

FEASIBILITY STUDY REPORT ON SETTING UP A
CENTRAL TRIBAL UNIVERSITY OR ITS REGIONAL CENTRE IN
KERALA STATE

Kerala State Commission for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, Thiruvananthapuram on its notice dated 31.01.2014 cited, enquired the feasibility of setting up a Tribal University in Kerala. The Kerala State Higher Education Council wide its order No. 54/KSHEC/Cl. Mtngs/2014 dated 21.03.2014 constituted a Committee with Dr. Veeramanikandan as Convenor, Dr. Sheena Shukkur, Prof. C. I. Abdul Rahiman. The Committee was reconstituted with two more experts namely, Dr. Aby George and Sri. Jaleesh Peter to explore the possibilities of establishing Tribal University in Kerala. The Committee conducted an assessment of the feasibility of setting up a Tribal University in Kerala.

Based on the assessment, the following recommendations are submitted for perusal and further action.

1. The Petitioner is demanding for establishing a Central Tribal University in the model of the Indira Gandhi National Tribal University, Amarkantak, Madhya Pradesh at Kerala state. The petitioner further suggested some location and land availability for this purpose. He has also suggested that if Central Tribal University is not feasible in Kerala, at least a Regional Centre of Indira Gandhi National Tribal University, Amarkantak, Madhya Pradesh may be contemplated for the State.

2. The Committee studied the tribal scenario in Kerala and found that education especially the Higher Education is a distant dream for a large percentage of tribal population in the State. The Committee feels that an arrangement for imparting education to the tribal community – from **pre-primary to post doctoral level** – should be an important area of priority for the State. However, setting up a Central tribal University or a Regional Centre of the Indira Gandhi National Tribal University, Amarkantak, Madhya Pradesh may not be an appropriate measure to address the educational deficit among the tribal community members.

3. The Committee understands the following.

(i) In Kerala we have 1, 00,912 tribal families with a total population of 4, 01,401 tribal peoples*. They belong to 40 different tribal communities spread over all the 14 districts with maximum number of people in Wayanad and minimum in Alappuzha districts. Among these 26, 000 people belong to Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTG) whose social, economic and educational situation is extremely poor and deserves special attention*.

(ii) It is estimated that 72% of the tribal people are literate. An assessment of the education status of the tribal people above five years old indicates that 15% of them are only reaching up to the primary school education, 33% up to SSLC levels, only 10% pass through the SSLC exam, 5% gets pre-degree / +2 levels. It should be noted that 1.2% of the tribal population attained degree level education and only **0.7%** get a post graduate degree**. Looking at the technical education, we have only 180 students with B. Tech. degree

***,**Basic information about the Tribal Committees in Kerala, November 2011, ST Department, Govt. of Kerala.*

56 students with MBBS, 16 students with BAMS and seven students with BHMS. Given this overall status of education among the tribal communities we have to work out a new system of education to address the specific tribal educational issues. Hence the Central Tribal University or its Regional Campus with specific focus on some aspects of tribal education may not be an answer to the educational issues of the tribal peoples of Kerala.

(iii) The committee agrees with the concern of the petitioner about the issues related to education, especially higher education of the tribal population in Kerala. However, the Committee rejects the proposal that setting up a Central University or a Regional Centre as an answer to the educational backwardness of the tribal people in Kerala.

(iv) The Committee noted that the drop outs among the tribal students are a serious issue. It is found that 46% of the students enrolled at the primary level and the 36% of the students enrolled at secondary level are found to be dropped out during the course of education. Most of the tribal people are still depending on agriculture, minor forest produce collections, wage labour, etc, as their source of livelihood. Only less than 2% of the tribal people gets in to the Govt./Semi Govt. sectors for employment**.

(v) Given the fact that tribal people in Kerala are spread across the state and mostly inhabit in forests and backward areas, setting up a

,Basic information about the Tribal Committees in Kerala, November 2011, ST Department, Govt. of Kerala.*

normal University system of education may not adequately address the specific educational requirements of these communities.

4. The Committee contemplated in detail and suggests that a new and innovative educational arrangement may be explored. The Committee recommends that “an autonomous institution / knowledge centre” in the model of Kalinga Institute of Industrial Technology, Bhubaneswar, Odisha may be considered as a model for this purpose. Such a Centre should be empowered to conduct courses, training programmes, research and extension activities on all Kerala basis pertaining to all aspects of tribal life and sustainable development. This “autonomous institution / knowledge centre” should be in a position to conduct courses from school to post Doctoral levels to the tribal community students. The special emphasis should be given to vocational training.

5. If entrusted, the Committee will be able to submit a detailed project report to establish such an institution.

Signed by the Members of the Committee

Dr. N. Veeramanikandan (Convenor)

Dr. Sheena Shukkur (Member)

Prof. C. I. Abdul Rahiman (Member)

Dr. Aby George (Member)

Sri. Jaleesh Peter (Member)

Committee on establishing the Tribal University in Kerala

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