in six years. This unique achievement gave it a place in the Limca book of Records. It is indeed incredible to state that in a short time span of time, KIIT has achieved incredible feats in ranking amongst the top colleges in this country. KIIT has been recognised as an 'Institution of Eminence' by the Government of India. It has been ranked No. 1 among self-financing institutions of the country in the Atal Ranking of Institutions on Innovation Achievements (ARIIA), 2020 of the Ministry of Education, Government of India. KIIT's Computer Science Faculty has been ranked in the band of 501-600 by The Times Higher Education World University Rankings 2021. It is also pertinent to mention that KIIT has been ranked in 601-800 band for its Engineering and Technology streams. It has also won The Times Higher Education (THE) Awards Asia 2020 for 'Workplace of the Year'.

KIIT Deemed to be University is spread over 25 sq.kms with world class infrastructure and top-notch facilities in its 25 lush green campuses. It has a wide base of 30,000 students from all over India and 65 countries across the globe. Over 60,000 students have graduated from KIIT and have carved a niche for themselves and are placed in respectable positions in corporate, academics, government services, business,

startups and so on. The outreach work of KIIT University is on a massive scale in terms of social and economic empowerment. The contribution to sports in terms of producing sportspersons and creation of sports infrastructure is next to none. The students performance and belongingness within the campus, and in their workplace after they have graduated have inspired us to strive towards higher degree of excellence. Instead of basking on its past glory and exponential growth, KIIT looks forward in achieving greater heights in world rankings, research and academics.

## KISS

The Kalinga Institute of Social Sciences (KISS) is a residential institution providing free education, accommodation, medical care, vocational, athletic & artistic training to 60,000 indigenous children. Of these, 30,000 students study at the main campus in Bhubaneswar, 15,000 are alumni and 15,000 study at 10 satellite centres of KISS across Odisha. It has indirectly impacted over a million tribal children and youth. The students come from 62 different tribal groups within the region, of which 13 are Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs).

KISS was started in 1992 with the aim of using accessible, free education to empower children from marginalised communities. It has now grown to symbolise a revolution for tribal populations of India to eradicate poverty through education. In its course of existence for over 28 years, KISS has arrested dropouts, child marriage, gender based harassment, left wing extremism, proselytisation, ignorance and superstition on a massive scale with its peaceful intervention through education and empowerment. It has promoted awareness on importance of education, girl child empowerment, upskilling and vocational empowerment, entrepreneurship and collaboration with the tribal communities as caretakers of the ecosystem and nature.

In 2017, KISS became the first exclusive tribal Deemed to be University in the world, and since 2015, it has been accorded Special Consultative Status by UN-ECOSOC. KISS proudly adheres to a 3E approach -Educate, Enable, Empower while ensuring that the model prioritises indigenous control of education, to preserve the culture, heritage and traditions of India's diverse tribal communities and fulfil the Sustainable Development Goals 2030 in its entirety.

# Member of Organisations

President, Volleyball Federation of India

Member, Indian Olympic Association

President, 39th World Congress of Poets, WAAC

NCST Leadership Award by National Commission for Scheduled Tribes 2019

General President (2017-18) of 105th Indian Science Congress.

Commission Member of University Grants Commission (UGC) 2008-2014, Ministry of HRD, Government of India

Executive Committee, All India Council for Technical Education, (AICTE), Ministry of HRD, Government of India and National Council of Teacher Education

Advisor, Ministry of Education, Government of Manipur

Academic Council of Assam Central University, Silchar (President of India Nominee)

Academic Council, Central University, Odisha (Ministry HRD, Govt. of India Nominee)

Committee on 'Round Table' on Disadvantaged Section, Women and SC/ST for expansion of educational opportunities of MHRD, Govt. of India

High-level committee on Higher Education, constituted by Planning Commission, Government of India

Committee on Forest Right Act, Ministry of Environment & Forest, Tribal Affairs, Govt. of India

Centre for Advancement of People's Action and Rural Technology (CAPART), Govt. of India

National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE), Ministry, HRD, India

Coir Board, Government of India

National Executive Council, Indian Society for Technical Education

EC Member, Indian Science Congress Association (ISCA) 2012

National Secretary, Gandhi Global Family (GGF)

International Association of University Presidents (IAUP), U.S.A.

International Institute of Education (IIE), New York

Association of Universities of Asia and the Pacific (AUAP)

University Mobility in Asia & the Pacific (UMAP), Bangkok (Thailand).

Asia-Pacific Academic Consortium for Public Health (APACPH)

United Nations Academic Impact (UNAI)

Asia Economic Forum (AEF)

CIFEJ (Centre International Du Films Pour L'enfance Et La Jeunesse), Dubai

Executive Committee, Indian Red Cross Society, Odisha State Branch (Governor's Nominee)

Vice-President, Bharat Scouts & Guides, Odisha

# Awards

Green Activist Award 2019 by Indian Federation of Green Energy

Jeevan Gaurav Puraskar (Lifetime Achievement Award) at 4th National Teachers' Congress by MIT World Peace University, Pune (2020)

Personality of the year 2019 by FICCI Higher Education Awards

Golden Gavel by World Academy of Arts and Culture (WAAC) recognised by UNESCO 2019

Gandhi Mandela Peace Award 2019

Businessline Changemaker Award 2019 in Social Transformation category

NCST Leadership Award 2019 by National Commission for Scheduled Tribes

Golden Gavel from World Academy of Arts & Culture (WAAC) 2018

National Award for the welfare of the Children in 2017 by Shri Ram Nath Kovind, Hon'ble President of India

