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## **NCRI Theme paper for 2<sup>nd</sup> round table**

Institutions born out of a particular need recognised in a spatial and temporal context will start losing shine in course of time if they fail to adapt to the changing context and requirements. Failing to do so will not bode well for the institution. It is a natural process for institutions to weather and, therefore, imperative for the top personnel of the respective institutions to change and adapt to the changing milieu. Continuously discovering and capturing the vision and reorienting the objectives to live up to the ideals, goals, objectives that brought the institution into being, appear to be the only way out.

Being a catalyst institution, NCRI has the mandate to provide necessary financial and academic support to rural institutions which have a potential for growth and to prominent NGOs engaged in the task of rural development.

The objectives of the Council are to:

1. promote rural higher education on the lines of Mahatma Gandhi's revolutionary ideas on education so as to take up challenges of micro-planning for transformation of rural areas as envisaged in NPE 1986 (as modified in 1992);
2. consolidate network and develop institutions engaged in programmes of Gandhian Basic Education and Nai Talim;
3. encourage other educational institutions and voluntary agencies to develop in accordance with Gandhian Philosophy of education;
4. strengthen teacher training facilities for Gandhian Basic Education;
5. design a variety of courses at tertiary level around emerging rural occupations;
6. strengthen the content of all these institutions with emphasis on Science and Technology;
7. encourage field-oriented courses of rural institutes; and
8. promote research as a tool for social and rural development;
9. promote extension services to the community through micro level planning; and
10. advise Government of India on all such matters pertaining to rural institutes as may be referred to it from time to time.

NCRI did not have a full fledged Chairman till recently and the institution was mainly supporting certain proposals coming from different quarters. The institution can play a major role in the development process as envisaged in the charter by staying in tune with times. After the full time chairman is in place it is felt important to have series of consultations with eminent personalities who have had experience in education, rural development and other domains of knowledge. The 1<sup>st</sup> round table was held on 7<sup>th</sup> January 2008. Participants included educationists, activists and practitioners, though in a small number. The idea is to continue these consultations through various round tables and coalescing them into a shared vision as a prelude to developing action programmes. A number of valuable ideas have emerged out of the first round table and the same is enclosed to this note.

This is the backdrop in which the 2<sup>nd</sup> round table is being organised by inviting a few experts and practitioners whose outlook has shaped the destiny of many an institution.

Along with the issues raised in the last meeting the following issues are placed for consideration:

- Positioning of NCRI
- Aligning NCRI to the priorities in the 11<sup>th</sup> plan
- Short- term, medium- term and long- term goals of NCRI
- Institutions with which NCRI may collaborate/enter into MOUs
- New areas into which NCRI may enter without deviating from its mandate in the changing context
- Identifying common purpose areas with Universities, IITs and IIMs and other institutions that NCRI should be working with closely for achieving its objectives as per the charter
- Identification of a national thrust programme under the aegis of NCRI

**INVITEES TO THE SECOND ROUND TABLE HELD ON**  
**27<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY, 2008**

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## **Inputs of Dr B.Gangaiah, State Advocacy Adviser, Constella Futures to NCRI Round Table held on 27<sup>TH</sup> February 2008 at NCRI Council Hall**

