Inclusive Knowledge Based Economies-A Perspective from a Newly Created Central University in India

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In March 2009

Central University of Tamil Nadu, Thiruvarur

Established by an Act of Parliament along with 11 other new universities. Three existing universities were upgraded as Central Universities under the same act.

Context for additional Central Universities

- Push for expansion of higher education sector-National Knowledge Commission-articulates need for about 1500 universities in India.

- Extension of reservations to other backward classes/communities in Central Educational Institutions;
- Increase in seats for OBCs by ensuring that such increase will not affect the open category students;
- To serve states that hitherto did not have central universities-Tamil Nadu is one of them;
- Preferably located in non-metro, smaller districts;
- Principle of enhancing equity, access and quality education.

Central Educational Institutions in India

- There are 39 central universities in the country – 15 of them were established early this year in a major policy decision by the government – and are directly funded by the central government through the UGC. Similarly, 60 institutions of technical education are directly funded by the central government through the ministry and governed by different laws and regulations. These include 13 IITs (including 6 new IITs set up in 2008-09) and 13 IIMs (including 6 new proposed IIMs to be set up soon). On the other hand, 251 state universities are the primary responsibility of the respective state governments even though the UGC defines the regulatory framework for them and provides some funds to many of them (not all) from time to time.

Public funded higher education: Expectations.

- Significance of public funded higher education institutions lies in the fact that even though their share is barely 5 % of the total enrolment in the higher education system in the country they are expected to be centers of excellence with greater focus on research and publication.
- There is also a strong critique that the few central educational institutions are pampered at the expense of other institutions that have higher enrolment.

A green field initiative

Vice Chancellors appointed and given mandate to develop the University

Expectations

- Work towards implementation of state(in this case Tamil Nadu) commitment-land and identifying building for temporary campus;
- State stakes-high-political mileage of bringing a central university to state that has a fairly good record of higher education practices and institutions.
- Precedes dynamics of where to locate the University;
- For the VC, place and in this case tentative location of land predetermined. Promise of a building for temporary campus. Fulfilled after a few months. Land allocation in installments and last installment due;
- Pressure to symbolically launch academic programmes-flagging off the institution to match expectations and accountability,

Formal steps

- Reaching and finding the place;
- First level of contact-district administration-collector;
- Facilitation with regard to accommodation for self and start up office;
- Opening bank account for transfer of funds;
- Round table discussion with other new VCs and expert educationists, administrators;
- Reforms advisory-governance-e governance-
- Advisory on lean non teaching staff &
- Thrust for innovative programmes-Credits, Choice based credits.

Compulsion to launch?

- Only non-lab, non-equipment courses can be launched as infrastructure development takes time;
- Consultation with experts and zero in on:
- Language courses;
- Regional studies;
- Appreciation programmes-eco criticism

Phase 1

- Programmes under three sub institutional frameworks-
  - School of Social Sciences and Humanities
  - School of Basic and Applied Sciences
  - School of Mathematics and Computer Sciences &
  - Interdisciplinary centres to address societal concerns etc based on eclectic inputs from a range of disciplines and perspectives.
  - Programmes to be launched on incremental basis-with consultations with domain experts who are meeting frequently to work out the approaches and the framework of core, optional and applied courses. Part of the experts mandate is to use their network to identify faculty at various levels to seed the schools and centres if necessary on invitation basis.

Core Faculty-recruitment

- The biggest challenge is not so much-buildings etc or even funds? The task is daunting for a VC to find right/good faculty who can teach and research-twin goals. With a host of new universities, institutes of technologies, institutes of management coming up simultaneously - incentives apart-location of the University is also a variable. Unless there is appropriate housing and family support infrastructure this in fact is a variable. A few qualitative responses have come and the task is identify the leader of subject/discipline/centres team.

