

Attitude of Parents towards Innovative Practices of Kalinga Institute of Social Sciences (KISS)

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Abstract

Within few years after its inception in 1993, Kalinga Institute of Social Sciences (KISS) became ‘a home away from home’ for the BPL students belonging to tribal communities in Odisha and nearby states. The unique functioning and innovative practices of this institution is globally appreciated. Now the Kalinga Institute of Social Sciences is the largest institution in the world exclusively meant for tribal education. The present study evaluates its functioning by measuring the attitude among parents of students pursuing education at KISS, Bhubaneswar campus towards the innovative practices adopted by KISS for attaining the holistic development of students belonging to tribal communities. A survey among parents (N =180) was conducted by using a self-made attitude scale. The results indicate a highly favourable attitude of parents towards the innovative practices of KISS.

Key Words: Attitude, Innovative Practices, Kalinga Institute of Social Sciences

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I. PRELUDE

One of the fundamental disgraces to mankind is the disparities existing in socio-economic realms among people. These disparities are discernable in various levels - inter individual, inter family, and inter community levels. Among these the most irrevocable one is the disparities among communities. The most beleaguered communities in India are that of tribes. The tribal populace consists 8.6% of the total population in India with its largest number in Madhya Pradesh (153.17 lakhs) followed by Maharashtra (105.1 lakhs) and Odisha with 95.91 lakhs (Census of India, 2011). For ages the tribal people were undergoing unscrupulous exploitation by other communities in the name of caste system or land acquisition for large projects and so on. Even the developmental programmes of governments after independence of the nation could not emancipate these poor masses. The socio-economic conditions of tribal communities still remain at the bottom rung or became even more pathetic as a result of alienation of habitat, culture, and language. Mainstreaming of tribes through many ways intentionally or unintentionally meant for making them ‘modern’ which resulted in the cultural collapse of these communities. Such developmental models did not consider the indigenous culture followed by tribals for centuries. Bhattacharya et al. (2021) posited that the new developmental approach adopted and implemented in India even after the colonial period did not help the tribal people except for a minority. The development policies and schemes resulted in cultural deterioration and pathetic socioeconomic state of tribal population in actuality. Rafeeq and Rajasekaran (2021) noticed that the present living conditions of tribal population is pitiable in spite of the largely sponsored governmental schemes and programmes for their development. They couldn’t enjoy the advantages brought about by modern science and technology (Daripa, 2017).

Today, the tribal category people experience disparities in different forms. The lack of awareness and education is the basic reason for such inequalities. Ignorance leads to exploitation. The tribal literacy rate in India is low (59.00%) as against the 74.04% of the national average. The gap between state average literacy rate and the literacy rate of tribal population is high in Tamil Nadu (25.8) followed by Odisha (20.7) and Madhya Pradesh (18.7) while the national average being 14.0 (Census of India, 2011). These statistics highlight the low level of literacy among tribal groups of India. Students from tribal categories, because of their social backwardness attain significantly lower academic outcomes than the students of non-tribal categories (Das, 2021). Thus there is an association between deprivation of amenities and low educational status; both together deteriorate the well-being of tribal people. Hence the only panacea for this worst condition seems to be educating the tribal people, taking care for their cultural backdrop. There are many barriers in extending education among tribal children. The remoteness of tribal inhabited villages, impoverishment, unfavourable

attitude of people regarding schooling, and lack of infrastructure and educational facilities make the tribal schooling highly challenging. In this context, the contributions of Kalinga Institute of Social Sciences (KISS) becomes relevant and appreciable.

II. KALINGA INSTITUTE OF SOCIAL SCIENCES (KISS)

Kalinga Institute of Social Sciences (KISS) is the brainchild of Prof. Achyuta Samanta, an Indian educationist and philanthropist who realized the need of a paradigm shift in the educative process of tribal children followed in India. This institution was established in 1992 with an aim “to break the vicious cycle of poverty and social isolation and to restore hope for a better future.” It focuses on inclusive education, women empowerment, tribal upliftment and sustainable development. Now “KISS is a home for 60,000 indigenous children who get free education, healthcare, home and board, vocational and sports empowerment from kindergarten to post graduation and doctorate levels, free of cost” (“AchyutaSamanta,” 2021). The innovations of KISS include :