- NCRI was started with the objective of promoting network of Rural Development Institutes with emphasis on promoting Gandhian Values and Gandhian model of development.
- Gandhian philosophy needs to be interpreted and redefined in the changing context as Gandhian values have eternal relevance.
- NCRI can play a catalyst role in promoting Gandhian values and Gandhian model of development.
- I do not agree with the view that NCRI should merely fund research in Gandhian philosophy. Along with research funding it should also promote adoption of Gandhian model in our development programmes.
- Rather I would suggest that NCRI fund some operational research projects but should strive to promote the incorporation of Gandhian Principles in the development models and programmes designed at state and central level. In the end it is only through practice that the philosophy will live longer. For this NCRI need to play the role of advocacy and networking agency. Initially the advocacy needs to start with Rural Development and Panchayati Raj Ministries where the maximum impact can be noticed. NCRI may even take some innovative projects for implementation in collaboration with these two departments.
- NCRI may also network with SIRDS and NIRD and other Rural Development wings of the Universities and NGOs for promoting these values and may do the capacity building of these institutions in this area.
- NCRI while promoting the Gandhian values in the formal educational institutions should also focus on incorporating these values in the non-formal education through networking with the concerned Government departments and NGOs. Council may develop modules for this purpose.
- At the district level networking with DRDAs and doing advocacy and capacity building may be one area of focus.
- Key issues for rural development are education, Skills upgradation of artisans, marketing support, decentralised agricultural extension. Appropriate programmes/projects can be designed by NCRI in collaboration with Development Departments at state and central level.
- Natural Resources Conservation and Regeneration and nondestructive use of the same are at the centre of sustainable development model. These principles are Gandhian in spirit and universally applicable with relevance to our country both at rural and urban areas. However, this is a massive task and needs cooperation from all the stakeholders in development. Our development cannot sustain if we ignore this aspect of our development. Perhaps NCRI can work with international institutions also in this area.

- NCRI may also work closely with Watershed Development programmes and Krishi Vigyan Kendra's (KVK).
- Danish Folk Schools concept may be looked at for promoting our cultural values and for enriching the quality of human resources at village level.
- Micro level Planning is very much Gandhian in its philosophy which is also being promoted in the context of Panchayati Raj development. However, due to various reasons we are not able to succeed in this area to the extent it is required. NCRI may document the best practices in various states in the country and disseminate the same widely so that the others can emulate or innovate.
- It is suggested that NCRI may develop a good website on its focus, programmes, and resources and may also disseminate other relevant resources for easy access of the users.

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## NATIONAL COUNCIL OF RURAL INSTITUTES (NCRI) **AGENDA FOR RURAL EMPOWERMENT**

Dr. D. Hanumantha Rao,  
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As an apex body to all the institutional set up working for rural development in India, the NCRI has the most challenging and catalytic role to play for the cause of rural empowerment, especially in the form of:

- a. Funding agency for research and developmental activities;
- b. Guiding and mentoring platform for undertaking Innovative path breaking development programmes;
- c. Coordinating and controlling setup for smooth functioning of all the developmental activities of the rural institutes and organisational set-ups in order to avoid duplicity and for guided progress.

The present Indian economy is characterised by robust progress in terms of GDP, foreign reserves, industrial progress, etc., on one side, and most surprisingly mounting pressure on agriculture, rural poverty, unemployment, etc., on the other.

The primary objective of every development initiative is to reduce the gap between rural poverty and urban prosperity. India development sector is characterised by a vast institutional set up both in Government and NGO sectors with wide variety of poverty alleviation programmes. In spite of such huge set up and generous funding, the gap still exists, indicating the need for some more specialised agencies and an agency for developing and giving priority to rural prosperity.

Some of the important points to be observed in this regard could be:

- ❑ **Core Mission:**  
“Promotion of Gandhian philosophy / ideology in the Globalisation context for self-reliant rural economy”.
- ❑ **Core Focus:**
  - ❖ Identifying the gaps in development sector, which are the primary causes of rural poverty and suggest suitable models to the institutions and agencies working for rural progress, for bridging such gaps.
  - ❖ Develop models/modules for taking up innovative programmes for rural empowerment and suggest the tested models / modules to various institutions / agencies working for rural development for scaling up such tested programmes.
  - ❖ Application of Gandhian way of doing in every social, economic and business endeavour with regard to existing social & individual livelihood and innovative initiatives.

❑ **Positioning of NCRI**

NCRI should be positioned as a research funding agency for taking up innovative programmes and suggestive body for development sector for the cause of rural prosperity. It could be a center for rural information (Results of learning and experiments by various rural institutions/ agencies) and nodal agency of coordination.

❑ **Aligning NCRI to the priorities in the 11<sup>th</sup> Plan**

NCRI can align itself with priorities in the 11<sup>th</sup> plan, especially in respect of skill development, rural poverty reduction, environmental sustainability, etc., through its focused areas and research and funding activities.