Programmes for Local Aspirations

- At IGNOU planning board meeting, the idea of community college programmes for job oriented/life skills programmes was mentioned. This template could form the basis for developing a few diploma and certificate programmes for employment oriented courses.
- The area is agriculture intensive along with oil exploration activities. Sea coast related activities are high. A few programmes could be in these areas.
- Petroleum related academic and training programmes for example.
- Re habitation and Relief training. A holistic centre for Disaster management.
- Retailing and service sector

Disconnect…

The Indian system of higher education has also kept itself aloof from the local knowledge base of the worker, the artisan and the peasant. It has kept itself at a distance from the real world outside. Within the system, there are distances between disciplines. Within a single campus, disciplines often grow in complete ignorance even of each other's presence.

What Yashpal committee said…

Put together, all the disciplines, breed value into each other. If forced to stay in isolation from each other they would not have the character demanded for greatness. It is our strong recommendation that the new Universities, including those we call Indian Institutes of Technology – or Management should have the character of such world-class universities. Furthermore, the existing Institutes of Technology whose competence as excellent undergraduate institutions we do recognize (also their brand name) should be challenged to play a bigger role – for example similar to that of great universities like the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) or Caltech. In addition, like these great universities of the world they should engage with a much wider universe of knowledge, both at undergraduate and post graduate levels.

We need to consider and decide

- The nature and level of programmes to be offered- Integrated with exit options is the “mantra”. Do we have another view?
- Is our approach innovative? Or should all our courses be “out of the box”
- Should we factor job oriented diploma courses?
- How can the University be a resource centre for strengthening particularly UG teaching?

Concern and mandate for universities-Science

Science research should be made the key activity of the Universities with greater emphasis on research leading to Ph.D degree without which quality teaching is not sustainable. Access to scientific research journals and related resources must be strengthened and its scope should be widened through Information and Communication Technology (ICT).

A framework for Post School Science Education- Indian National Science Academy View

Keeping these in view, it is suggested that a new 4-year B.S. programme should be introduced, at select institutions to begin with, which the +2 pass students can join.
Subsequently, the interested and competent B.S. qualified students can directly join a dual degree M.Sc., Ph.D. programme. If they wish to leave in between, they can do so with an M.Sc. degree alone. Those qualifying the 4-year B.S. or the ongoing B.Tech can move from basic science to technology and vice versa for further education, leading to M.Sc./M.Tech. and/or Ph.D.

http://www.ias.ac.in/academy/misc_docs/Four-year-BS-position-paper.pdf

Options

1) 4-year B.S. followed by Ph.D. in basic sciences, with a provision for early exit with M.Sc. degree or dual degrees after completion.
2) 4-year B.Tech. followed by Ph.D. in basic sciences.
3) 4-year B.S. followed by M.Tech./Ph.D. in professional(Technology) field.
4) 3-year B.Sc. followed by 2-year M.Sc. and then Ph.D. or 3-year B.Sc. followed by integrated M.Sc.-Ph.D.
5) 3-year B.Sc. followed by 2-year B.Tech.
6) 5-year integrated M.Sc. followed by Ph.D.
7) Vocational courses.

Mentoring Relationships?

- University of Hyderabad, JNU, Pondicherry University and MIDS have as of now formally indicated their willingness to mentor. The scope for mentoring relationships sought.
- Others if they consider-TISS, LVPEI, Indian Institute of Science, Indian statistical Institute etc.

1. MPhil/PhD guidance with course work as part of their regular teaching or directed study.
2. Modular courses/part of the course on short term but intensive engagement with the students.
3. Interaction through e learning mechanisms including net based counseling etc. Norms for compensation to such teachers to be worked out
4. MoUs. For example MIDS has expressed this as a formal mechanism.
5. Will ICTs and NKN initiative help better and efficient mentoring

Why is green development relevant for the Central University in Thiruvarur?