1. **Mother Tongue Based Multilingual Education:** Mother Tongue Based Multilingual Education (MTBMLE) is a well-planned strategy to address language deficiencies at initial learning of tribal children. The MTBMLE programme is incorporated within the formal education schooling in KISS, in collaboration with Bernard van Leer Foundation since 2013.
2. **English Access Micro-scholarship Program:** The English Access Micro-Scholarship Program is an enterprise of the U.S. Department of State, to impart English-language learning experiences to bright but non-elite children of 13 to 20 years.
3. **Handicrafts:** KISS introduced handicraft technical training as a part of HRD scheme in partnership with the Ministry of Textiles, Government of India.
4. **Employability Training Program:** KISS has been facilitating TCS’s Employability Training Program at KISS campus.
5. **Life Skills Based Sexual & Reproductive Health (SRH) Education:** Since 2009, with the backing of United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), KISS extends Life Skills Education based Adolescent Reproductive Sexual Health education in order to empower adolescents to face the challenges in life successfully.
6. **International Internship & Voluntary Program (IIVP):** This programme is meant for education and research of international students at KISS under IIVP.
7. **Mission Uday:** Mission Uday is a joint venture of REC Foundation of Rural Electrification Corporation Limited, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the Government of Odisha and the KISS to inculcate leadership and social entrepreneurship skills among youngsters.

Several studies conducted on KISS highlights its significance in the tribal educational scenario; what the government couldn’t do, KISS does. The schooling at KISS could enhance the socio-economic and psychological status of female students of tribal communities (Ahya, 2020), the method of MTBMLE addresses the “language gaps” of novice learners so that further education can be more manageable for the tribal students (Nair & Neel, 2021), and KISS provides holistic education through various programmes (Samal, 2020). According to Bhatt (2019), the English Access Micro Scholarship Program helps in enhancing skills and confidence among the tribal students to a great extent. Thus the functioning of KISS is unique as Bhullar and Maan (2020) noted: “The unique experimentation of KISS is really a model for the government to invest in a productive manner for the liberation of weaker sections of the society.”

III. RATIONALE OF THE STUDY

Present day tribal schooling is looking for equalizing tribal communities to other communities by imposing modern education neglecting their cultural footprints. But it results in severe dropout and stagnation of tribal children from formal education. The impoverished home environment and lack of facilities usually compel the young girls and boys to engage in various jobs for livelihood. Hence education becomes inaccessible to these communities.

Kalinga Institute of Social Sciences is a movement that recognizes the need to ensure comprehensive and holistic education to the underprivileged in order to eradicate poverty among these exploited and oppressed masses. KISS has taken on the Herculean task of providing free education to tribal children from first standard to research degree level in the midst of several barriers such as remoteness of habitat, poverty laden households, and ignorance of people about the significance of education in bringing out changes in their living conditions. In addition to providing regular education, KISS has developed and implemented various innovative practices that help to enhance the language skills and creativity of tribal children without compromising their indigenous cultural characteristics. Through the innovative projects, KISS aims at the holistic development and empowerment of tribal people. The chief beneficiaries of KISS are the people from the tribal communities in Odisha. The prominent place of KISS in tribal education is evident from numerous studies conducted on its

various aspects. However, it will be more impressive if the attitude of the parents is revealed about the benefits percolated to their children from the schooling at KISS. Hence a study was made in this regard.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The study examines the attitude of parents of students undergoing schooling at KISS towards its innovations and is entitled as, “Attitude of Parents towards Innovative Practices of Kalinga Institute of Social Sciences (KISS).”

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To study the attitude of parents towards innovative practices of KISS
2. To compare the attitude of parents towards innovative practices of KISS based on gender (male and female)
3. To compare the attitude of parents towards innovative practices of KISS based on the study level of their children (primary, secondary, and tertiary)

HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY

1. The attitude of parents towards innovative practices of KISS will be favourable.
2. There will be a significant difference in the attitude of parents towards innovative practices of KISS based on gender.
3. There will be a significant difference in the attitude of parents towards innovative practices of KISS based on children’s study level.

