

## **An appeal to IUAES to sever ties with the giant Factory School, KISS**

We, Adivasi leaders, academics, activists and all those concerned about adivasi peoples' rights and their futures, call on the IUAES, (International Union of Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences), IAA (Indian Anthropological Association) and the World Council of Anthropologists, to change the venue and sever ties with the giant Factory School, Kalinga Institute of Social Sciences (KISS), Bhubaneswar, Odisha, India to stop it from hosting the 2023 World Congress of Anthropology (WCA).

KISS is a residential factory school exclusively for adivasi children based in Odisha state's capital city Bhubaneswar. At present it houses 30,000 odd girls and boys from different adivasi communities from Odisha, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, Mizoram, Assam, etc. It pompously claims to be the largest residential school for adivasi children in the world and its own institution as the largest anthropological laboratory for indigenous people.

Schools like KISS disinherit adivasi children from their histories and describe adivasi ways of life as 'backward' and 'primitive'. Referring to a tribal community in Odisha, Mr. Achyuta Samanta (founder of KISS) has said, "*..... they fill up their stomachs only with the forest products and cover their bodies with the leaves of the plants. There are 13 primitive tribes in Orissa. They live, they sleep, on the branches of the tree like monkeys*". Schools built on this colonial and racist foundation are stripping adivasi children of their identities, spirituality and connection to their ecologies.

The education model of KISS makes adivasi children ashamed of their parents and elders in the community, since children are not allowed to maintain contact or meet with their parents or go to their villages often. Thereby, alienating them from their cultural roots and making them unwilling or unable to return to work in the rural economy of their home villages. There is a large emphasis for children to speak and read in Odia as compared to their mother tongues. The school does not allow children to celebrate adivasi festivals and rather indoctrinates them to celebrate mainstream Hindu festivals like Sarawati Puja, Ganesh Puja and Vishwakarma Puja. The Christian children have also been forbidden from conducting prayer sessions in their hostels. Sometimes these children sneak outside the campus to attend prayer sessions in nearby homes. One ex-student of KISS, while describing his experiences there, shared that, "*KISS is delinking adivasi children from their spiritual identities and our connections to land, forests and spirits. We don't engage in idol worship, but at KISS we are forced into it since childhood.*"

Smaller children enrolled in grades 1 to 4 suffer from huge mental trauma after being separated from their parents and community members as a result of which they often fall sick, compounding their everyday sense of alienation. One thing which most children undergo is the forcible cutting of their hair for admission into ashramshalas (Government run boarding schools) and schools like KISS. During interactions with some children from KISS, they expressed their discomfort about cutting their hair short. The children at KISS wear traditional attire only for school functions or to welcome guests, when their adivasi identity is displayed like an exhibit in a museum because the school sees adivasi identity itself as a symbol of their backwardness. We find this dehumanising and we demand that this practice be stopped.

We strongly believe that every Adivasi child should grow up to be proud of her or his identity and be strong in the knowledge and values of their people. Factory schools like KISS, by design, stop children from learning from their elders or participating in their festivals and rituals, which has led to the breakdown in passing on of the ecological knowledge, skills and worldviews.

KISS has been taking funding from mining and extractive industrial corporations like Adani and Nalco and partnering with Vedanta to name a few, to run its model. Besides these, as found on their website and annual reports, KISS has signed MoUs with dubious industrial houses like National Mineral Development Corporation (NMDC), EMAMI and RECL (Rural Electrification Corporation Limited). It has recently opened Adani-KISS factory school in Mayurbhanj, Odisha. It is an established fact that mining and extractive industries have been historically oppressing and exploiting adivasi communities by illegally grabbing their habitats for profiteering. When KISS partners with such companies it enables an atmosphere of learning that teaches adivasi children to support the mining and industrial economy that feeds off their lives and lands. Such partnering teaches Adivasi children to support the mining and industrial economy that feeds off the lives and lands of their own communities. In the words of Dongria Kondh elder Dodhi Pusika, *“Children are being taught in these schools to get them to sell our land and mountain ... they will become useless and become brokers for mining companies ... We don't agree to that.”*

By stripping Adivasi children of their identities, spirituality and ecological knowledge, such schools are giant machines for indoctrination, assimilation and the destruction of cultural diversity. During the twentieth century, state policies for indigenous peoples were formulated looking at these destructive models in countries as diverse as Canada, Australia, Russia and Norway. In every one of these countries, these schools have been a catastrophic failure, leaving behind a trail of abuse, scandals, commissions of enquiry and sometimes even compensation claims. KISS is repeating these outdated, discredited policies – and scandals – on a massive, industrial scale.

Schools built on this colonial and racist foundation, with support from giant mineral extraction corporations, are contrary in every way to the spirit, ethics and mission of modern anthropology. We believe that anthropologists around the world should and would boycott KISS which would otherwise give further legitimacy to their model. We strongly believe that anthropologists should not dignify an institution like KISS that treats adivasi children as lab rats.