- LOOMING ENVIRONMENTAL CRISIS
- Climate change and rapid depletion of natural resources are urgent issues that need to be addressed TODAY
- A 550 acre campus in an ecologically rich locale demands thoughtful and environmentally sensitive development
- GREEN MAKES ECONOMIC SENSE AS WELL
- Long-term operational cost savings due to enhanced energy and water efficiency
- Reduction in construction cost by using
  - alternate or recycled, locally available eco-friendly material
  - cost efficient green building techniques
- Documented decrease in absenteeism and increase in productivity in green buildings

- **A GREEN CAMPUS IS MORE CONDUCIVE FOR LEARNING**
- Green buildings are healthier and more comfortable

- **A POWERFUL EXAMPLE FOR TAMIL NADU AND INDIA**
- Show the way for kick-starting sustainable development in Tamil Nadu and rest of India
- Ensure that the legions of students graduating from the university will be life long environmentalists

National Mission for ICTs in Education

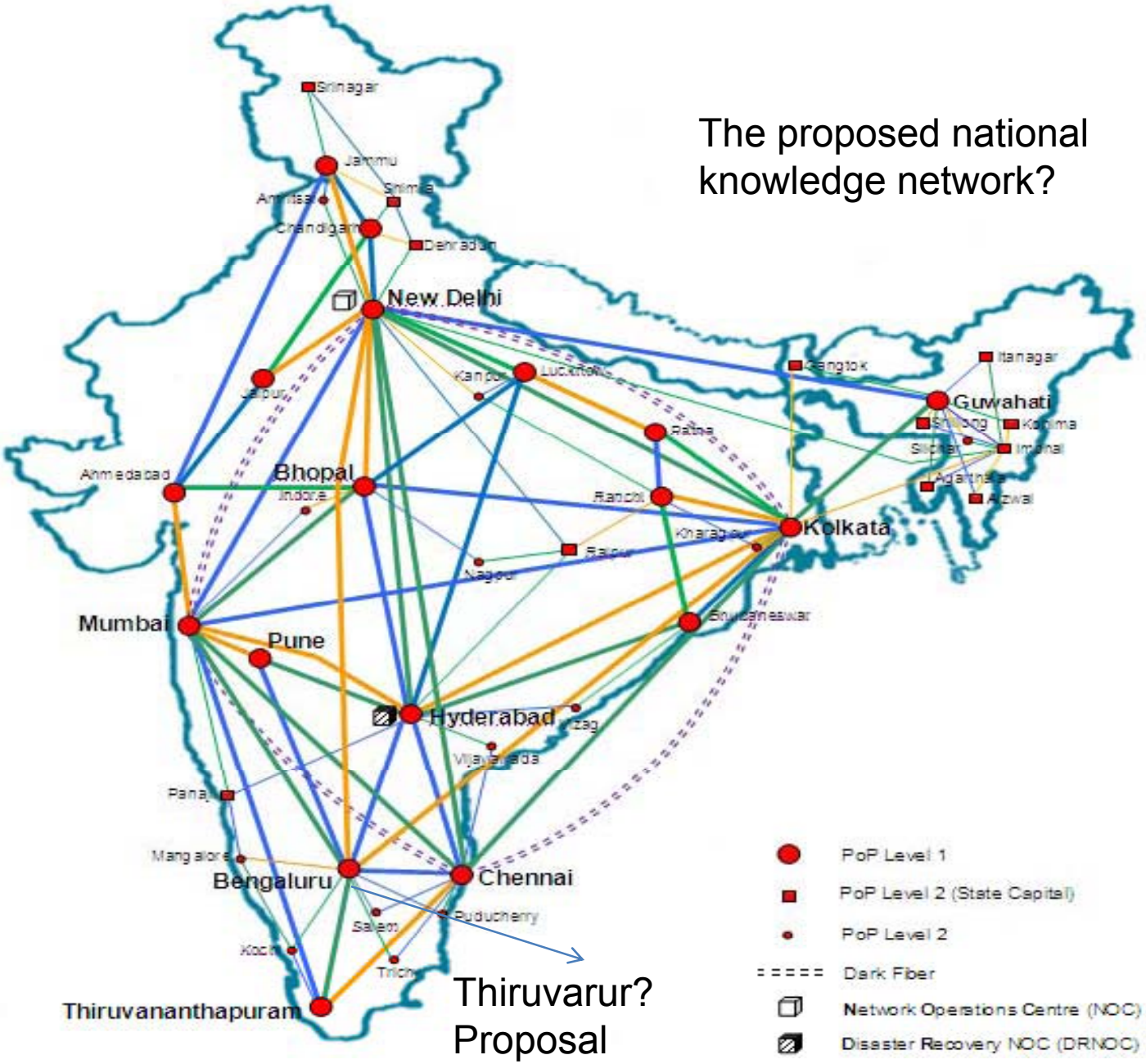
The main objective of the Mission is to use Information & Communication Technology (ICT) for providing access and quality higher education to student communities all over India. Under this Mission, 419 Universities, over 20000 Colleges including 2000 Polytechnics will be provided VPN broadband connectivity. The Mission would also provide high quality e-content, free of cost to all the learners in the country.

