



National Council of Rural Institutes

Department of Higher Education, Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India



Connect

Vol.-3

April 2017

Issue-4



Paving paths for Rural Engagement

Partners in Rural Engagement...



Central University of South Bihar

and Central University of Sikkim. Prof Swapan Kumar Dutta who is the Vice Chancellor of Viswa Bharathi inaugurated the workshop in Shantiniketan.

The long term mutual commitment for rural community engagement was confirmed through MOUs with Mahatma Gandhi Antarashtriyahi Hindi Vishwa Vidyalyaya at Wardha, Central University of South Bihar at Gaya, Mahatma Gandhi University at Motihari, Central University of Gujarat at Gandhinagar, Central University of Punjab at Bhatinda and Mahatma Gandhi University at Nalgonda in Telangana State.

March 2017 was a swamped, assiduous month for the National Council for Rural Institutes, with two major workshops with the National Service Scheme (NSS) Officers from the Central Universities, National Institutes of Technology(NIT) & Indian Institutes of Technology(IIT). The Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) entered with various Central Universities for long term academic collaboration, Round Table Conferences and the Workshops held in Universities further made it momentous for us.



Mahatma Gandhi University Nalgonda

Dr Girish Misra Vice Chancellor of Mahatma Gandhi Antarashtriyahi Hindi Vishwa Vudhyalaya at Wardha said, “the curriculum should be developed taking into account the strengths of the villages as well. The term ‘community’ very much signifies the rural areas as the community feelings and atmosphere of concern still exists in the villages”.



Mahatma Gandhi Central University Bihar

NCRI facilitated roundtable interactions in: Central University of Karnataka, Central University of Kerala, Central University of Gujarat and the Central University of Haryana. In Central University of Kerala, the round table was chaired by the Vice Chancellor Prof G Gopa Kumar. While Prof H M Maheshwaraiah who is the Vice Chancellor of the Central University of Karnataka addressed the round table in Kalaburga.



Central University of Gujarat

The two day NCRI workshops on Curriculum for Community Engagement were held under the in Vishwa Bharathi Central University, Benaras Hindu University

Prof Arvind Agarwal Vice Chancellor of Mahatma Gandhi University at Motihari in Central Bihar opined that, “we have taken five villages into our fold to make these



Central University of Punjab

villages self reliant on the lines of Gandhian ideology”.
 “With the help and collaboration of NCRI this will be an effective long term process” he added. Pro Vice



**Mahatma Gandhi Antarashtriya
Hindi Vishwavidhyalaya Wardha**

Chancellor Prof OP Rai of Central University of South Bihar at Gaya stated that, “together NCRI and CU of South Bihar could work hard to realize the dream of building a resilient rural India.”

Prof RK Kohli Vice Chancellor of Central University of Punjab felt, “this exercise would facilitate both the partners move jointly on academic, teaching, training and research fronts in the arena of rural studies. We need to support each other’s endeavors in delivery of



Vishwa Bharati Shanti Niketan



Central University of Karnataka

Doing academic activity and pursuing it with longer term interest is commitment. Community engagement is associated with Social Engineering and Nation Building.

academic programmes and research activities through various steps. The objectives would be designed in such a way that would initiate the rural studies in real sense.”

Prof S A Bari Vice Chancellor of the Central University of Gujarat appreciated the initiative of NCRI and said that Community Engagement is constructive in nature as “doing academic activity by joining the system though difficult, we need to conduct it as a fruitful academic activity with required commitment. Doing academic activity and pursuing it with long term interest is commitment. Community engagement is associated with Social Engineering and Nation Building. Small initiatives are instrumental in bringing changes which give a lot of satisfaction”.



Indira Gandhi Tribal University Amarkantak

“Universities have the responsibility of molding the students into effective human resource. NCRI is supporting rural community engagement of students thereby making students get real time learning experience and also feel the social responsibility towards rural community” said Vice Chancellor of Mahatma Gandhi University at Nalgonda in Telangana State.

Connecting Catalysts for Cascading Changes



NCRI Workshop inauguration

When there is a delicious piece of cake laid before you, if not eaten now, it will be gone forever. Hence we need to pursue with rural engagement, not just learn and leave it. This opportunity for the universities should be utilised now. All small starts need not necessarily stay small forever. It may actually be a stepping stone to a great future ahead. So we need to consider curriculum development in rural engagement as starting point. This needs to be followed up with research endeavours. Thus, education has the option of being either longitudinal or horizontal. – Dr WG Prasanna Kumar Chairman NCRI.