Kautilya Award by Indian Economic Association (2017)

GOPIO International Award 2017, Malaysia

Silver Medal of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic for outstanding contribution in social sector

ISA Award for service to Humanity, the Highest Civilian Award from the Kingdom of Bahrain 2015

World of Difference Awards - 2013 (The International Alliance for Women, TIAW, USA)

Gusi Peace Prize International, Manila (Asia's Peace Prize) 2014

Qimpro Platinum Standard Award-2011

Certificate of Excellence, 2010 (Government of Cambodia)

Asia's Best Social Entrepreneur, World HRD Congress, Singapore 2010

Humanitarian Award-2004 (Johannesburg, South Africa)

Recognition as Social Entrepreneur, Skoll Foundation - 2007 (one of the 15 best social entrepreneurs)

'Hall of Fame' Award from World CSR Congress, 2015

Economic Times Award for being in the top 50 successful entrepreneurs in India, 2015

NIQR Bajaj Outstanding Quality Man Award 2016

Pride of India Award by Youthink International, second largest youth Organization in the world with its chapters in 192 countries

Dr. Pinnamaneni and Smt. Seetha Devi Foundation Award – 2014

Education Entrepreneur of the Year-2014 from ASSOCHAM

Jawaharlal Nehru Award - 2012 (in Indian Science Congress)

Mahaveer Award (Bhagwan Mahaveer Foundation) -2012

Godfrey Phillips Bravery Award (Social Bravery) -2011

ICON of Odisha-2011 (Times of India)

Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore Samman-2011

Dainik Bhaskar India Pride Award-2011 (for being a Change Agent, Social Development and Equity)

International Award, Certificate of Excellence 2010 (Muscat, Oman)

Swami Vivekananda National Award - 2010 (Government of Karnataka)

National Young EDGE Award 2010

Gandhi Seva Medal - 2009 (Philanthropy and Charity)

Priya Odiya (Most Endeared Personality of Odisha) - 2007 (through a survey by a popular TV Channel)

## His life in his words

*"I struggled for food for the first 25 years of my life and now, my struggle is to provide food to millions of deprived and underprivileged children."*

*"Pain and passion are my best friends, pain in the past and the passion in present to alleviate poverty through quality education for millions."*

## His Thoughts

*Giving quality education to a deprived child is like giving sight to the blind.*

*Educating a girl child is equal to educating generations thereafter.*

*Poverty creates illiteracy. literacy eradicates poverty.*

*If one is not appreciated or hailed during his/her lifetime, it's like living dead.*

*Continuation of beauty is more important than creation of beauty.*

*Positivity is the best way to sustainable success*

*Given opportunity, the weak too can excel.*

*In the present age, half education is more harmful than no education.*

*Think - What I was, What I am, What I will be!*

*I will serve the society selflessly. The society has made me what I am. I will pay back the debt, without being complacent.*

*Be obliged, not ungrateful.*

## KIIT & KISS Sports

### Rare Achievement

Not only he has built a large sports infrastructure at KIIT and KISS, but also produced about **5000** sports talents **(70% among them girls at a single place)**

100+

International sportspersons in 14 sports disciplines (Participation in Olympics, Asiad, Commonwealth Game, etc.)

900

National sportspersons in 26 sports disciplines

2000+

State-level sportspersons

2000+

Sportspersons who have participated in national university and school games

# | Social Reformer

## Art of Giving

A philosophy of life to promote peace and happiness in the society

## New Mind New Dreams

Spreading awareness of Education, Health, Human Rights, Sanitation and Hygiene in 30 districts of Odisha

## Kanya Kiran

A flagship initiative to stop violence against women and girl child in Odisha

## Sustainable Development

A blueprint of 5Ps in action and fulfilling Sustainable Development Goals

## Lifeskills Education

Providing lifeskills education to 1,50,000 school children with UNFPA collaboration

## Art of Appreciation

Appreciation of the good qualities of someone or something is the key to happiness

## Kalinga Fellowship

An International Fellowship Programme to achieve Zero tolerance on sexual harassment against women

## Education for all

An initiative to promote awareness about Quality Education to ensure that no child is deprived of Education

## India Against Negativity

A forum for positive minded persons to promote positivity and combat negativity

Born in **1965**

**30+**

Years of Teaching Experience

**2**

Civilian Awards from Baharain and Mongolia

**100+**

National and International Accolades

**46**

Honorary Degrees from Universities

**1.5 lakhs**

Employment Generated indirectly

**15,000+**

Employment Generated directly

**100+**

Entrepreneurs Created

**60,000**

Students in KIIT and KISS

**80,000**

Alumni of KIIT and KISS

**22**

Nobel laureates visited KIIT & KISS

**75**

Ambassadors visited KIIT & KISS

**200**

Talks, speeches, Lectures delivered both nationally and internationally

## Addressed more than 200 talks, lectures and speeches in different International and National Conferences and meets like

- Universities for Poverty Alleviation, a gathering of Vice Chancellors in Madrid, Spain (July-2015)
  - The only educationist from India to be invited to Oslo Education Summit, Oslo-sensitized world leaders about the role of education for eradication of poverty (July-2015)
  - Global CEO Meet, New York
  - 4th GRIPMER Oration on "Sustainable and Inclusive Development"
  - Delivered a talk on "Empowering India at the grassroots" at 360 Degree Disruption knowledge platform of World Bank Group
  - Delivered a keynote address in the 12th Annual Global Investor Conference organized by Motilal Oswal Securities limited
  - UNDP, Jaipur
  - UN Headquarter, New Delhi
  - Stars Symposium, China
  - Indira Gandhi Forest Academy for IFS officers, Dehradun
  - Lal Bahadur Shastri National Academy of Administration for IAS officers, Mussoorie
  - House of Lords, UK
  - UNSSC Bonn
- Besides these, he has delivered many convocation addresses and Foundation Lectures



# My Childhood

## Poverty

In that small space of the dilapidated two-room house, we all were perhaps waiting for an unforeseen future. The flickering ray of the light emanating from the half-lit broken lantern was perhaps our only ray of hope to survive. We all knew that the light will not be there for long as it did not have enough kerosene the night. Kerosene was also a luxury for us and we had no choice when it came to choose between darkness and light.