❑ **Short-term, medium term and long-term goals of NCRI**

In this short-term, the NCRI can take up research based funding initiatives to promote the existing institutional set up and also promote some innovative projects. It can also strengthen its liaison with various government/ non-government/ research academic bodies in this period. However, in the medium-term, it can become a unique center for rural information and coordination for guidance, suggestions and path showing platform for acceleration of rural development programmes. In the long-term, the NCRI should aim at becoming the center for excellence for promotion of Gandhian Philosophy for Human excellence, Social Well-being and Business Progress- by way blending every social, ecological, economic and business endeavour with Gandhian way of life.

❑ **Institutions with which NCRI may collaborate / enter into MOUs**

NCRI can collaborate with all those institutions/ organisations working for rural for mutual learning and experiments, which work for promotion of Gandhian way of rural progress, especially KVIC. It can also join hands with business entities, its federations / confederations. It can even think of collaborating with primary / secondary educational institutions.

❑ **New areas into which NCRI may enter without deviating from its mandate in the changing context**

❑ **Identifying common purpose areas with Universities, IITs and IIMs and other institutions that NCRI should be working with closely for achieving its objectives as per the charter.**

In this regard, the NCRI cannot be a guiding agency for designing the appropriate curriculum for rural development and also suggest suitable delivery mechanism.

❑ **Identification of a national thrust programme under the aegis of NCRI**

*Sustained rural prosperity only through reliability and peace among people should be main caption behind every initiative of NCRI, whether it is funding for research projects, academic programmes, innovative schemes, or any such development issues. Thus, every initiative of NCRI should be designed based on this noble caption.*

## **SECOND RTC – Some Views**

**Ms Padmaja, Jattu, Vizayanagaram**

### **Technical Training**

Junior Technical courses to be promoted for 7+ class students-in ITI campuses. Industrial Training Institutes (ITI) to be revamped with courses that are market driven. Strengthen and monitor the vocational training in Ashram schools, NCLP, social welfare schools. Technical/ Skill training which is relevant to market needs is to be promoted. Forming a network marketing, fares, melas to sell their products.

### **Network of corporates / Foundations**

MOU with corporations/Foundations that have concern for Social Responsibility and working for rural development, rural education and imparting training based on Gandhian Philosophy.

### **Coordination with Government Agencies**

Tie-up with APEDA, CAPART, Panchayat Raj, Rural Development depts., Agri, Extension, Khadi Board, KVIC, NIRD etc, through which common agenda based on Gandhian Philosophy could be monitored. Emphasis on training the rural youth with the focus on forward, backward linkages. Marketing network for promotion of rural products through exhibitions, haaths, melas, etc.

### **Teachers Training**

Training of teachers of Ashram Schools, APRPRP Schools etc on pilot basis. Involve the teachers unions in teacher training & module preparation.

**Rural development/Sustainable Development/Gram Swaraj** as a project in the curriculum for all technical/non-technical U.G & P.G. Courses could be introduced. For instance—‘Gram swaraj and role of an engineer’/administrator/, Doctor etc., Compulsory field work to gain grass roots experience and tie-up with good NGOs. Tie up with International organisations like Red Cross, or NGO for organising Fellowships/ Stipend. This would promote, Volunteering which in turn will help in developing youth committed to rural development.

### **Empanelling of good NGOs**

Empanelling of good NGOs in the country working in the field of education, rural development based on Gandhian Philosophy. Data collection through various existing SIRD’s Rural Development department, Education department etc . Strengthening of NGOs that follow Gandhian philosophy.

### **Artisans**

Rural artisans have very few financial resources. The most frequent response to risk events is to borrow to cover increased expenditure. But they have very few formal loans. The inability to get formal credit for they lack any form of collateral, limits their options.

There is a need to make the poor artisans bankable and improve their access to affordable formal credit. Some artisans have left their occupations and have been working as landless labour or migrated to urban areas. Rural artisans, especially some weavers have taken extreme step and committed suicide. Situation of women heading the families is worse with their children ending as child labourers.