Reality of holistic rural community engagement for socio-economic progress is possible only through tailor made curriculum that fosters it.



Discussion on proposal for CFCE & SR



Group discussion for CFCE & SR

Rural engagement being the most important yet unsatisfied need, NCRI as fostering agent for the same, has taken the role of a connecting catalyst that will enable this process. Most Institutions actively encourage community engagement. In fact there is a huge gap between practices and the outcomes. This gap can be filled only through tailor made curriculum. Community partnerships increase the resources and relationships available for students' in real time learning. With this objective in mind, NCRI had conducted two workshops on the 6th & 7th March and 9th & 10th March 2017 on "Rural engagement, Unnat Bharat Abhiyan and Social Responsibility".



Brain storming on proposal for CFCE & SR

The first workshop focused on bringing together like minded NSS Officers from the Central Universities along with the local Universities from Telangana, whereas the second workshop was a platform for initiating cascading changes in the rural community engagement arena through NSS Officers of the NITs and IITs. NCRI is interested in sharing this responsibility of collaborating for rural community engagement as catalyst organization with willing academic Institutions. Attaining the reality of holistic rural community engagement for socio-economic progress is possible only through a tailor made curriculum that fosters community engagement.



Erthapalli field visit

Fourteen Central Universities and nine Universities from Telangana added substance to the event where Dr WG Prasanna Kumar Chairman National Council of Rural Institutes, stated that NCRI is not only initiating but is also interested in providing hand holding support to the Higher Educational Institutions in course of transacting the content in rural community engagement education.



NCRI Workshop for Central University NSS Officers

An excellent learning experience was the field visit to Kowdepalli village in Sanga Reddy district facilitated by M S Chandra Director of CARPED. It was an interactive session on community issues. It focused on solution engineering with prospective road map. It utilized the participatory rural appraisal approach.

Model presented by Unnat Bharat Abhiyan(UBA) of the Department of Higher Education in the Ministry of Human Resource Development in Government of India needs building of institutional capacity. The crux of community engagement is solution engineering. It needs to be initiated through a tailor made community interaction model. It should be based on available local



Learning at NCRI Workshop



NCRI Workshop for NIIT/ IIT NSS Officers

resources. Its model should be replicable. UBA can be supported by campus engagements with the local challenges that foster human productivity. Transformation is holistic. It needs to benefit the community and its academic partners. All strategies of transformation are to be based on current situational analysis.

Doing academic activity and pursuing it with longer term interest is commitment. Community engagement is associated with Social Engineering and Nation Building.

This process can be supported through engaging street theatre and field surveys. Various courses can incorporate rural engagement curriculum at post graduate level. MBA stream can have rural entrepreneurship and rural tourism subjects which can be great generators of economic momentum, while providing employment and self employment opportunities. National Service Scheme forums can also be culmination points for rural engagement while collaborating with the State and Central Universities. NCRI is sponsoring 50 rural internships for a period of two months, with a stipend of ten thousand rupees per month enabling aspiring students for getting into rural engagement. Further 25 Ph. D fellowships at par with the UGC fellowships will also be provided where the course work on rural engagement is mandatory.

“Purpose of higher education is human resource development which is the most important aspect of progress. If market is the determinant, the society is the relevant factor. The broad areas of education – teaching, research and service are basically to help community” said Dr. Rajesh Tandon, a staunch proponent of Community Engagement and also the Director of PRIA New Delhi.

“Research looks at applicability of knowledge. Service integrates teaching and research into community engagement. With uneven higher education quality every form of learning should enable real time knowledge acquisition. This knowledge can be ploughed back into the society ensuring exemplary outputs”, he added.



Kowdepalli field visit

Brainstorming on the draft proposal for the establishment of the Centre for Fostering Social Responsibility and Community Engagement of the University Grants Commission, NSS Officers flagged the requirements and supportive guidance available. It was felt that if community engagement is facilitated, then every concerned person can be partner in nation building.