That night was perhaps the darkest, as it had restricted our movements even inside the room. We could hear trees falling to the strong wind and it only added to our sense of fear. All we could do was to submit our fears to our fate. I can't recollect any night worse than this, when it seemed that the fountains of the Great Deep had burst and the floodgates of heaven had split apart. But we neither had Noah's Ark, nor the basket that saved Moses. All we could do was to cling to each other and pray that uprooted trees did not come crashing down on us.

As water kept gushing through a hole in the thatched roof, we tried to keep ourselves dry but ended up getting drenched in the end. The cold wind blowing through whatever was left of our home made us shiver in the cold. It was indeed a night for the living dead.

The pangs of hunger robbed us of our sleep, and with little to do our mother kept comforting us in every manner possible. I did not understand then that she was bleeding inside, trying courageously to control her tears.

She tried to impress on us to wait for a while till she could get something to eat. All that she

could find was some leftover wet rice and cooked wild spinach. But in that cold rain soaked night, serving us wet rice was out of question. She then asked us to wait till she made some pancakes with the flour she had bought a few days ago. I was no mood to eat that either, for I knew she would make it without any oil and I had to eat it without sugar.

I was then too small to realise the pain I had unknowingly given her that day. One thing we knew was that our mother was not in a position to provide us with basic luxury. All my grumbling stopped when she found the oven and the fuel were filled with rainwater. Never to be cowed down, my mother searched for some puffed rice she had kept for me. She searched but could not find it as by then the lantern had run out of oil.

My fear, my desperation and my helplessness got transformed into anger against my mother, who never allowed buying a matchbox as it was also beyond our affordability. Our next-door-neighbour always lighted our lamps, but that night it was out of question.

Being virtual prisoners in my own house, I had no option but to sleep. Hunger, fear and the chill in the air even denied us of that. With all odds stacked up against us, she mumbled:

**"Remember Jagadish is the saviour and he rescues the fallen." In a trembling voice, I wanted to know who was Jagadish. She replied: "He is the Lord of the Universe - Lord Jagannath. You must chant his name and you would feel no hunger nor any tree would fall on our house."**

It was the best she could offer us. Before she could finish, there was a huge noise nearby caused by a falling tree. I cried out loud fearing that would crush was alive. In fear I started to

crawl towards my mother in the dark. I just leapt over her, holding her tight to ward off the fear. Without a grain in the stomach and all things eerie happening around us, I started to chant Jagannath's name. The greater my pang of hunger, the louder grew my chant. The night slowly gave way to a new dawn and the inclement weather began to ease. We mustered courage to step out and witness the trail of devastation the gale and heavy rain had caused. It was still raining but the wind was not as strong. To our surprise, we found that lightning had struck a palm tree only a few inches away from our house. It could have taken our lives mother said, but I reminded her that it could not have happened as I was chanting Jagannath's name.

I showed her the mayhem in the surrounding and told her we were better placed with only water pouring down from the roof. We were drenched, but still alive. Our house was damaged, but not grounded. That might have helped me to reaffirm my faith in Lord Jagannath. As my eyes turned to the other side of our house, I saw an uprooted banana tree. I hurried to get the bananas. I also wanted to cut the tree and get its soft inner trunk for mother to prepare some curry. It was a struggle between my hunger and the prospect of getting rid of it.

Before I could decide what to do, my mother opened the front door. It was equally devastating. I could see hardly any roof on what were once houses. What also drew my attention were coconuts lying on the road. Some were still falling from the trees. Mother asked me to collect a few coconuts, but then all were not ours.

In a struggle between what is right and pangs of hunger, the latter had won that day. With great reluctance, we thought of collecting the coconuts. Had it not been such a moment of despair, mother would not have allowed us to touch the coconuts. Motherly instinct to feed her children got the better of her ideals that day.

She tried to convince me that how could anyone know which coconut came from which tree. **The conflict between rectitude and reality was still within me, but I succumbed to the fact that without the coconuts we would go hungry for some more days.** As I collected the coconuts, I kept chanting the Lord's name to avoid being injured by a falling coconut. My mother was my strength and she reminded me that nothing would happen if god wanted to protect us. It were not coconuts alone, we collected bananas, papayas and even the leaves of the coconut trees that were used to cover the leaking roof. The leaves were also used as fuel.

The exercise left me tired and I felt hungry again. Even in my hunger, I thought of the blessings of Jagannath on us. Since then my devotion to Lord Jagannath has grown manifold and I started feeling his presence whenever I am faced with a difficult situation. May be it was my faith or maybe it was his wish to take me where he wanted me to see me. Though I collected the raw materials, it was not possible for mother to cook as the oven was still under water.