### **Social mobilisation:-**

Various Government /Non government agencies have been helping the rural artisans through the

cooperatives. But the cooperatives are not formed in true cooperative spirit and no social bonding exists. They are controlled by the middle men/traders with vested interests. Money that is spent for these cooperatives benefit the middle men rather than the artisans. Tools, equipments/machinery that are supplied by Government do not actually reach the artisans who deserve such help. There is a need to reorganise train/strengthen artisan cooperatives or self-help groups so that 'community of interest' is created. All the support should reach the right beneficiaries for the intended purpose.

### **Empowerment**

Building the assets of the poor artisans—Human (Health, Skills, Education) and Financial(credit, insurance, market, trade) needs be done simultaneously. Health is a cause and a symptom of poverty, frequently leading to a depending spiral of poverty and debt that is very difficult to break from. Skill trainings have to be demand driven. KVIC, Khadi Board, CAPART trainings have to be coordinated with forward backward linkages. There is need to bridge the gap between education and life by drawing upon the cultural, social and vocational potentialities of the students and to make education 'life centred'.

Empowerment of artisans is a gradual process that needs continuous effort. There is a need to empower the artisans to overcome the constraints on conversion of assets into a better living and choice of opportunities, for example- through building skills and investing in physical infrastructure to facilitate micro enterprises. Rural institutes and management institutes overemphasise on microfinance and especially on micro credit. Micro insurance is neglected. The other area of interest has been on tapping the rural market by the corporates. There has not been significant contribution in providing market for rural, non-agriculture based products.

**Prof. E.A. NARAYANA,**  
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The contribution of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in India has been substantial in the area of education. The NGOs have been known for their virtues for human touch, dedication, flexibility, self-reliance and proximity to the community. The NGOs play a significant role in retaining Indian traditions as in the past under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi. Even today, over 80 percent of the student community is dependent on the NGOs for their education. The non-government sector has thus been playing a key role in education besides the governmental labyrinth.

There is increasing evidence that the Government had recognised the role of NGOs in education and sought their cooperation in achieving educational goals of the nation. NGOs engaged in educational activities are motivated by aspiration of service and have carved a special place and in development of the country. The recognition is largely due to the advantages they have against the statutory bodies and governmental agencies in delivering the goods.

The NGOs have, however, been facing a number of problems and challenges in preparing themselves for the realisation of the objectives for which they came into being. The problems of resources – material, financial and human, availability of expertise, technical know-how, administrative and managerial capabilities are a few issues favouring the obvious. The other issues include lack of missionary zeal and morale of their members and workers, areas and modes of their operations, need for coordination, harmonisation and networking role. It is because of these innumerable problems that the non-governmental sector has not been true potential as a major factor in national educational development. The National Council of Rural Institutes (NCRI) may prepare action plans to address these problems so that the NGOs' contribution to the achievement of educational goals of the nation would be more effective.

Before preparing the action plan, the NCRI may undertake a study of the NGOs engaged in the field of education in rural areas. The information with regard to programmes and services, sources of finance, major achievements and failures and the difficulties experienced by the NGOs may be collected. The study would enable the Council to

- (a) identify the NGOs engaged in educational activities in rural areas;
- (b) categorise the NGOs on the basis of geographical location, nature of programmes, etc., and
- (c) support the NGOs according to their requirement.

There are many NGOs not only in Andhra Pradesh but throughout India which are doing good work in the field of education. The study would definitely identify all such institutions.

The NGOs are of different types and sizes. The nature of programmes of these groups presents a great deal of diversity. They may be secular, or Gandhian or missionary institutions. These institutions may be grouped into different categories based on one or more aspects.

NCRI may, apart from financial assistance, provide professional and technical guidance to NGOs for developing or improving their programmes, organise training for their functionaries, and initiate research into their needs and problems. These measures may result into the encouragement and promoting NGOs.

The NCRI can also take up the task of coordinating and networking of rural institutes. Many institutes are working independently and without any linkages or coordinating arrangements with other governmental and non-governmental organisations working in the field of education. These institutes are willing to coordinate with other organisations for more effective functioning or providing more educational facilities to the rural people. They are also keen to take the help of other agencies. Hence, the NCRI may take the lead in coordinating the efforts of the rural institutes and facilitate the networking among them.

# **REPOSITIONING NCRI: THE GLOBALISATION**

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## **1. Introduction**

The NCRI can strengthen the research culture in India by taking a radically different view.