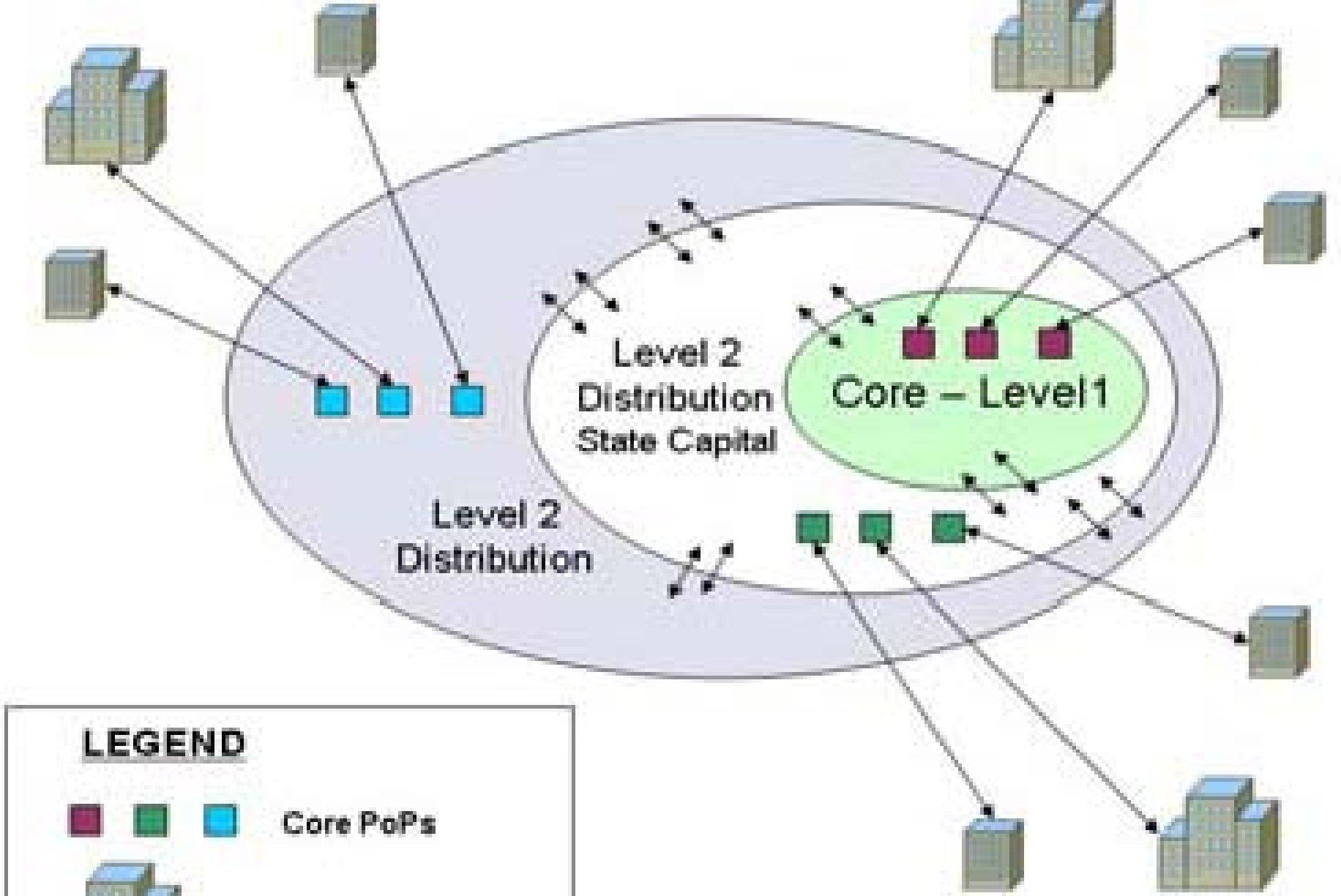
A National Knowledge Network… (NKN)