We therefore appeal to the President of IUAES, Mr Junji Koizumi, Vice-Chancellor of Utkal University Prof Soumendra Mohan Patnaik and Vice-Chancellor of Sambalpur University Prof. Deepak Kumar Behera to initiate proceedings to change the venue of the WCA and to sever their ties with this Factory School.

We call on the IUAES and the Universities of Sambalpur and Utkal, Odisha to hear our appeal and respect our views.

## List of Petitioners

SI No	Name	Assosiation
1	Prof Virginius Xaxa	Professor of Sociology, Visiting Faculty at the Institute of Human Development, Delhi
2	Gladson Dungung	Adivasi Hunkar, Jharkhand
3	Nicholas Barla	CBCI, New Delhi
4	Soni Sori	Human Rights and Political Activist, Dantewada
5	Lalsu Soma Nogoti	Advocate and Cultural Activist, Gadchiroli, Maharashtra
6	Ruby Hembrom	Adivaani Publications, Jharkhand
7	Chhotubhai Vasava	MLA, Jhagadia Constituency, Gujarat
8	Santoshi Madkam	Journalist, Newdelhi
9	Deme Oraon	Environment Defender and member of MMPN, Sundargarh
10	Pranab Doley	Jeepal Krisak Sramik Sangha, Kaziranga, Assam
11	Zutsiitho Nyuthe	Cultural Activist, Nagaland
12	Purna Jani	Environment Defender, KJSS, Koraput, Odisha
13	Arengzula Jamir	Sisterhood Network, Nagaland
14	Jarjum Ete	Political Activist, Arunachal Pradesh
15	Chandresh Meravi	Cultural Activist, Adivasi Resurgence, Hyderabad
16	Jacinta Kerketta	Poet and Cultural Activist, Jharkhand
17	Padma Rigzin	Freelance Journalist, Ladakh
18	Joseph Bara	Historian, Ranchi
19	Anubhav Sori	Cultural Activist, Sarva Adivasi Samaj, Bastar
20	Shravan Kabakka	Member of Tudumdebba, Warangal, Telangana
21	Soneshwar Narah	Jeepal Krisak Sramik Sangha, Kaziranga, Assam
22	Putul Narah	Jeepal Krisak Sramik Sangha, Kaziranga, Assam
23	Bikash Pegu	Jeepal Krisak Sramik Sangha, Kaziranga, Assam
24	Mercy Pegu	Jeepal Krisak Sramik Sangha, Kaziranga, Assam
25	Evanjelina Kullu	Accessory Designer, NIFT Mumbai

26	Dasi Nandibali	Environment Defender, KJSS, Koraput, Odisha
27	Arjun Khila	Environment Defender, KJSS, Koraput, Odisha
28	Bhagban Golori	Environment Defender, KJSS, Koraput, Odisha
29	Debe Vetti	RITES Forum, ,Malkangiri, Odisha
30	Venkatesh Jatavati	Member of Jana Vikas NGO, Chintur, Andhra Pradesh
31	Mangal Kunjam	Freelance Journalist & Human Rights Activist, Dantewada
32	Manasa Kambanna	Journalist and farmer, Bangalore
33	Hemant Dalapati	Poet and Cultural Activist, Bolangir, Odisha
34	Krushna Kulesika	Adivasi Farmer, Rangmatipodar, Koraput
35	Aashish Khakha	PHD, TISS, Mumbai
36	Richard Kamei	PHD, TISS, Mumbai
37	Reshmi Ekka	Angna, NGO, Chhattisgarh
38	Ashish Birulee	Founding member, Adivasi Lives Matter & Photo Journalist
39	Meiashan Ryntathing	Interior Architect & Designer
40	Mamta Kujur	Jashpur Jan Vikas Sanstha, Jashpur, Chhattisgarh
41	Felix Padel	Writer and Peace Activist, Wales, UK
42	Malvika Gupta	PHD candidate, Cambridge University, UK
43	Pallavi Verma Patil	Professor of Education, Axim Premji University, Bengaluru
44	Vivek Sundra	Human Rights Activist, New Delhi
45	Sudhir Patnaik	Senior Journalist
46	Prafulla Samantara	Convenor, Lok Shakti Abhiyan, Odisha
47	Debaranjan	Documentary Filmmaker and Political Activist, Odisha
48	Lenin Kumar	Editor, Janabadi, Odisha
49	Lingaraj Azad	Advisor & Activist, Niyamgri Surakhya Samiti
50	Bhalachandra Sadangi	State Secretary, CPI ML (ND), Odisha
51	Bijaya Bohidar	Rtd professor of Political Science and Writer, Odisha
52	Charles Varghese	Professor of Sociology, Madhya Pradesh