“Domain expertise can lend a ray of hope for appropriate problem diagnosis and solution engineering” said Dr. GV Ramanjaneyulu Director Centre for Sustainable Agriculture. Speaking on the occasion he said that, field learning has to be part of the curriculum. He stated that the agricultural concerns were predominantly rural. Presently economic outcome is not at par with physical input. This is the main cause for farmers' suicide. A cropping strategy and a marketing support which suits the present agrarian crisis is required. It has to focus on food security and setting right the distorted prices influenced by unintelligent cultivation.

55% of Telengana population is dependent on agriculture. Only 2.5% of the total budget is allotted for agriculture. Concern on waiver of agricultural loans can be reversed through credit guarantee funds. The tax for food is higher (around 12.5%) than the tax on gold (around 1%). In this context, the farmers embrace suicidal path as the last resort. There is a need to initiate appropriate process that facilitates implementation of farmer friendly policies. The producers are taxed a huge 30% put together with 12.5% VAT which is not acceptable when the country is agriculture-centric.

“Convergence is essential. It is for handling people's aspirations and community engagement. Networking, partnerships and tie-ups with the rural community are vital. Model village has sustainable and inclusive growth



Participatory Rural Appraisal

as critical aspects. The participatory rural appraisal approach with village mapping is essential. The convergence model incorporates community's aspirations. The community engagement through networking and partnership tie-ups with the adopted community as knowledge hub is also essential” said Dr Gyan Mudra from NIRD &PR.

The crux of community engagement is solution engineering. It needs to be initiated through a tailor made community interaction model. It should be based on available local resources.

“The notion of community engagement is not forcible enforcement of engagement, but to work hand in hand along with the respective rural community. Gram Panchayats have several funds at their disposal. Enabling entry of women and youth into the village arena, making community engagement and progress is a realizable dream. Perspective twenty year plans can enable this process at its nascent stage. Due to multitude of issues like lack of documentation, and the actual document getting altered in the course of approval, the process is hindered. The academia can lend able aid facilitating this process”.

Dr Suryanarayana Reddy former consultant NIRD &PR said participatory situational analysis is essential for village strategy mapping in development plans. Resource envelope needs to be prepared with women being an appropriate source and SHGs being the conveying medium. There may be a need for capacity building which gets identified. This need can be met through activities incorporated in Unnat Bharat Abhiyan.

“Saving is earning. The three major global concerns are sustainability, inequality and pollution” said Sagar Dhara from Cerena Foundation.

Other aspects which came to the fore include that of NCRI to also act as a MIS agent for UBA and MHRD. NSS activities can become integral part of UBA. There is a need for convergence between Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) and Ministry of Youth Affairs (MYA). In course of implementation of the projects on community engagements, the Vice-Chancellors of the Universities needs to have decision making freedom, felt the participants.

Crossing Borders through Communication

Community is not just receiver but also an associate and producer of messages for various media. It is source, receiver as well as medium of communication. Its views should matter for those who work for it. That is why the cultural context provides substance to the message and medium. NCRI noted keenly these aspects which came to the fore prominently in the seven day workshop conducted by the NCRI, Department of Communication in collaboration with the UNESCO chair on community media of the University of Hyderabad. This 6-day NCRI supported workshop conducted between 16th to 21st March 2017 “Teaching and Researching Community media” was meant generate interest in rural communication as a discipline in the universities. The participants were the University faculty

These citizen-controlled and managed media are more participatory and regional, while addressing local issues in stark contrast to the commercial media outlets.

members from communication departments across the country.

“Community media both globally and nationally, have begun to alter the existing media landscape. As a third-sector alternative, independent of state- and market- run media institutions, viz., community newspapers, community radio, participatory video, and mobile phone based multimedia platforms are challenging the hegemony of the mainstream media. These citizen-controlled and managed media are more participatory and regional while addressing local issues in stark contrast to the commercial media outlets. A rather significant and audible current manifestation is the emergence of community radio on our airwaves, with a number of Educational Institutions also pitching in and setting up stations in their campuses” concluded the workshop.

A good relationship is the outcome of a good communication. This holds true for community



Workshop in Hyderabad Central University

engagements as well. Community communication can pave way for community engagement and this power of communication can ultimately pave way for the success of community engagement process.

On a more introspective note, the workshop covered aspects like a) providing a larger landscape for community media, b) sharing required theoretical aspects of community media c) presenting prominent community case studies d) map the existing policies e) potential and implementation f) facilitation ground for research activities on community media g) formulating a community media course curriculum and h) orientation on the process of setting up a community radio in the concerned university campus.