So, we drank coconut water and ate its tender pulp. Before starting to eat, I called my neighbours to take their share. It was also a way to get rid of my guilty feeling. The darkness of the night had eventually given way to sunshine, but today I when I look back I remember the famous lines from Fyodor Dostoyevsky's Crime and Punishment:

**"The deeper the grief, the closer is God!" Indeed the chanting of Jagannath made me sail through all odds.**

I have no hesitation to admit that ever since my mother introduced me to Lord Jagannath, I felt a new energy in me. I believe that I always enjoy the blessings of Lord Jagannath. Whatever I have been doing for my fellow human beings and my society, I believe Lord Jagannath has showed me the way and led me on that path.

I strongly believe that he would continue to bless me to do more for the society as I have completely surrendered myself under his lotus feet.

## Hunger

During the time, when I sit alone, comes the picture of my childhood in front of me and my hands automatically go up to wipe my moist eyes. My interface with poverty, my resolve to live at any cost and my mother's blessings on me remained my strength. Sometimes people ask me how poverty could be the strength, for the world knows the poor is powerless and poverty is the weakness of the people at large. But I changed my weakness to my strength. Poverty can never be quantified. Definitions and divisions like Absolute or Relative poverty do not say the whole truth. Perhaps I was born with poverty. My father being so benevolent and kind, had already become a pauper by helping people around him beyond his means. In that condition of penury he died leaving my mother and seven siblings in the lurch.

My mother with all her courage and determination raised me and my sister. Working as a helping maid, or getting the paddy to make it rice for few coins or even collecting wild spinach to cook for us, she did everything to keep us alive. Though human feelings, benevolence, her approach to life seemed to have changed at that point of time, but she never ever forgot that she was a mother with abundance of love for her children. She was a woman with her natural instinct of being soft. Like every mother she wanted her children to live and lead comfortable lives but those were her dreams and she never knew whether the dreams one day would turn into reality.

I vividly remember the day, when I noticed the great love, my mother had for me. Perhaps she loved me most but the way it was revealed shocked even her. After the death of my father, my elder brother staying in Jamshedpur Tata trying to get a job on compensatory ground, came to home in the village. It was after a long time my mother would be seeing her eldest son and it was natural that she would be extra careful to see the comfort for him. Ours was a home where all the food containers always remained empty. We all were living only the moments without any certainty for the next day. Since there was nothing in the house, my mother ran to some neighbour to ask for some Chuda, the flattened rice. It was that entire she could ask for and it was all that could be available in my village. Chuda only could extinguish the fire of hunger but it is never palatable without sweet or curd or without any other preparation. My mother got the Chuda from one house but her son must not be fed Chuda only, rather he should be given something more with that. So she left that bowl of Chuda in the kitchen and rushed into our immediate neighbor to borrow some sugar or jaggery. At that moment, when I returned from outside to ask my mother to give me something to eat, I found the bowl of Chuda. I was hungry then and slept hungry last night too as there was nothing to eat at home. The bowl of Chuda was definitely tempting and I started eating that. My mother with little sugar in her hand saw me eating the Chuda which she brought for her eldest son. In a feat of rage, she got hold of a stick and came running to beat me.

At that point of time, she felt so helpless for the fact that she was not being able to give anything to eat to her son coming all the way from Jamshedpur.



*Bond of a lifetime: Achyuta Samanta with his mother*

While she was about to beat me, on a reflection, I turned around to escape the beating and in that process, the stick struck my left eye leaving the inside by few centimetres. The stick left a scar on the upper portion of my eye and I started bleeding with blood drops dripping down.

When my mother witnessed me bleeding, she fainted, seeing the blood. Someone took me to the hospital and I returned with a small bandage on my eye to see my mother still crying, blaming herself for all that happened.

It was then; I realized how poverty could break the human relationship. I could realize how helpless my mother was and how much she loved her children. It was not that, he liked her eldest son more or she was angry with me for eating the Chuda, but it was her motherly

affection for the son, whom she was meeting after a long time and it was her helplessness that she could not give her younger son something to eat since last night. She hugged me, kissed me and even in an apologetic way she blamed herself for being so insensitive. I could understand the whole situation but I had nothing to say except wiping the tears from her eyes, trying to say, nothing happened, see it did not hurt my eye, only the outside as I turned around. At that point of time I was trying to console my mother and it was perhaps the ugliest face of poverty and hunger seen both by the mother and her son.

# Self-made Man

Come festivities and I am surrounded by unspoken internal bliss by its nostalgic charm of driving me down the memory lane of colours, sounds and its galore. The festive season starts right after the Ganesh puja till the end of Kartik month of the Hindu Calendar. The stories of how I grew up in village, my school life and my childhood days tickles my memory. About four decades ago, I lived in a remote village in Kalarabanka in Cuttack district of Odisha. The village was quaint and lacked basic amenities and even electricity. There was a narrow road at the river side across which most of the modest houses were built. Even with no facilities for a good comfortable life the atmosphere of my village was unparalleled with its green cover, ever-welcoming Paika river, the tributary of Mighty Mahanadi, warm people and plethora of temples.

The period of “Puja” was special to every member of the village. Interestingly, festival in our village can be traced back to over 300 summers. Durga Puja and Kali Puja were the most celebrated ones amongst the many festivals we acknowledged. Families came together, people who worked at far off places gathered at one place and it was time of ritual and bondings. Traditional cakes, sweets and attires were made and distributed. Women and Children dressed up in the best of the newly purchased attires for the occasion. One could feel spring in every heart and cheer in every heart. It can be compared with the Nuakhai celebration in Western Odisha.

