

7.3.1 Institutional Distinctiveness

The Section 4 Clause (ii) and (iii) of Dravidian University Act 1997 envisages an integrated development of Dravidian languages and literatures, both written and spoken, including Tribal languages of Dravidian family. In tune with this cherished objective the academic programmes including research programmes identified Dravidian languages and literatures as the thrust areas with an emphasis on comparative perspective. With the same spirit the Departments were established and named accordingly.

The Departments, viz. Department of Comparative Dravidian Literature and Philosophy; Department of History, Archaeology and Culture; Department of Folklore and Tribal Studies; Department of Telugu Language & Translation Studies; Department of Tamil Language & Translation Studies; Department of Kannada Language & Translation Studies; Department of Malayalam Language & Translation Studies; Department of Tulu Language & Translation Studies; and Department of Dravidian and Computational Linguistics involved in focussed work and generated significant body of knowledge. The programmes are designed in such a way to incorporate the components of Translation and Comparative Studies. The academic climate of the campus is so conducive for comparative literature as the teaching staff of the University belong to various linguistic groups and cultures. This kind of situation naturally encourages cross cultural interactions. Motivated by this atmosphere, many scholars on campus involved in reading and writing with a comparative perspective and taking forward the cherished goal by keeping the following objectives:

- To make a comprehensive and comparative study of all Dravidian knowledge systems.
- To identify the common literary sensibilities and cultural ethos in various Dravidian languages and literatures.
- To focus on inter-lingual and interdisciplinary studies.
- To explore the new grounds in the Dravidian studies To unearth the pioneering contribution by the Dravidians to the Indian artistic legacies.

The Departments of Dravidian Studies take up projects on the Dravidian Tribal languages. A project on the Central Dravidian Languages sanctioned and funded by UGC under Special Assistance Programme (SAP) to the Department of Dravidian and Computational Linguistics is going on and the data has already been collected in Kolami and Naikri. The same department is surveying the endangered languages in the districts of Chittoor, Kolar and Krishnagiri.

To familiarize Tribal-lore and culture to the rest of the world, under Tribal Series the University published monographs on Myasabedas (Karnataka), Bairas (Karnataka), Medas (Karnataka), Kattunaicken (Kerala Tribes Series), Adiyar (Kerala) Irula (Kerala Tribes Series), Kanikkar (Kerala Tribes Series), Aranadan (Kerala Tribes Series), Kunubis: Marati Nayaka (Karnataka Tribes). The books like: Koraga Grammar, A Comparative Grammar of the Gondi Dialects, Descriptive Grammar of the Kui Language and Pre and Proto-Historic Andhra Pradesh upto 500 B.C. were also published.

These departments published about 2000 articles about 400 books and organised 175 seminars and workshops and produced 106 Ph.Ds. The topics range from the South Indian Saints to Contemporary Street Play. The teaching staff have got more than 60 Major and Minor Research Projects sanctioned by the funding agencies like UGC, ISSR, ICPR, DST, CIIL and CICT.