*Huge changes are taking place in India since the launch of liberalisation, and privatisation policies. Certain changes introduced in the economy brought in new challenges. There is urgent need to stop for a while and take stock of the situation especially social change that took place since 1991. When NCRI was conceptualised it was felt that a focused approach on rural higher education perhaps will ensure inclusive growth. However, studies show that just as the way state through its 191 odd schemes of rural development with Rs. 2.7 lakh crores budget could not ensure equity even market is unable to ensure participation of large majority living in rural areas if one goes by the experience of development for the last 15 years. There is a need to study the impact of these schemes.*

## **2. Research Priorities**

The architect of economic reforms the former Prime Minister of India Shri P.V. Narasimha Rao also bemoaned the unintended consequences of privatisation policies. The full impact of globalisation or liberalisation policies on rural India can be taken up or funded by NCRI to a university to obtain first hand information on the political, social, economic, cultural changes that took place in the last 15 years. Such studies done through universities helps in bringing in appropriate changes in development strategies. They also reestablish relevance of National Coordination agency for rural development with NCRI. For instance, Government of India funds variously about 190 schemes for development of rural areas. A comprehensive study on the impact of such schemes would be showing us the limits to the behemoth state.

## **3. The Compulsions of Decentralisation**

Structural differentiation and functional specialisation are the hallmarks of development administration. The Quantum of decentralisation effected after 73<sup>rd</sup> Amendment would be of immense interest to students of Governance. Gandhiji's dream of Gram Swaraj can be atleast partially realised if an attempt is made to prepare a status report on PRI's. This can be a nationally coordinated study. The inputs are useful for revamping the curriculum of various courses

A study of the research priorities of Gandhian studies can be funded by UGC would be useful to the NCRI to appreciate the contemporary trends in Gandhian studies.

## **4. Need Era Study on Agrarian Crisis**

The NCRI can bring out a policy paper on Agrarian crisis in the country. One can take a position that the peasantry in this country is unable to judge the new trends. What are the relevant

questions in this regard? How can policy machinery be geared up to come to the rescue of distressed farmers? Answers to these questions can be expected through a comprehensive study.

A Study for Rural Governance with a few positions ensure focused research on relevance of Gandhi.

**5. Skill**

*Can the NCRI think of an assessment of JKC's started by Government of Andhra Pradesh? In tune with contemporary times perceptions about 'skill' perhaps calls for change.*

**6. Literacy**

*The current structuring of literacy revolves only around three R's. The Nai Talim of earlier era cannot be expected to be followed unless a touch of realism can be added. When MNC's are talking of digital divide, it is time to set a road map for literacy.*

# **SOME IMPRESSIONS ON RURAL DEVELOPMENT – ROLE OF NCRI**

***PROF M. RAMCHANDER***

Rural development is a process of developing and utilising Natural and Human resources, Technologies, Infrastructural facilities, Institutions and organisations, Government Policies and programmes to encourage and speed up economic growth in rural areas to provide employment and to improve quality of life towards self sustenance.

The basic elements of Development are

1. Life sustenance
2. Self-respect
3. Freedom

Policy makers should take into cognisance the basic elements of rural development while making policies and while chalking out action programmes.

Rural development aims at

1. Increasing opportunities for all rural people with respect to Health, Knowledge, Skill development, Income and Participation in decision making.
2. Creating conducive environment in reducing social and economic inequalities and conflicts.
3. Bringing all present and potential resources to most optimal use, conservation and development.

Every Institution or organisation which is working in the field of rural development should bear in mind the objectives of rural development.

Rural development is possible only when the rural masses are empowered. Rural empowerment is realised only through capacity building of rural people. Capacity building can be achieved through enacting and implementing various policies and programmes keeping in mind the rural needs and environment. Access to smaller and rural technology, proper education and training and related facilities should be given to rural masses to overcome their constraints to boost up their income-generating capacity.

The aim of Education is

1. to provide livelihood
2. to develop mental horizons
3. to transfer an individual into a responsible and responsive citizen.

The policy makers should aim at the above while preparing the curriculum for rural education.