Missions such as NKN require enormous determination and vision continuity. The ability of India to stand solidly behind NKN irrespective of changes in the environment – political or administrative – is a necessary pre-condition for success. NKN philosophy is "Encourage, Enable, Enrich, and Empower" the users. Accordingly, the the Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) that drives NKN should be highly responsive with a leadership that combines enthusiasm, vision, and passion. Establishment of NKN is not expenditure for the country – but an INVESTMENT. When any investment is tightly coupled with passion, the RoI (Return on Investment) rises exponentially in tangible and intangible terms.

Technology changes in the ICT sector is bound to be significant and perhaps disruptive. NKN as it evolves will reorganise itself to absorb the contemporary technologies seamlessly without disturbing the stakeholders and the usage. This is the fundamental reason why thought leadership is important in SPV governance and NKN formation.

The proposed national knowledge network?




Level 2
Distribution
State Capital
Core – Level1
Level 2
Distribution
LEGEND
Core PoPs
University
Institutes / Colleges

What do I have?

- Temporary Building

ENTRANCE
நுழைவாயில்

FRONT ELEVATION
முகப்பு தோற்றம்

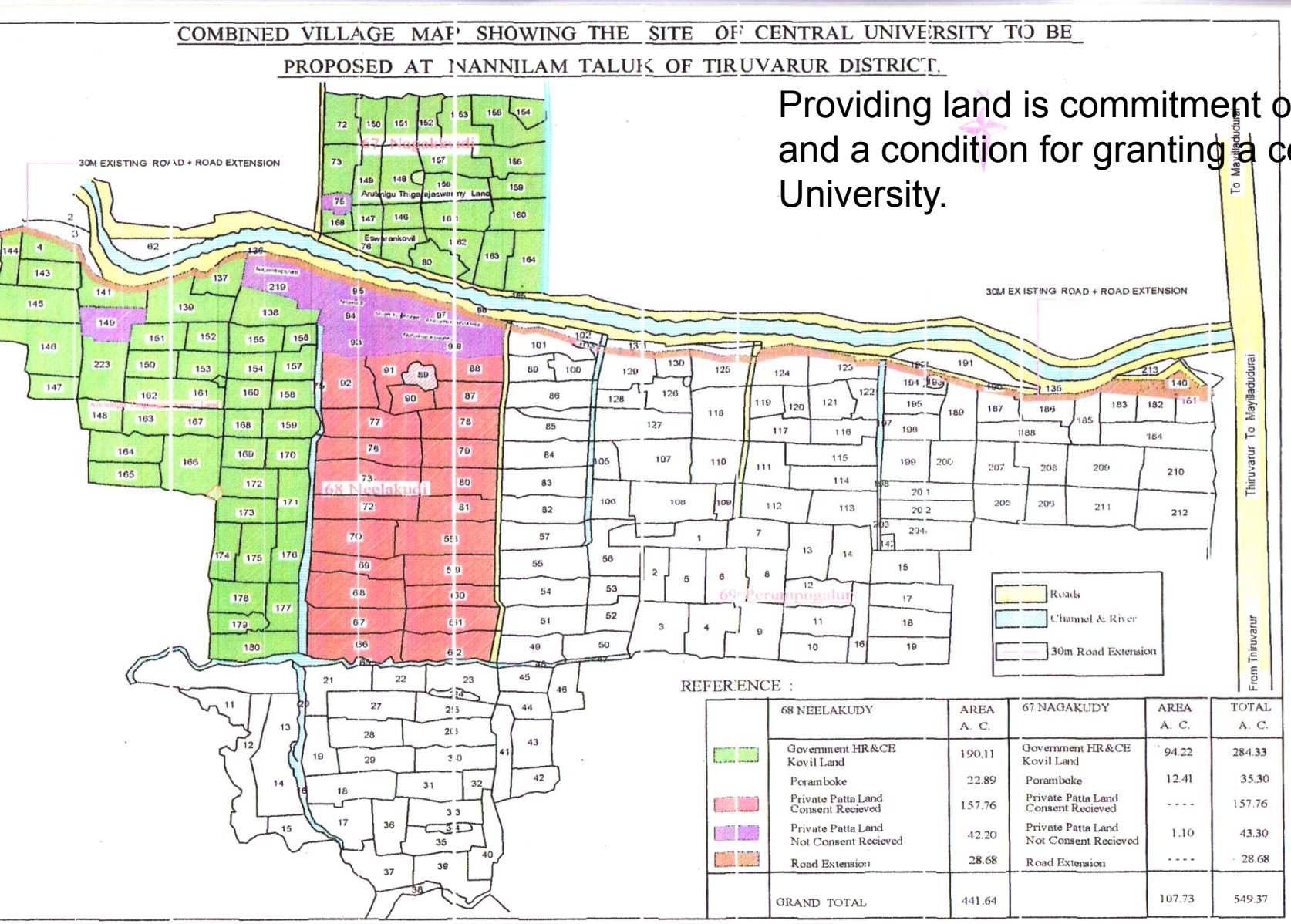
INNER ELEVATION
உள்புறத் தோற்றம்

FIRST FLOOR REAR SIDE
முதல்தளம் பின்புறம்

Area Available

- Land area: 5.6 acres;
- Ground floor + 3 floors;
- Ground floor 1278 sq m or 13756 sq ft
