



MINIMIZING IMPACT OF THE PANDEMIC

Compassionate action during Corona Crisis

An Initiative by

Kalinga Institute of Social Sciences (KISS) & KIIT 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 are witnessing 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, 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

Kalinga Institute of Social Sciences (KISS) is the largest indigenous university in the world that provides holistic education, accommodation, healthcare and meals to over 30,000 indigenous students without any cost from Odisha and surrounding states. It was founded in the year 1992-93 by Dr. Achyuta Samanta and is located in Bhubaneswar, the state capital



of Odisha, India. KISS offers education to the indigenous underserved children from Standard I to PhD. Another 20,000 alumni have become change makers in respective indigenous communities. KISS promotes sustainability of indigenous community by empowering poor indigenous with quality, free education. Different initiatives at KISS are aligned with sustainable development goals. 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 initiative.

ABOUT KALINGA INSTITUTE OF INDUSTRIAL TECHNOLOGY (KIIT)

Kalinga Institute of Industrial Technology (KIIT), an Institution of Eminence (IoE) bestowed by Government of India located in Bhubaneswar, is one of the most acclaimed and recognized Indian universities that provides professional education to 30,000 students of India and abroad. KIIT also runs a 2500 bedded multispecialty hospital and an attached Medical College Kalinga Institute of Medical Sciences. KIIT is one of the first institutions in the State of Odisha, India to attract foreign students into its various academic programmes. KIIT has students from over 53 countries, including most of the South Asian Nations, proving its reputation as a quality institution of professional education that transcends borders. KIIT is also the member of prestigious national and international organisations. It is known as Institution with humanism and compassion for its continuing contribution towards the development of society.

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 of KIIT University and 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.

KIIT, KISS & SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN THE TIMES OF COVID-19

Sustainable development has been at the core of KIIT and KISS DNA since its inception. Not only is it clearly at the heart of our vision, mission and values, but it is also propagated by our students and staff as they journey through the experience, as well as by our various institutional and corporate partners. This means KIIT and 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 KIIT and KISS 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 indigenous 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.*
- *KISS emphasizes on creating space for education of indigenous girl child from remote hinterland areas to make them as social change agents.*
- *KIIT & 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, KIIT and KISS have 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 KIIT AND KISS DURING COVID-19 CRISIS

At KIIT and KISS, we also try 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 Dr. Achyuta Samanta through both the institutions to help citizens of Odisha and providing support to the state government in the battle against COVID-19. We will highlight the ongoing work of KIIT and KISS during Corona Crisis:



MAJOR INITIATIVES:

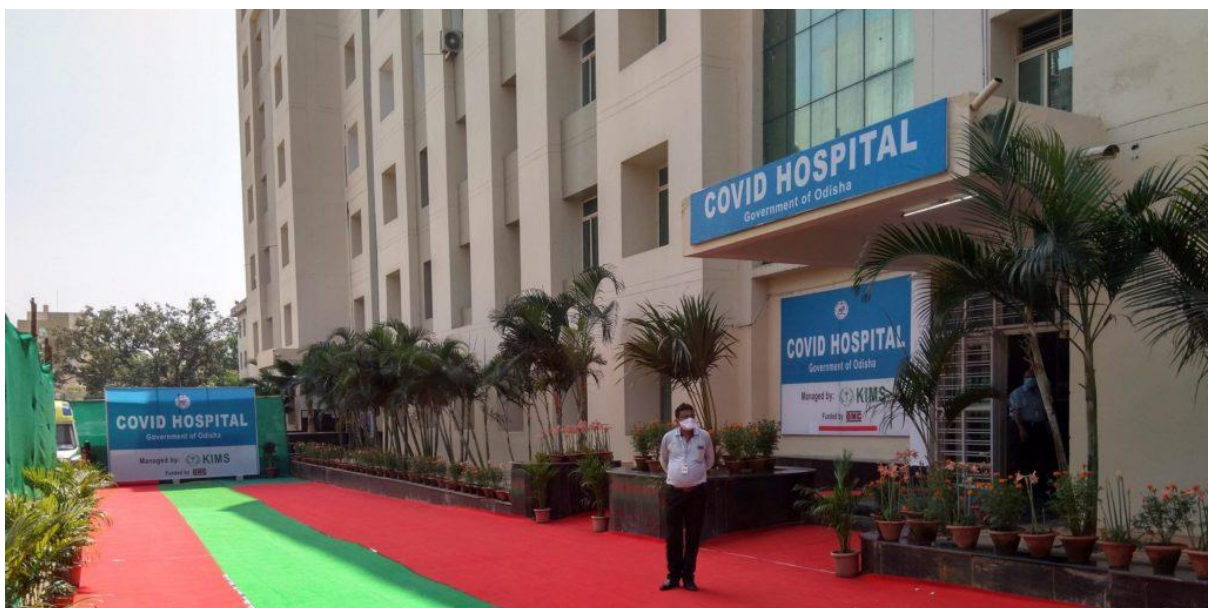
Leaving No one Behind – Providing relief material and other necessities to homeless, stranded migrants, slum dwellers, daily wagers, transgenders, sex workers, beggars, Tibetan monks and animals on street, frontline workers and other vulnerable people. It is putting forth to the Government needs of the 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 at Kalinga Institute of Medical Sciences (KIMS) is operational. 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 is 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 and the capacity will be upgraded in coming days.

