

Empowering Tribal Communities through Science and Technology Innovation: A Three-Day Training Program under the KISS STI Hub

Project Title: *KISS Science and Technology Innovation (STI) Hub for Tribals*

Funded by: Department of Science and Technology (DST), Government of India

Venue: Nayakote Panchayat, Banspal Block, Keonjhar District, Odisha

Date: October 23–25, 2025

The *KISS Science and Technology Innovation (STI) Hub for Tribals*, supported by the Department of Science and Technology (DST), Government of India, organized a three-day awareness and training program at Nayakote Panchayat, Banspal Block, Keonjhar District, from 23rd to 25th October 2025. The program aimed to foster innovation, entrepreneurship, and sustainable livelihood opportunities among tribal communities by integrating indigenous knowledge with modern scientific approaches.

The *KISS STI Hub for Tribals* is an initiative designed to empower tribal communities through the promotion of science, technology, and innovation-driven livelihoods. Recognizing the rich indigenous knowledge systems inherent in tribal societies, the project seeks to bridge traditional wisdom with contemporary scientific applications to achieve holistic and sustainable socio-economic development.

In line with these objectives, a three-day field-based training and awareness program was organized to sensitize and equip tribal beneficiaries with practical knowledge in **vermicomposting, compost technology, and value-added product development from tubers, cassava, and millets**.

Program overview:

A total of **58 beneficiaries** participated in the program, representing various self-help groups, local farmers, and youth from nearby tribal villages. The sessions combined **theoretical instruction, practical demonstrations, and interactive discussions** facilitated by experts from the KISS STI Hub team.

Day-Wise Highlights

Day 1 – Orientation, Field Visits, and Networking (October 23, 2025)

The program commenced with an introductory session on the objectives and activities of the *KISS STI Hub for Tribals*. Participants were oriented to the vision of the project - enhancing community-based innovation and entrepreneurship.

Field visits were organized to assess local resources and traditional practices in agriculture and livelihood generation. Networking sessions encouraged dialogue among participants, experts, and community leaders, creating a collaborative learning environment.

Day 2 – Vermicompost Technology and Start-Up Awareness (October 24, 2025)

The second day emphasized **vermicompost and compost technology**, focusing on organic waste management and eco-friendly farming practices. Participants gained hands-on experience in preparing vermicompost using locally available materials.

Sessions on **start-up culture** and **micro-enterprise development** introduced participants to basic entrepreneurial concepts, including business planning, market linkage, and value chain enhancement. The discussions aimed to inspire local youth and farmers to initiate small-scale, sustainable enterprises.

Day 3 – Value-Added Products from Cassava and Nutritional Awareness (October 25, 2025)

The concluding day centered on **value-added product development from cassava and other tuber crops**. Experts demonstrated various processing and preservation techniques and elaborated on the nutritional significance of these crops. The session highlighted opportunities for creating **market-ready products** from indigenous food sources, thereby enhancing livelihood potential and nutritional security.

Outcomes and Impact:

- **Total Participants:** 58 tribal beneficiaries
- **Core Focus Areas:** Vermicomposting, Compost Technology, Value-Added Product Development, and Entrepreneurship
- **Key Impact:**
 - Improved awareness of sustainable agricultural practices and organic waste management
 - Enhanced understanding of innovation-driven livelihood models
 - Motivation among participants to establish micro-enterprises and contribute to community-based economic growth

The program effectively strengthened the link between **scientific knowledge and local practices**, reinforcing the role of innovation in achieving self-reliant and sustainable tribal livelihoods.

Conclusion:

The *KISS STI Hub for Tribals* training program at Nayakote Panchayat demonstrated how grassroots innovation, when supported by science and technology, can catalyze meaningful socio-economic transformation. By empowering tribal communities with practical skills and entrepreneurial insights, the initiative contributes to building resilient, self-sustaining rural economies aligned with the goals of inclusive national development.

Acknowledgments:

The training program was successfully implemented under the guidance of the **Project–KISS STI Hub Team**:

- **Dr. Rashmi Mohapatra**, Project Principal Investigator (PI)
- **Dr. Snighdharani Panda**, Project Co-Principal Investigator (Co-PI)
- **Dr. Umesh Chandra Dash**, Project Coordinator
- **Jay Prasad Jena**, Project Associate I
- **Soumya Ranjan Mohanty**, Project Associate II
- **Tattwadharshee Mohapatra**, Lab Assistant

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Glimpses of the Event