Formal education in India is synonymous to investment in long-gestation projects whose viable returns take long period to occur. It does not and cannot meet the requirements of rural sector where livelihood and education have to be largely juxtaposed. The rural education programmes should sharply focus in the requirements and opportunities that arise from rural economic environment so as to sustain

development at all levels. At the same time facilities must be generated where by the rural learners are equipped to deal not only with the efficient production techniques of the present but more necessarily of the future needs and requirements. Providing educational facilities on continuing basis in formal and non formal settings will enable the rural masses to adopt to changing techno-economic conditions and respond to the need for community development. Building a knowledge of inter dependence consistent with economic prosperity, environmental protection and social equity will help the rural people understand, communicate and participate in decision making that affect their lives. A variety of political, technological, academic and social functions affect the process of any educational and training undertaking. Many of the factors affecting education for sustainability can be meted out through partnership perspective and above all access. The right type of rural oriented education programmes and training will help the overall personality development of the rural people along with skill up-gradation. Promoting training with the objective of income generation and enhancement will not only effectively fight rural poverty but also restore human dignity.

Empowerment is a much wider concept than economic development. An empowered individual is enabled to take his/her rightful place in the society as an equal and a free member. This calls for an all round personality development. Economic development though necessary is not a sufficient condition for empowerment. Evolving the right type of rural friendly education and training aimed at achieving personality development and self sustained livelihood at a decent level since rural poverty is a formidable impediment to empowerment. Aiming at productivity enhancement and upholding human dignity are among the most durable ways of overcoming the problems of rural poverty and deprivation. The pursuit of education in the present days is tagged on to the economic well-being of an individual. The need is to strive for education driven development. That is why education and training become indistinguishable.

The basic objective is to empower people through skill oriented training programmes so that it gives the required impetus to rural self employment through the use of small technologies and boost the rural economy through programmes which will emphasise the self-employment. Hence it is the need of the day to prepare the rural masses to take up micro enterprise by training in the case of smaller technologies/artisan tools so that the developed skills are used not only to gain a decent livelihood but also make them less dependant on Government.

Technology transfer has become one of the major sector in economic development. But unfortunately such transfers are confined to the industrial sector. Indian rural economy has not been visited by such technologies. The rural sector is in need of induction of modern technology. These technologies are to be examined for their reference keeping in view of the rural environment.

The objective is also to empower people in such a way that over a period of time they turn into consultants for any of the rural developmental projects. Involving people who matter in the decision making process helps Governments to avoid policy backlash.

Thus, objectives of NCRI are

1. promote rural higher education on the lines of Mahatma Gandhi's revolutionary ideas on education so as to take up challenges of micro-planning for transformation of rural areas as envisaged in NPE 1986 (as modified in 1992);

2. consolidate network and develop institutions engaged in programmes of Gandhian Basic Education and Nai Talim;
3. encourage other educational institutions and voluntary agencies to develop in accordance with Gandhian Philosophy of education;
4. strengthen teacher training facilities for Gandhian Basic Education;
5. design a variety of courses at tertiary level around emerging rural occupations;
6. strengthen the content of all these institutions with emphasis on Science and Technology;
7. encourage field-oriented courses of rural institutes;
8. promote research as a tool for social and rural development;
9. promote extension services to the community through micro level planning; and
10. advise Government of India on all such matters pertaining to rural institutes as may be referred to it from time to time.

A close perusal of the objectives of NCRI reveals that they are similar to the basic ideas and aims of rural development.

The present Round Table is to discuss and consider the following

- Positioning of NCRI
- Aligning NCRI to the priorities in the 11<sup>th</sup> plan
- Short-term, medium-term and long-term goals of NCRI
- Institutions with which NCRI may collaborate/enter into MOUs
- New areas into which NCRI may enter without deviating from its mandate in the changing context
- Identifying common purpose areas with Universities, IITs and IIMs and other institutions that NCRI should be working with closely for achieving its objectives as per the charter
- Identification of a national thrust programme under the aegis of NCRI.