Infrastructure facilities available at Balangir & Mayurbhanj campus of KISS Satellite centre are also functioning as COVID 19 hospitals, along with a further dedicated COVID 19 Hospital in my parliamentary constituency Kandhamal in association with the district administration. These are each 200 bedded hospitals managed by KIMS and round the clock service following WHO and ICMR guidelines. Patients are being treated here.



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

A team has also been 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 has extended the helping hand to villages. Besides KIIT and KISS has also reached out to the red-light areas in Bhubaneswar and distributed dry food items. 15 districts are covered by KISS till now. Over 3,00,000 food packets were served to vulnerable people and 500 poor people in the locality are fed every day. At Kandhamal district of Odisha, we are helping 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, KIIT and KISS is distributing 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. KIIT and KISS has been distributing 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 are coming to Odisha primarily by bus are being 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 KIIT and KISS has adopted the old age home in Chandragiri - a Tibetan settlement area in Eastern Odisha. 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 settlements in and around Chandragiri. KIIT and KISS have provided one month supply to the Tibetan population & monks in Chandragiri and Padmasambhava Monastery in Jiranga, Odisha. KIMS is supporting a hospital 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 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 distribution to those who are reliant on us happens twice a day. In addition to that KIIT and KISS have also adopted 140 peacocks in Bhubaneswar and will take care of these beautiful birds.



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

The students of KISS and UDAY volunteers are creating awareness 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, handwashing and proper usage of masks. 500 volunteers are involved for this purpose and 220 villages in aspirational districts of Rayagada, Koraput and Malkangiri has been going on. They are also helping the state government in monitoring and administering Quarantine Centers. Our work covers 6 aspirational Districts of Odisha: Rayagada, Malkangiri, Koraput, Kandhamal, Balangir, Gajapati and 2.5 lakh population have reached so far.



- **DISTRIBUTING SANITARY PRODUCTS:**

KISS is distributing sanitary hygienic products like sanitary napkins and masks to women and girls in all the districts of Odisha. Till now, over 1 lakh units have been distributed and it is continuing with reaching out to 500 people from vulnerable communities every day. Sanitary napkins were also provided to returnee migrant workers. N-5 masks and food have been provided to police personnel and volunteers those 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 are living under stress situation because of different impacts of this crisis. Keeping in view of that, Tele Counselling Cell has been set up to provide support for the people including frontline COVID workers and people experiencing stress during trying times. Psychologists, psychoanalysts and psychiatrists have been deployed to deal with psychological

repercussions in the time of social distancing and lockdowns.

- **INNOVATING THE FUTURE ACTION**

Dr. Samanta as a visionary 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 as a Centre for Augmenting War against COVID-19 Health Crisis

tech support

KIIT & KISS FOUNDATION FIGHT COVID-19

Online classes & exams for KIIT students and classes and doubt clearing via Whatsapp for KISS Foundation students



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

KIIT and KISS 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. KIIT is the first University to have begun online classes and online examination for 30,000 children.



In KISS, we have been using various electronic methods to reach the students for their study. We emphasize on teacher student interface through these methods. The teachers are producing and disseminating 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 is a solution to remote places where internet connectivity is poor. The students are in contact through WhatsApp groups. All these indigenous students are staying with their families in different remote locations across the state of Odisha. To ensure their uninterrupted study, we are starting their tutoring through a television channel and WhatsApp groups we run. In a humanitarian motive, KISS has provided dry food items, groceries, soap along with the books and study materials of the new academic year to all the 30,000 students at their doorsteps every month since the lockdown. It is 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. Indigenous communities take lead in distributing these E-learning modules in the native villages following all social distancing norms.



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

KIIT and KISS have been constantly working with its available resources (Financial resources, human resources and infrastructural) to reduce the onslaught of the pandemic on the society. KIIT University 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 commencing from 2020-21 and 2021-22. Besides children from indigenous families those lives were affected seriously because of Covid-19 crisis were assured with education at Kalinga Institute of Social Sciences. Also the foundation shown its commitment through supporting with its resources for the athletes of Odisha state facing challenges for preparing the Olympics during Covid-19. This act will certainly support to a great extent for the family members psychologically and reduce the burden on their children's education.

