

The institutions have been able to bring about social changes in the tribal hinterland

A KISS that offers free education from KG to PG

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July 16: Social entrepreneurship has got a new dimension with a unique experiment done by Dr Achyuta Samanta, founder of KIIT (Kalinga Institute of Industrial Training) and KISS (KIIT Institute of Social Sciences). He has not only established an institution of repute called KIIT in Bhubaneswar, Odisha, his KISS model is offering free education to 25,000 under-privileged tribal people of Odisha and its neighbouring states.

In an interview with 'Observer' Dr Samanta revealed why he took up the job of educating people, particularly those who come from the unprivileged section of the society. From a very modest beginning KIIT, set up in 1992, has current student and staff strength of 27,000 and 10,000 respectively. Taken together the KIIT and KISS are handling 52,000 students.

At a tender of four Dr Samanta lost his father in an accident and his mother



Dr Achyuta Samanta with KISS students.

had to work hard to educate him. Having lived that life Samant had the passion for doing something for the poor and unprivileged.

Dr Samanta said: "If a person is sincere, dedicated, has the ability to make sacrifices and remains committed, he can overcome any obstacle and can achieve

impossible goals." Dr Samanta believes that "poverty creates illiteracy and literacy eradicates poverty. I attempted a humble beginning in 1992 by setting up KIIT. By 1997 it commenced graduate programmes in engineering and post-graduate programmes in Computer Application and Management. KIIT got

university status in 2004 just within six years of its inception."

For educating the unprivileged Dr Samanta set up KISS in 1993, which has now grown to be the largest free residential institution for tribal children. "It offers holistic education from Kindergarten to Post-Graduation, vocational training, food, accommodation, healthcare and all basic necessities for 25,000 students free of charge."

On his conviction for the sustenance of KISS, Dr Samanta said: "I was very much convinced that the KIIT would sustain KISS and it truly happened. The KIIT provided a sustainable financing and a technically enabling model for KISS because living on donations only could not have provided a sustainable source of finance and other resources. Since then both the organisations are prospering impressively."

Besides implementing the United Nation's Millennium Development Goals, KISS has been able to bring about much needed social changes in

the tribal hinterland of the state and its neighbouring states by arresting the spread of Maoist and Naxlite insurgency and inculcating a strong will to come up in life. KISS, through its 25,000 students who come from 25,000 families in different villages across the state, is transforming the tribal mindset and triggering the process of their joining mainstream society.

The success of KISS model has spread, attracting state and country heads, diplomats, Nobel laureates, social activists, social researchers and scholars, legal luminaries from across the world. International organisations like Unicef, UNDP have come forward to join hands with KISS.

"A unit of KISS is operating in the Delhi as KISS-Delhi and we have plans to open branches in all the 30 districts of Odisha, 10 states and 10 foreign branches," said Dr Samanta as he has been propagating the KISS model in developing and underdeveloped countries.