Prof P Appa Rao Podile Vice-Chancellor University of Hyderabad inaugurated the workshop while Prof. BP Sanjay Pro Vice-Chancellor spoke on “Rural Communication : Shifting paradigms” in his key note address. The UNESCO Chair on Community Media team consisting of Prof Vinod Pavarala, Prof Kanchan K. Malik and Prof Vasuki Belavadi were the organizer resource persons for the workshop. Dr WG Prasanna Kumar Chairman NCRI shared his insights on approaches to enhancing capacity building on rural communication in higher education arena.

The participants in the workshop included those from the Universities of Tamil Nadu, Haryana, Jammu, Sikkim, Assam, Manipur, Arunachal Pradesh and South Bihar, BBA University of Lucknow, Jamia Milia Islamia, Delhi University, Pondicherry University, Tezpur University, Xavier's University of Bhubaneswar, Pune University, SKB University and the University of Burdwan.

An attempt to make the workshop worthwhile and holistic was enabled through a field visit to Pastapur village 100 kms away near Zaheerabad. The participants interacted and discussed the nuances of community media with the Director of Deccan Development Society Mr PV Satheesh. The visit to Sangham Radio and video screenings by video team members of the Community Media Trust enriched the visit.



Discussion on Rural Communication Curriculum

Great learning opportunity... Living together... Rural Bengal.



Community Engagement at Shanti Niketan

Amor Kutir is a place inspired by Santiniketan where rural artisans work and sell their produce in its neighborhood. Rural Reconstruction Education project of Rabindranath Tagore was conceptualized and delivered in Santiniketan. It has a tradition of artisans fixing the price of their produce and selling it in their outlet, where customers queue in from different parts. Rural India is waiting for the day when all produce including agricultural produce price is decided and fixed by the farmers. That is real Rural Freedom - the essence of Rural Higher Education.

Rabindranath Tagore was always concerned about Rural Reconstruction. His laboratory was Sriniketan, an area adjacent to Santhiniketan, where present departments of Social Work, Rural Studies and Rural Management are located. Viswa-Bharathi is the Central University which sprawls both Santhiniketan is the area of Art Culture and Education and Sriniketan is the area of Rural Reconstruction. Today Viswa-Bharathi works with more than 50 villages.

Interestingly, Gandhiji called Rabindranath Tagore as Gurudev. In response, Rabindranath Tagore called Gandhiji as Mahathma. Gandhiji's ideas on Rural Reconstruction were an outcome of his interaction with Tagore. Ravindranath Tagore introduced **boy scouts** as part of his Village Reconstruction efforts to develop ideas of citizenship and public duty appealing to villages and within their means and capacity promoting organized and trained volunteering. They are called '**Brati Balaks**' and '**Brati Balikas**'. They were involved in cleanup and fire drills.

Before Gujarat and Maharashtra attempted cooperatives, Ravindranath Tagore promoted cooperative farming to benefit rural reconstruction efforts. In the same context, his Nobel prize amount was gifted to the agricultural cooperative and the school. But the 'Argumentative Indians' were against this 'Bhadralok Conception' of work and chose to disengage with Tagore's ideas of cooperative farming and cooperative movement and Gujarat quickly adopted it with Dr V Kurian promoting Cooperative Dairying and Amul. Gujarat benefited and Bengal didn't. In fact till recently Ravindranath Tagore's ideas and thinking were not taken on by Bengal's education system. Though they took pride in peripheral items like Rabindra Sangeeth at times.

In Santiniketan Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore didn't want to adopt British holiday system of Sundays. Hence Wednesday was the weekly off. Even now some departments seem to follow this. In Viswa Bharati University, there is no clapping for any appreciation. They say 'Saadhu Saadhu' as words of appreciation this was also followed for appreciating the exclusive rural cultural units trained by the Santiniketan cultural teams into performing on Rabindra Sangeeth. Though Rabindranath Tagore was from Bhadrakalok of Bengal, a Zamindar, he was disturbed by Rural Distress in an area which is currently located in Bangladesh. That led to his conceiving Santiniketan and Sriniketan experiments. ***The Santiniketan experiment is Rabindranath Tagore's model for Rural Reconstruction.***



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