**Our cowshed like house was situated near the centrally located Durga temple which created a certain aura of godliness and devotion amongst us and the entire village.**

Festivals brought with fun, frolic, sounds of symbols, dance in the group and bustle. Some memories are so engraved in our minds that it becomes live every time of its annual

occurrence. Durga Puja comes with all the memories of Kalarabanka, my native village. It was a convention to wear new clothes during the five days of the festival. From the pujas that I could recall, two of my elder sisters were married off and my brother worked in a faraway place that didn't pay enough. My younger sister, Iti and I lived at the dilapidated house alone during some Puja as Maa would visit and stay with our brothers. During that period, new clothes, sumptuous and satiating food were a luxury we could not even dream to afford.

We observed people making delicious food and eating without offering it to us ever. We saw people living and enjoying the festivals and we were happy to see others enjoying in their own paradise. Even the poor aspires and manages to wear new clothes according to their capacity during Puja.

**Iti and I used to get a pair of new clothes from our elder brother which we would continue wearing till the next festive period.**

We would still wear the precious gift from our brother with utmost pride and happiness.

Staying alone at our house, I cooked an unembellished meal of “Dalma” (Lentil and Vegetable Soup) and rice and consume over the next 5 days of puja. Somehow or the other, we would make ends meet and live through the Durga puja with our little things of happiness.

Durga puja in our village was memorable for another element that came every year with it: “The Fair”. People from nearby neighbourhood assembled to celebrate the joyous and traditional Mela.

**I would set up a small stall for selling balloons in the Mela with the help of my sister.**

Those four days of selling balloons were enjoyable as it gave me a source of income without the load of doing a double shift of

school and work. It started when I was class 4 and continued till the end of my schooling life. At the end of each day I would count the money I had earned by selling those and fortunately I earned a little surplus to survive. This income used to give me immense joy as it was hard earned and honest, how-much-ever it was. Though we were poor, my mother always advised us not to cheat or be dishonest or aim for easy money. I remember the days when people would eat Rosagullas and delicious dishes whereas not one person would offer us food or bother to ask us. But they joy of people around me eating good food in itself was fulfilling.

The words of my mother still echoes in my ears. She would say this in Odia- “jake loke na kahle bhalo, sei jiyanta jivane marlo” which means:

**If a human life isn't appreciated by others then it isn't worth living.**

If one is not hailed during his life time, it is like living dead. I have kept this as the sermon of my life and continued to do my work selflessly. I have not deviated from the path of honesty a wee bit even in running organisations, famously known as KILT and KISS. I will continue the same till my last breath.

Like Durga Puja, Kali Puja is also celebrated in my village with a greater fervour and zeal. It is very famous and there is a big fair during the puja as well. Food, fun and frolic are the part of the fair. Many food stalls are set up. People of the village working outside also came home during the puja, a time for reunion of family and friends at the intersection of festivity. The villagers loved roaming around in the fair, buy chaat and sweets and eat it to hearts content. It was the only time when they could eat food outside, prepared live. Iti and I would go to the fair, roam around and have fun with the children and friends. We would be happy in a surcharged atmosphere, see a lot of enjoyment and splendour but never demanded or asked for what we could not afford. Our own relatives

would pamper their kids but never offered us Aloo chop, bara or a rosogulla. From this time, I understood the humiliation one has to face as a child if one has no support or pillar to fall back to.

No relative has ever given us a chocolate or sweet or a balloon, even during festivals. We would see parents loving their kids, pampering them, buying them goodies, feeding sweets and expressing their affection towards their next generation. We would see this from far. We felt the lack of such cushion but we never had anything to complain. We never wanted sympathy. We never asked for it. I remember those days and thats why today I do everything to give smile to millions of children.

**My only passion today is to spread happiness among the deprived. I never forget to give Bakshish to 1000 people and financial assistance to the needy.**

During Kali Puja, I distribute sweets, snacks and give goodies to the children of two schools at the Kalarabanka set up by us. I remember that no one fed us many pujas and that's why I don't leave a chance to distribute food to the children at Kalarabanka.

I am blessed to rise from the balloon seller to a medium for alleviating poverty and sufferings for millions through Education. Today, God has made me capable to go back to the same village and spread smiles and happiness among the children. I get pleasure out of it. It's a sense of unsaid comfort that I get by giving the experience of not being deprived to the children. But one thing remains common, then and now,

**I got happiness by spreading happiness and hope.**

I remember the experience and I live it each day. A man is a sum of experiences from the past. I am sad at times at the glaring inequalities in the society but I realise that the five fingers can not be the same. I have learnt a lesson that one can



spread happiness by small acts of giving. The power of good intention can cure all melancholy for the betterment of the society. A true life is lived when one takes the experiences from the past and the process of growth and utilise it for not letting the fellow human beings suffer the same experience, in whichever small way possible. One should never forget the past. I always remember what my mother use to say, “Thili Kana, Heli Kana, Hebi Kana” meaning always keep in mind what you were, what you are and what you will be. All the tenses are intricately connected to the game called life. If one is oblivious of this, one forgets the ethics of life and living.

## Being Human & Humane

Humaneness is a small word and the connotation of the word can never justify the importance and feeling behind it. It is the core value behind the progress of civilization and the human race. It is intrinsic and innate to one and all. In the simple and traditional society, human lives were less complicated and human bonds were stronger. With the transition of innocent living to a modern and ultra-modern era and lifestyles, the respect for humanity is declining. The higher one is placed, the lesser one thinks about other human relations, a paradox of our times.