KIIT University and KISS Foundation so far 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 are working 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 KIIT/KISS Family.

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

KISS is working closely with the American Embassy in repatriation of American and Indian American personnel who have been 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**

KIIT and KISS is working 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.



SCOPING STUDY ON SOCIO-ECONOMIC IMPACT OF COVID 19 ON MIGRANT LABOURERS

With the rapid development of economy and urbanization, India made tremendous gain in reducing poverty, improving livelihood access and in field of social protection. Meanwhile, COVID – 19 caused unprecedented health and development crisis, devastating global economy. It, in fact impacted India's 1.3 billion population too. To prevent its spread more and more countries started to restrict or prohibit various activities. India too enforced lockdown protocols severely impacting livelihood of vulnerable and marginalized groups.

KISS in collaboration with UNDP India has carried out a scoping study on migrant labourers. The specific objective of the study was to analyse the socio-economic situation of the migrant workers after lockdown with reference to livelihoods of the migrant community. The survey was carried out in three phases. Outcome of the survey will help understand the potential range of impact on the livelihood of daily wagers and the likely solutions to overcome the impact. Five migration prone districts of Western and Southern Odisha were covered in the study.

STRENGTHENING DRM CAPACITY UNDER COVID 19 PANDEMIC IN CYCLONE/FLOOD PRONE AREA

KISS in collaboration with Resilience Innovation Knowledge Academy(RIKA) is implementing a project "Strengthening DRM Capacity under Covid-19 pandemic in cyclone/flood prone area" in the disaster-prone districts of Odisha. This project is supported by Japan International Cooperation Agency(JICA). The project focuses on better integration of aspects of biological hazards into existing planning and decision-making mechanisms for Disaster Risk Management (DRM) at the local level in the state of Odisha.

It envisages to support such an integration with enhanced preparedness and capacity of local government and local communities for playing the critical roles and functions leading to better management of complex risks of natural and biological hazards. For fulfilling this aim, the study has the following key objectives:



ENGAGE AND TRAIN TRIBAL YOUTH VOLUNTEERS & CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS TO CREATE AWARENESS ON COVID 19

The pandemic has also led to people deal with myriad emotions all at the same time – there is anxiety, there is fear, there is apprehension, there is grief, there is confusion, there is chaos, there is anger and there is hope – that we will ‘build back better’ – especially cater to the concerns of those ‘at the margin’. In spite of the lockdowns and social distancing measures being adopted, there is a surge in the number of cases and fatalities in an upward trend. It is also being said that India is going in a geometric linear way and there will be a peak in the number of cases and fatalities in the coming few months.

In such circumstances, it is thereby important that people ‘at the margins’ who do not have access to proper information are made aware of the situation and simultaneously, their capacities built towards resilience and recovery. KISS in collaboration with US Consulate General, Hyderabad is implementing a project “Engage and train tribal youth volunteers & Civil Society Organisations to create awareness on Covid-19.

The broad objectives of the project are –

- Build capacities of volunteers and local NGOs / civil society organizations on vital aspects of COVID-19, with a cascading effect on communities.
- Awareness generation and information dissemination using various virtual / online medium amongst the communities.

The project aims to reach out to the most vulnerable and marginalized in these areas with all relevant and important information about the pandemic and the steps being undertaken by the Government to address the issue and move a step ahead towards embracing the goal of SDGs i.e., ‘Leaving no one Behind’. It also aims to use the medium of mass media and other online social networking sites to support the communities and community led organizations in building their capacities towards building resilience and onwards towards the path of resilience.



LOOKING FORWARD

Dr. Achyuta Samanta, the founder of KIIT and KISS gave his three months' salary as an MP to Chief Ministers Relief Fund and has been helping both financially and institutional support along with manpower for this fight against pandemic. He writes inspirational blogs every day to drive home the point of Compassion. He has been engaged building and boosting confidence of our frontline workers in COVID Hospitals besides other healthcare workers who are regularly working beyond duty hours for attending patients with other diseases. He himself physically has overseen the facilities and endeavours for the patients and vulnerable indigenous communities. Through popular magazine and media channels, he is facilitating awareness, spreading positive stories and reaching out to the unreached. The endeavour includes he is becoming himself a frontline worker.

As a compassionate touch, Dr. Achyuta Samanta has also provided his 2 years MP LAD fund for developing health infrastructure and facilitating Covid-19 response initiatives in his parliamentary constituency of Kandhamal which is primarily dwelled by marginalized communities.

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 are on the same boat and all of us are 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. Dr. Samanta's philosophy of "Art of Giving" would certainly be a game-changer and cushion for the needy and affected populace.

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