53	Shiv Visvanathan	Prof of Law, Author & Columnist
54	Ashish Kothari	Writer and member of Kalpavriksh, Maharashtra
55	Aniket Aga	Professor, Ashoka University, Haryana
56	Sandeep Patnaik	Researcher, Bhubaneswar, Odisha
57	Meera Sanghamitra	Political Activist and member of NAPM, Telangana
58	Malini Subramaniam	Freelance Journalist, Bastar, Chhattisgarh
59	Achyut Das	Aragamee NGO, Rayagada, Odisha
60	Ankush Vengurlekar	Founder Member of Adivasi Lives Matter, India
61	Debjeeet Sadangi	Rayagada, Odisha
62	Eleonora Fanari	Activist & Researcher, Forest Rights Act
63	Subrat Kumar Sahu	Independent Filmmaker, New Delhi
64	Mamata Sahu	Political Activist and Feminist, New Delhi
65	Maheen Mirza	Filmmaker and Feminist, Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh
66	Pradyumna Behera	Hyderabad Central University, Telangana
67	Madhumita Ray	Academic Researcher (Anthropology)
68	Chandra Bhanu Pattnaik	Director, Institute of Knowledge Societies, Odisha
69	Meenal Tatpati	Researcher at Kalpavriksh, Pune, Maharashtra
70	Shruti Ajit	Researcher at Kalpavriksh, Pune, Maharashtra
71	Mathew Schutzer	Researcher, Harvard University, USA
72	Manan Ganguly	People First Collective, West Bengal
73	Ashfaq Mohammed	Cultural Activist, Rajasthan
74	Vikas Dubey	PHD, HSS, IIT Kanpur
75	K Edward	Activist, Ranchi, Jharkhand
76	Gee Imaan Semmalar	Kent Law School, UK
77	Souvik Lal Chakraborty	PHD, Monash University, Australia
78	Pritu Vatsa	Alternative education practitioner
79	Reena Mahesh Kolekar	Education Consultant, Bangalore
80	Ashik Krishnan	Educator, Sahyatri Foundation

81	YV Pratap	Student of Developmet Praticce, APU University
82	Chatura Rao	Faculty, Shristi Institute of Design, Art & Technology
83	Ruchira Das	Arts Entreprenuer
84	Kamayani Bali Mahabal	Convenor, Jan Swasthya Abhiyan, Mumbai
85	IndiraVijaysimha	Retd Prof of Education, Founder of PLC
86	Darshini Jenifer	Educator
87	Sukanya Nair	Student of Public Policy , Jindal Univeristy, Haryana
88	Misria Ali	PHD candidate, Dept of STS, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute
89	Brototi Roy	PHD candidate, Sustainability studies, Spain
90	Bidyut Mohanty	Founding member of SPREAD, Koraput
91	Sarika Chaudhary	Secretary, Democratic students Federation, JNU
92	Saket Moon	Vice-President, JNUSU
93	Rajaraman Sundaresan	Student of Indigenous education
94	Sharanya Nayak	Cultural activist and Farmer, Rangamati Podar
95	Ragini Lalit	Community educator, Indigenous children, Muskaan
96	Dhruva Desai	Educator, Marudham foundation
97	Krunal	Nai Talim Samiti, Sevagram
98	Xavier Dias	Khaan, Khanij aur Adhikar, Jharkhand
99	Nandini Sundar	Professor of Sociology, Delhi University
100	Leena Pujari	Professor of Sociology, K C College, Mumbai
101	Ramdas Bhaskaran	Vidyodaya, Gudalur, TN
102	Shivani Taneja	Muskaan, Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh
103	Jyotsna Penumarti	Enviroment studies student
104	Anuj Kumar	Banker
105	Anajali Joy	Architect
106	Harshwardhan	Weaver, Ecoversities Alliance and Graphic designer
107	Ashima	Practitioner, Theatre of the opressed

108	Sulagna	Waste warrior
109	Ashutosh Kumar	Fellow in Action research, CDP, Ambedkar University
110	Pronoy Saha	MA Performance studies , Ambedkar University
111	Prakash kumar Sahoo	Development sector professional, former PMRDF
112	Piyush Kumar	Social Impact consultant, Piramal Foundation
113	Bhavya Chitranshi	PHD Candidate, Western Sydney University, Australia
114	Neha	MA Performance studies , Ambedkar University
115	Geethanandan	Convenor, Adivasi-Dalit-Sthree Pouravakasha Samithi, Kerala
116	Lydia	M.Phil, Researcher, University Of Hyderabad
117	Shirley MJ	Kanavu, Kerala
118	Srimanta Mohanty	Political Activist, Odisha
119	Narendra Mohanty	Political Activist and Human rights defender, Kandhamal
120	Vidya Das	Aragamee NGO, Rayagada, Odisha