

CENTRAL UNIVERSITY OF ODISHA, KORAPUT

OFFICE OF THE PUBLIC RELATIONS

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Central University of Odisha Signs Landmark MoU with Four Central Universities to Boost Higher Education and Tribal Research

In a significant move aimed at advancing the goals of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 and promoting inclusive and multidisciplinary education, the Central University of Odisha (CUO) signed a historic Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with four Central Universities of India on Monday 25 August 2025 at the university campus in Sunabeda.

The partnering institutions include the English and Foreign Languages University (EFLU), Hyderabad; Central Tribal University of Andhra Pradesh (CTUAP), Vizianagaram; Indira Gandhi National Tribal University (IGNTU), Amarkantak; and Sammakka Sarakka Central Tribal University (SSCTU), Telangana.

The MoU aims to foster academic and research collaborations, resource sharing, faculty and student exchanges, and joint initiatives focused on tribal studies, regional development, and socio-economic transformation.

The signing ceremony was attended by Prof. N. Nagaraju, Vice-Chancellor, EFLU; Prof. Y. L. Srinivas, Vice-Chancellor, SSCTU; Prof. T. Srinivasan, Vice-Chancellor (I/c), CTUAP; Prof. Soubhagya Ranjan Padhi, Professor, IGNTU; Prof. Narasingha Charan Panda, Vice-Chancellor (I/c), CUO

Welcoming the dignitaries, Dr. Sourav Gupta, Convener of the MoU Committee and Associate Professor in Journalism and Mass Communication, highlighted that tribal studies would be the primary area of collaboration among the institutions.

Key Objectives of the MoU:

- Promote multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary learning as envisioned in NEP 2020
- Enhance collaborative research and academic partnerships
- Encourage credit transfer, faculty exchange, and joint academic projects
- Support tribal empowerment, innovation, and sustainable regional development
- Strengthen digital education, Indian knowledge systems, and entrepreneurship
- Contribute to increased Gross Enrollment Ratio (GER) and institutional capacity building

Speaking at the event, Prof. N. Nagaraju emphasized the crucial role of faculty in turning MoUs into meaningful academic action. He praised the initiative for its focus on tribal research, which he described as a "potent and promising" field.

Prof. T. Srinivasan hailed the agreement as a "momentous occasion" and noted a shift in perspective—from educating tribal communities to learning from them. Echoing similar sentiments, Prof. Y. L. Srinivas shared that SSCTU has already established a tribal centre and is undertaking a funded nine-month collaborative research project.

Prof. S. R. Padhi elaborated on the tribal populations in Amarkantak and other regions of Madhya Pradesh, underlining the scope of research opportunities the MoU presents under NEP 2020.

In his presidential address, Prof. N. C. Panda expressed gratitude to the partner universities for their commitment and participation. He revealed that the idea for the MoU stemmed from discussions during Union Education Minister Shri Dharmendra Pradhan's

visit to CUO in July 2025. Prof. Panda emphasized the potential of the MoU to drive impactful research and policy-making aimed at improving the socio-economic conditions of tribal communities.

The ceremony concluded with a vote of thanks by Dr. Rakesh Kr Lenka, Registrar (I/c), CUO. The MoU will remain in effect for five years, with provisions for renewal based on mutual consent.

Prominent CUO faculty members in attendance included Prof. Rathi Kanta Kumbhar (HOD, Economics), Dr. Kapila Khemundu (Director, CTWD & HOD, Sociology), Dr. Ramendra Kumar Parhi, (DSW), Dr. Sanjay Pradhan (HOD, Dairy Science), Dr. Manjushree Singh (HOD, Agriculture), Dr. B. K. Srinivas (HOD, Anthropology), Dr. Nirjharini Tripathy (HOD, English), Dr. Ashok Kumar Erigala (Teacher-in-Charge, Academics), Dr. Phagunath Bhoi (PRO), Dr. Anupam Dakua (OSD, VC Office) and Dr. Dr. Nupur Pattanaik, Asst. Professor, Sociology.

Dr. Phagunath Bhoi, Public Relations Officer