- First floor 1437 sq m or 15468 sq ft
- Second floor 1228 sq m or 13218 sq ft
- Third floor 1228 sq m or 13218 sq ft
- Total 5171 sq m or 55660 sq ft
- Includes Conference hall that can seat 40 persons. This has been adapted for meetings etc.

Providing land is commitment of State and a condition for granting a central University.



	68 NEELAKUDY	AREA A. C.	67 NAGAKUDY	AREA A. C.	TOTAL A. C.
	Government HR&CE Kovil Land	190.11	Government HR&CE Kovil Land	94.22	284.33
	Poramboke	22.89	Poramboke	12.41	35.30
	Private Patta Land Consent Recieved	157.76	Private Patta Land Consent Recieved	----	157.76
	Private Patta Land Not Consent Recieved	42.20	Private Patta Land Not Consent Recieved	1.10	43.30
	Road Extension	28.68	Road Extension	----	28.68
	GRAND TOTAL	441.64		107.73	549.37

Can Lirneasia help?

- Its network, concerns, comparative perspectives etc can be useful to nucleate a interdisciplinary Centre for research that facilitates “evidence based” study of knowledge economies through effective use of ICTs. This new University would be happy to seed such a centre based on assured involvement of diverse stake holders and networking with other universities in the region and elsewhere. It would also provide an opportunity for young scholars and generation next to understand historical, contextual and comparative evolution of current practices and programmes.

Eminent resource persons gathered here are welcome to offer their ideas and suggestions.

Thank you

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