Humaneness as a value should be given impetus. Small acts of benevolence can create huge ripples of change. It can help one wipe tears, spread joy and smiles. It gives immense pleasure to both the giver and the taker. One gets satisfaction out of small and random acts of kindness and compassion, which is nothing but humanitarianism. Misery and agony can be abated through being humane.

I have grown up learning the core value of humaneness and service. It has become the ethos of my life. I keep extending support to the needy and distressed. I would like to share a few

tales from the recent past about the many acts of kindness that I have been engaged in the last 30 years.

Last month, I read about 4 orphan girls and their plight in “Samaj”, an Odia daily Newspaper. The helpless girls had lost their father before few days and mother five years back. They did not have anything to eat after the death of the only bread earner in their family. The eldest of them is pursuing her Bachelors Degree while the other three girls are studying in school. We immediately sent them some cash for their expenses and assured them financial assistance every month. We also offered a job to the eldest one at KISS Puri after completion of her Bachelors Degree. Further, among the other three, two will be pursuing higher education at KISS Puri from next year while the youngest one will be enrolled in Kendra Vidyalaya. – A stroke of humaneness at work.

In a recent road accident in Cuttack- Paradip road, I extended support to the family members of the people who had died on the spot. We gave them cash for immediate help and offered employment to 3 people from the family of the deceased to ensure that the family is not pressed to make both ends meet while facing this irreparable loss. In my capacity, I tried to help the family and its next generation to lead a happy life. – Another instance of humaneness in action.

In both the above cases, I tried to extend immediate help and provide a permanent solution. There is no end to the sufferings, pain and miseries in society. But we can do our bit. I sometimes go down the line of nostalgia and remember kindness of the people who helped our family in the darkest of the dark circumstances and find it coming a full circle today.

**I still remember with extreme pain a memory from my childhood when my father expired untimely leaving seven children and a widowed mother without a single piece of land, a home or money.**

I was four and my youngest sibling was one month old when the news of my father's demise through train accident came to my elder brother at 5 AM in the morning. My brother who was 16 years old then rushed to the hospital after getting the news. He was in deep grief and remorse after seeing the body of my father covered with a white sheet that cleared his state of denial. He came back to take consent from my mother to claim the dead body and bring it home for last rites. My mother nodded in stoic silence.

**My mother who was 40 years old then had no idea of facing this tragedy. She was totally broken. Suddenly all the burden fell upon her. She had a huge task of bringing up the children amidst poverty, hunger and humiliation without any support from anyone else. Her life was devastated by this stroke of destiny. Few relatives consoled but nothing can really comfort during such a loss.**

After hearing the news of my father's death, some Kaabuliwallahs (Traditional money lenders) came to our house to recuperate the hand loans that father had taken. My mother was not aware of such borrowings. They are very friendly while lending money but usually ruthless when someone defaults.

When the Kabuliwallahs saw the pathos of our life, loss of the only earning member and no money for the seven siblings or the last ritual, they left considering they can not get anything back from our helpless poor family. Such staunch Kabuliwallahs who are known for harassing the borrowers in case of non-payment did not ask for their money back from our family and left our home tongue-tied. This is the example of humaneness that I experienced early in my life.

**Few colleagues of my father came home to console my father's death. They knew that my father was a good human being but was very poor. They also knew that family had nothing to eat after father's death.**

Four colleagues of my father came forward to support our family at this time of distress by providing us with basic groceries and vegetables so that the family did not die of hunger.

Today, we survive and have scaled heights because of the humaneness showed to us. My mother was asked to vacate the staff quarters given by the company to get the deposits and insurance cover upon an accident. We thought we will be homeless.

**But, a distant relative, who himself stayed in a one-room house, spared his verandah and kitchen for all of us. We moved there and stayed there for six months.**

The shelter was given to us when our lives had lost meaning. This act of humanitarianism anchored us at the times of despair and disillusionment.

I have been observing and feeling this humanitarianism from 1970 through my experience. Without humanitarianism, this family of 8 people would have perished, listless and unrecognized. We are what we are because of the compassion extended to us in the past and we shall always stay rooted in the past and extend the same to all with empathy, love, and compassion. I would not have been able to contribute to the society, state, the country had humanism not played a major role in my life.

Great people have done great deeds because of the touch of humaneness they have experienced in their lifetime. They remain great because it is reflected in their actions and words. I have felt its power and lived with it from the age of four. It doesn't cost anything but returns multifold to the soul and the society at large. Make what Desmond Tutu says and I quote

**“Do your little bit of good where you are; it's those little bits of good put together that overwhelm the world.” the maxim of your life and world will be a better place to live in.**

# While laying the foundation of KIIT

## Struggle

In the foothills of Himalayas, listening to the chirping of the birds my mind was growing restless in the midst of a calm and stunning setting. The serene atmosphere failed to provide rest to fast whizzing thoughts. Sleepless and restless, I was thinking about last night's journey.

I was at the Mayfair Himalayan Spa Resort, a spectacular celebration of luxury and heritage located in the hill town of Kalimpong in Bengal.

From my otherwise busy schedule, I had to take time out to attend the parliamentary standing committee meeting on coal and steel in Kalimpong.

I express my gratitude to Naveen Patnaik ji, the chief minister of Odisha, for reposing faith in me and giving me an opportunity to represent the state as a Rajya Sabha member. Everything was perfect, but then a strange whirlpool of thoughts disturbed my otherwise calm composure. I want to share the experience of this night with all.

