

Tribals should accord high priority to education, says Minister

Ensure that children of tribal communities attend schools: K. Ramachandran

Special Correspondent

UDHAGAMANDALAM: Education is vital for the socio-economic development of tribals, observed the Khadi Board Minister, K. Ramachandran, here on Monday.

Participating as the chief guest in World Indigenious Day celebrations organised by the Kotagiri-based non-governmental organisation Keystone Foundation, he said the Government was accord-ing high priority to the implementation of the Education for All scheme.

Urging the tribal communities to extend their cooperation to the Government by ensuring that all their children attended schools, he pointed out that when other communities are living comfortably in urban areas, the tribals are still residing in and around forests because they lack education.

Stating that it is not necessary for them to lead such an existence, Mr. Ramachandran said that the tribal children should develop and protect their communities.

Preservation of tribal culture and education of tribal children should be given equal importance. The Government was ready to provide necessary facilities in tribal areas. They should make use of the Government schemes.

Under the aegis of the Mudumalai Tiger Reserve (MTR), camps would be organised to impart vocational



SHOWCASING: The Khadi Board Minister, K. Ramachandran, going round a tribal exhibition in Udhagamandalam on Monday.

— PHOTO: M. SATHYAMOORTHY

training to tribals.

Underscoring the importance of the celebrations, Mr.

Ramachandran said that the environment, tribal rights, tradition etc should be protected. Everything possible

should be done to check global warming.

The Nilgiris Collector, Archana Patnaik, said that the administration would not be found wanting in the efforts to uplift tribals and safeguard

their interests. The Field Director, MTR, Rajiv K. Srivas-

tava, hoped that tribal communities would help make the MTR the best of its kind in the country. The Director, Keystone

Foundation, Pratin Roy, said

that a great deal could be learnt about sustainable development and livelihood from tribals. The Coordinator, Keystone Foundation, Robert Leo, lamented that

though the allotment for tribal development is increasing

their requirements have not yet been met. An exhibition and a rally in which various tribal groups participated marked the occasion.