STATEMENT OF HON’BLE CHIEF MINISTER IN THE ASSEMBLY ON
DT.13.03.2020 ON CORONA

Very few times in the history of the world have human beings as a race faced challenges beyond their comprehension.
With advances in science, this phenomenon has become a rarity.
However, the last 45 days has seen human beings as a race facing one of the biggest challenges of the century.
We are faced with a threat that does not discriminate between developed countries and under developed countries between democratic or Non-democratic countries. Rich and Poor societies all are equally vulnerable.

UK’s Health Minister, the first family of Canada, Senators in the US, Half of Iran’s Cabinet, major Movie stars, Sports persons – the virus has not spared any one.
This extra ordinary circumstance calls for an extra ordinary response. This response cannot be only at the individual, Government or Sectoral level. Each one of us in Odisha has to rise to the occasion, and be responsible. In the absence of any Vaccine or treatment ..... our collective responsibility is the only hope we have, to fight this epidemic.

The World Health Organisation has declared COVID-19 as a global pandemic. It has urged upon all member States to take urgent and aggressive action to contain the spread of the pandemic.
We must remain calm but not complacent ..........
We must remain prepared, but not panic.

• The State Cabinet met this morning and declared COVID-19 as a ‘disaster’ for the State under the provisions of Disaster Management Act, 2005 to adequately empower our public officials to combat the spread of COVID-19.
• The Health & Family Welfare Department and its Directorates, as well as the Collectors and the Municipal Commissioners have been authorised for making emergency procurement of necessary drugs and consumables, equipment and other required services etc. as are necessary to prevent, contain COVID-19.
• The competent officers have been authorised to impose required restrictions on assemblies, congregations, institutions and establishments aiming at ‘social distancing’ to contain the spread of the disease by invoking powers under the Epidemic Diseases Act, 1897 and the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973.
• An Empowered Group of Ministers has been constituted and a Committee of Secretaries under the chairmanship of Chief Secretary to be constituted to evaluate the emerging situation and take all necessary steps for preventing, containing the spread of COVID-19 in the State.
• The COVID-19 Odisha Regulations, 2020 have been approved.
• An amount of Rupees two hundred Crore has been earmarked to augment the Public Health Response Fund to combat the threat of the pandemic and for making required expenditure.

The experience of China and Singapore and Italy has given us a learning on what to do and what not to do.

I must confess the entire world is on a learning curve about handling this disaster.

This is where it is very important that the four and half crore Odias join together and help us in managing the situation.

Each one of us has a responsibility to ourselves, to our families and to the communities we live in.

The only effective measure so far has been social distancing. All of us should ruthlessly practice social distancing.

• All educational institutions shall remain closed till 31.03.2020 except for holding examinations.
• Non-essential official gatherings such as seminars, workshops, conferences are to be cancelled.
• Social gatherings and assemblies like religious functions, marriage receptions, parties etc. are to be regulated by local authorities.
• Cinema Halls, swimming pools and gyms are to be closed till 31.03.2020.

Just keep interactions to the most essential levels and even in that take all precautions.

Being at home, reducing social interactions and avoiding gatherings will cut down the vulnerability to a great extent.

Another important practice is frequent hand washing and strict sanitisation protocols.

With the support of Hon’ble Members, the State will promote this on a mission mode.

Sneezing and coughing etiquette to be followed as is being widely published.

My personal appeal to you is - This is an opportunity for Odias to stop spitting Paan.
I urge the Hon’ble Members of this August House to take personal care of themselves and at the same time provide inspiring leadership in your Constituencies.

I appeal to every section of the society to behave in the most responsible manner.

Rumour mongering, mis-information and irresponsible conduct will be dealt with very sternly.

I am sure with the support of each one of you, Odisha will be able to face this situation in the best possible manner.