I had to take a train to Calcutta on the night of August 28 and a three-hour car drive from Bagdogra airport to Kalimpong after a flight from Calcutta to Bagdogra the following day. This train journey was very comfortable, but I could not catch up with sleep. Images swirled across in my mind at one moment and flashed across in the other.

I was mentally taken to a journey of life 26 years ago. I was lost in the past train journeys and one particular trip stood out.

From 1992-95, the formative years of KIIT-ITI, I had to travel to Calcutta four times in a month to procure lab materials and equipment.

**I did not have money to buy a ticket for sleeper class, let alone the air-conditioned seat.**

My journeys to Calcutta were mostly in general class in Jagannath Express without getting the luxury to sit.

I would stand the whole night many a times, sometimes near the smelly toilets and compartment doors, occasionally closing my eyes out of a desperate need to sleep.

If the luck was great, I managed to usurp just enough space to squeeze in my slender body or get an offer to sit, after standing for three to four hours. There is one journey to Calcutta that is etched in my memory sadly amidst the horde of several difficult ones.

One such journey I do remember was with Mr P.K. Sahoo, founder staff of KIIT-ITI who had accompanied me in the August of 1992.

Both of us took a tiring long journey to Calcutta by train in general class. We reached Calcutta in the morning. Our place of stay was not booked, nor did we have money for one. "My friend's house is a stone's throw away. We can complete our morning rituals there," said Sahoo babu in a composed tone.

**Beggars have no choice. In those days, my condition was more pathetic than a beggar because I did not have the luxury of mercy. I accepted Sahoo babu's plan at once.**

We started walking towards Sahoo babu's friend's house. We walked for an hour and a half, getting wet in the rain, through the busy streets of Calcutta, with rickshaw pullers making weirdest of sounds to clear their path and we reached a place which was a quintessential Calcutta slum.

The roads were muddy and we splashed mud as we tried to avoid potholes.

Calcutta gets waterlogged during the monsoon.

As we walked, it continued to rain and the overflowing drain water took toll on our energy. While heaps of garbage welcomed us, we found food rotting in one of the heaps close to his friend's house.

**I have been nurtured in no different conditions. Hailing from one of the poorest households in a remote village in Odisha, I had lived in such conditions.**

There was no proper toilet or place to take bath at his friend's place.

"After walking for an hour and a half, should we take bath here, Sahoo babu? I don't see any washroom here," I asked him.

"I am sorry. This is my first visit too. I didn't know it was like this," Sahoo babu rumbled. "Sir, let's take bath in the river Hooghly," Sahoo babu said.

So, we walked to the banks of the river. It was a walk for another one and a half hours. The stench was overpowering. The whole place smelt of fresh defecation.

Whenever I travelled, my usual practice had been to use the waiting room toilet at railway stations. This is not to say that they were any better.

Without thinking twice, I took off my clothes, wore my "gamucha" (a thin cotton coarse towel).

I forcefully shut my eyes, ears and nose, took a dip and changed into fresh clothes. I have lived in utterly poor conditions and this made me digest the pain of the surroundings and go ahead with the work as planned.

We then went to the purchase the equipment for KIIT-ITI at Bowbazar. When we finished our work, it was already evening.

As we could afford only one porter, both of us carried the equipment on our head and shoulders till we got into a bus. While coming back, I asked Sahoo babu: "Why didn't you

book a room in a hotel? It would have cost us Rs 500."

Sahoo babu's was prompt to reply in a convincing tone: "Sir, we are struggling to get money to buy equipment for our institute. Even Rs 500 is too big for us. We are taking loans and utilising it for KIIT-ITI. How can we think of spending it for our comfort just to get a clean toilet?"

I had no answer. I was in a state of denial.

Fast forward to 2018. Twenty-six years later, I was in the same train and divinely blessed with the comforts I had never thought of. This time I was in an AC first class compartment.

I would have taken the flight to Calcutta, but my engagements in Bhubaneswar compelled me to take the last possible train to Calcutta.

The station master came to see me off. My staff and colleagues came to see me off and the train attendants extended unmatched hospitality.

I went to the toilet, cleaned up, and did not have to do my bedding because the attendant had made all the arrangements. However, I could not sleep because I was reminded of the night on the same train to Calcutta and my state of helplessness.

My heart was swelling with gratitude to the Almighty who made me work so hard and achieve for millions and myself.

**I thanked all gods for giving a life of comfort to me.**

I also thanked our chief minister for assigning me this important role as Rajya Sabha MP. I was trying to sum up life –

**"If your intentions and work are good then privilege, position and recognition come automatically. The whole universe conspires to give back to one who toils for the greater good of humanity."**

**N.B.** These are few episodes of his million struggles and hardships till date

# | Testimonials



*"KISS is wonder. It is rare in the world."*

**Prof. Muhammad Yunus**

Nobel Peace Prize Winner, 2006



*"KISS is a real 'Lighthouse Project'. It is a manifestation of the motto of Art of Giving by its Founder."*

**Prof. J. Georg Bednorz**

Nobel Laureate In Physics, Zurich, 1987



*"My country, Israel has 25000 students, but here at KISS, I see the same numbers. KISS is really impressive"*

**Prof. Ada Etil Yonath**

Nobel Laureate In Chemistry, Israel, 2009



*"What is Education? Education is very precious. What Dr. Samanta has done is more than couple of pounds of gold. "*

**Prof. Ferid Murad**

Nobel Laureate In Physiology or Medicine, 1998



*"I am greatly impressed by the progress made by this young University in such a short time."*

