

an>

Title: Need to convert Gandhigram Rural University into a Central University.

SHRI M. UDHAYAKUMAR (DINDIGUL): In 1956 the Government of India experimented with Rural Institutes. Fourteen such institutes came up in all. While others fell by the way side, the one at Gandhigram was to claim status as a Deemed University in 1976. The Gandhigram Rural Institute (GRI) was founded in 1956, with undying faith and deep devotion to Mahatma Gandhi's revolutionary concept of 'Nai Talim' system of education. It attracts students from all over the country and abroad. Its courses have a rural tilt.

Today, it has become a nationally and internationally recognised Institute for its contribution to rural education, so much so that the New Education Policy of the Nation reflects the principles evolved here in developing the rural university concept. It has, at present, about 2300 students and 125 teaching and 250 non-teaching staff. The programmes offered here have attracted students from abroad every year. The Gandhi gram Rural Institute is re-accredited with 'A' Grade by the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC).

A government-appointed panel of experts which reviewed 126 deemed universities, had found only 38 to be deserving for the deemed tag and put them in category A, one among them is the Gandhi Gram Rural Institute.

I urge upon the Central Government to provide financial assistance of Rs. 200 crore to the GRI under the Union Government's Rashtriya Uchchatar Shika Abhiyan (RUSA) scheme, so that the present infrastructure may be upgraded in the coming days.

Further I request the Ministry of Human Resource and Development that the Gandhigram Rural University in Tamil Nadu should be converted into a Central University for raising the benchmark for academics and research.