IV. METHODOLOGY

Survey design was adopted to realize the objectives of the study. Parents (N = 180) of learners belonging to KISS campus, Bhubaneswar were administered an attitude scale comprising of 30 statements to reflect their attitude towards innovations in KISS. The attitude scale was of Likert type five-point scale with equal numbers of favourable and unfavourable statements. Through a random selection parents of students studying at primary level (classes 1 to 8), secondary level (classes 9 to 12), and tertiary level (undergraduate and postgraduate classes) were chosen for this survey. The data obtained were analyzed by employing descriptive as well as inferential statistics such as mean, standard deviation, independent sample t-test, and ANOVA.

V. DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

1. Attitude of Parents towards Innovative Practices of KISS

The instrument employed for quantifying the attitude of parents towards innovative practices of KISS consisted of 30 statements. The scoring was done in accordance with the Likert’s procedure. The descriptive analysis of data indicates that the parents of children studying at KISS campus hold a highly favourable attitude towards innovative practices of KISS as the mean score (M = 115.35; SD = 13.90) is well above 90, the middle score of the scale (30×3). It is also obvious from the negative skewness (-0.249) of the distribution; the scores tend to cluster at the high end of the scale. Among the respondents, 170 (94.44%) parents obtained scores above the middle score.

2. Comparison of Attitude of Parents Based on Gender

Independent sample t-test was performed to equate the attitude towards innovative practices of KISS male parents and that of female parents; the details are shown in table 1.

Table 1

Result of the Independent Sample t-Test for Comparing the Attitude of Parents towards Innovative Practices of KISS Based on Gender

Category	N	M	SD	t
Female	108	117.63	12.55	2.74
Male	72	111.93	15.16	(p = .0033)

Table 1 shows that there is considerable difference (significant at .01 level) between attitude towards innovative practices of KISS of female parents and that of male parents, $t = 2.74$, $p = .0033$; though both female parents and male parents possess favourable attitude, female parents (M = 117.63, SD = 12.55) show high degree of favorableness towards innovative practices of KISS than that of male parents (M = 111.93, SD = 15.16).

3. Comparison of Attitude of Parents Based on Study Level of Children

In order to compare the attitude of parents towards innovative practices of KISS based on the study level of their children the scores obtained by parents of students belonging to primary level (N= 65), secondary level (N= 62), and tertiary level (N=53) for the attitude scale were subjected to analysis of variance (ANOVA). The details are shown in table 2.

Table 2

Summary of ANOVA for the Attitude Scores of Parents towards Innovative Practices of KISS Based on Study Level of Children

Source of Variance	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F Ratio
Between Groups	197.4296	2	98.7147	0.5078
Within Groups	34409.52	177	194.4041	(p = .6027)
Total	34606.95	179		

Table 2 reveals that the F ratio obtained from ANOVA for the attitude scores of three groups of parents (categorized based on study level of children) is 0.5078 and it does not reach 3.047, the F critical value for .05 level of significance; therefore the differences in means compared are negligible (p = .6027). Thus it may be supposed that the attitude of parents towards innovative practices of KISS does not differ considerably with respect to the study level of their children. Parents of children studying at primary, secondary, and tertiary levels hold comparable levels of favourable attitude towards the innovative practices of KISS.

VI. CONCLUSION

The findings of the study realize that the parents of students of all levels (primary, secondary, and tertiary) studying at KISS possess highly favourable attitude towards innovative practices adopted and implemented at KISS. Female parents show more favorableness towards innovations of KISS when compared to male parents. It is appreciable to see that the women folk especially from tribal communities show interest in the schooling of their children. The highly positive attitude of the respondents is indicative of their acceptance of the functioning of KISS. The wholehearted support extended by the parents of KISS students points to the success and accomplishment of KISS in the tribal educational and socio-cultural milieu. The findings of the present study are confirming the reports of various previous researches (Nair & Neel, 2021; Samal, 2020; Bhullar & Maan, 2020; Chadarava, 2019; Bhatt, 2019; Samanta et al., 2017; Kanti, 2015).

SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The study was an effort to assess the attitude parents of KISS students regarding innovations of KISS and it provides a feedback of parents about the same. The result of the study will be supportive for the continuation of the activities adopted by KISS in a befitting manner; it will be helpful in multiplying the confidence of the leaders of the institution. The findings of the study are encouraging to the faculty members of KISS.

The delimitations of the study are listed below:

1. Only one aspect of the KISS that is its innovations were studied in this attempt.
2. The attitude measuring tool was sent to the respondents through their children. Only 60% of the filled up scales could be collected back because of various reasons; hence the number of the sample had to be limited to 180.

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