**Prof. Sir John E. Walker**

Nobel Laureate In Chemistry, 1997



*"KISS is an extraordinary initiative trying to educate tribal children."*

**Prof. Rolf Zinkernagel**

Nobel Laureate In Medicine, 1996





*"Your achievement is just incredible and extremely difficult to emulate for generations to come."*

**Prof. Hiroshi Amano**

**Nobel Laureate In Physics ,2014**



*"Its really amazing that KISS is working for the benefit of future generations. It is putting thousands of students on a right track."*

**Prof. Erwin Neher**

**Nobel Laureate In Physiology Or Medicine, 1991**



*"You know, I come from a small village. You are 10 times the size of my village."*

**Prof. Olivier Smithies**

**Nobel Laureate In Physiology Or Medicine 2007**



*" Dr. Samanta is a life model for me."*

**Prof. Richard R Ernst**

**Nobel Laureate In Chemistry,1991**



*"I am overwhelmed with admiration to witness what Prof. Achyuta Samanta has created through his vision, dedication and passion."*

**Sir Richard John Roberts**

**Nobel Prize In Physiology Or Medicine 1993**



*"It's a pleasure to see smiling faces of the children here at KISS. Visiting KISS is like a pilgrimage. Temple, Mosque & Church all reside in the smiles of these innocent children."*

**Shri Kailash Satyarthi**

**Nobel Peace Prize Winner, 2014**



*"I am very impressed with the facilities at KISS & KIIT. I wish KISS to grow and be able to be a good example to the world."*

**Prof. Ernesto Kahan**

**Nobel Peace Prize winner, 1985**

## Covid-19 Pandemic: KIIT & KISS Reach the Unreached

Kalinga Institute of Industrial Technology (KIIT), Bhubaneswar and its sister institution Kalinga Institute of Social Sciences (KISS), under the leadership of its Founder Prof. Achyuta Samanta, have taken a series of initiatives right from the outbreak of the disease and have been at the forefront of Odisha's war against the coronavirus. Some humanitarian actions of KIIT & KISS stand out as they have significantly bolstered the health care infrastructure of the State, greatly reduced the suffering of people and touched the lives of the most marginalized and overlooked sections.

1. In one of the most significant measures in Odisha's war against Covid-19, Kalinga Institute of Medical Sciences (KIMS), a constituent of KIIT Deemed to be University, set up four ultramodern dedicated Covid hospitals with the support of the Govt. of Odisha, located in



Bhubaneswar and three tribal-dominated districts of Odisha. The hospitals have a combined bed capacity of 1200. KIMS Covid Hospital in Bhubaneswar, a 500-bedded state-of-the-art facility including 50 critical care beds, is India's first standalone Covid hospital. The quick turnaround time in setting up the Covid Hospitals has saved thousands of lives.



2. KIIT & KISS reached out to various groups facing hardship due to the extended lockdown. The intervention included the distribution of food materials and other essentials to over 3 lakh pandemic-hit people, including the disadvantaged people living in various slums, stranded migrant labourers, who were also provided temporary shelter, and people living in containment zones.

3. Community outreach activities of KIIT & KISS strived to reach the hardest-hit and commonly overlooked people – transgenders, sportspersons, physically challenged, sex workers, etc. They were provided with allowances to cope with the prolonged lockdown. Food materials and cash to meet other expenses for three months were given to priests and other workers of several spiritual centres in Bhubaneswar, Cuttack, Puri and nearby towns. The two institutions are providing groceries and cash for miscellaneous expenses to over 40 orphanages, old age homes and leprosy centres in Kandhamal district.



4. The student community is one of the worst affected groups in the Covid-19 pandemic. KISS is a home for 30,000 tribal students from interior districts of Odisha pursuing their studies from Standard-I to PG/Ph.D. level. Days before the outbreak of the pandemic, they were sent to their respective homes in various districts of Odisha. As the students are in their respective homes, KISS has been sending study materials, dress and generous amount of dry foods at the



doorsteps every month since April. The monthly materials also contain sanitary napkins for the adolescent girl students. This will continue until reopening of KISS.

5. Inspired by the Prime Minister's call for 'Atmanirbhar Bharat' (Self-reliant India), KISS has revved up its vocational skill centre during the Covid-19 pandemic. The centre has been scaled up to become a medium-size industry and is now making 25 different types of vocational products. These products are marketed through well developed distribution channel, besides fulfilling the in-house requirements of KIIT & KISS. The sale proceeds from the centre are expected to make KISS self-reliant in the coming years.

6. In a unique humanitarian gesture, KIIT Deemed to be University has decided to provide free education to the children of the Covid deceased in Odisha. The facility will be available for two academic years: 2020-21 and 2021-22.

7. The first six months of the ongoing pandemic has made many children orphans. Such children, particularly those belonging to the poorer sections, are suffering an untold tragedy. They are vulnerable to become victims of child abuse and human trafficking. KIIT & KISS have adopted and are taking care of about 100 such orphans and providing them monthly allowance ranging from Rs. 5000 to Rs. 10000, depending upon the family size. As and when the academic institutions reopen, they will be provided with free education and subsequently complete higher education in KIIT & KISS.

Support to orphans and children of the Covid-deceased has been possible due to its Founder, Prof. Achyuta Samanta's personal childhood experience of hunger and poverty that he had to suffer after he lost his father at the tender age of four. He has always been striving to ensure that no child is deprived of quality education because of untimely death of parents or poverty.