The NCRI need not deviate from its basic aim and objectives. However, it can make minor adjustments/ changes in its approach to achieve rural empowerment. It should be very cautious while extending and financing various schemes and projects. The organisations and institutions identified for funding should really work at the field level to build capacity in the rural masses who are bestowed with traditional skills and to those who are in the service sectors. The NCRI may identify such organisation & institutions which are really striving to empower the powerless rural people.

The NCRI may collaborate or enter into MOU with universities, recognised and reputed NGO's and other organisations. The universities are helpful in evaluating the projects that are funded/supported by the NCRI.

NGOs and other institutions may be helpful in taking up and implementing of various programmes that are instrumental in empowering the rural people.

The NCRI, apart from funding the capacity building projects, can also finance/fund the rural awakening programmes such as legal education, women rights, child rights, etc.

The NCRI can work with universities, IIT and IIMS in the field of rural awakening, developing and transferring of rural technologies and developing and encouraging rural entrepreneurs.

The NCRI may backup those programmes and fund which are aimed at capacity building in rural areas. There is no dearth of skills in rural areas. But the difficulty is that most of them are uneducated. They do not have school certificates or college degrees but have the skills. The NCRI may help them in educating to the necessary levels and may also help to modernise their traditional skills. This may help in arresting rural to urban migration which may result in lessening the problem, related to urbanisation. The capacity building process may also result in rural employment and may encourage self employment.

# NCRI – ROLE AND REALITY

Prof. B. Sambasiva Rao  
Department of Economics  
Acharya Nagarjuna University

The main objective of NCRI is to promote rural higher education on the lines of Gandhi's ideas on education so as to take up the challenges of micro planning for transformation of rural areas. To achieve this goal, the council will work to strengthen the basic systems in the rural areas. In recent times, most of the institutions include: NGO's (Civil societies), Universities, IIT's, etc. work for the upliftment of rural masses through their innovative and technocratic programmes. The Council will identify the thrust programmes, their strengths and weaknesses, evaluation, participation levels by the stakeholders, will definitely help rural folk. Keeping in view the strategic role of NCRI in shaping the rural areas, the following issues may be relevant for discussion at the 2<sup>nd</sup> round table.

- Participation and training to persons involved in Panchayat Raj institutions by NCRI for effective implementation of rural development programmes.
- NCRI will have collaborative work with NGO's and Universities relating to rural sanitation and environment awareness programmes.
- Training to rural entrepreneurs through NGO's on traditional and medicinal products by NCRI.
- Innovative techniques at the village level may be encouraged to take the challenges of globalisation.
- Taking up rural projects relating to farmers problems and its solutions.
- Development of marketing network systems are linkages by NCRI.
- Training to Rural youth on innovative technologies and its implementation.

# **Revitalising and Broad-basing the Functioning of NCRI: Some Suggestions#**

**G. SREEDHAR\***

Since more than a decade has elapsed after the establishment of NCRI in 1995, it is most appropriate to take stock of the functioning of the Council so that a strategy could be evolved to incorporate necessary modifications to meet the demands of changing times for promoting the cause of rural higher education. Truly, the NCRI has to act as a catalyst in providing the required support to the rural institutions and NGOs engaged in the task of rural development. Keeping in view the objectives of the Council, the following suggestions are offered to accomplish the tasks in the context of dynamic rural situation.

One of the objectives of the Council is to promote rural higher education on the lines of Mahatma Gandhi's revolutionary ideas on education so as to take up challenges of micro planning, for transformation of rural areas as envisaged in NEP 1986 (as modified in 1992). In reality, there are very few institutions offering courses fully incorporating the Gandhian Ideology on Basic Education. Further, there is no comprehensive micro planning effort initiated by the government anywhere in the country. Micro planning initiatives are confined to a few NGOs, that too in a limited way. Also, it is important to bear in mind that rural development functionaries at the local level are not equipped with any special skills in working with rural people and may not have a thorough understanding of the dynamics of rural socio-economic scenario. This has serious implications for the quality of rural development programmes both in respect of planning and implementation. In this context, it becomes pertinent to examine whether it is possible to promote the transformation of rural areas through micro planning as envisaged in the objectives of the Council.

It was largely due to the work of Mahatma Gandhi that rural reconstruction/ development programmes were initiated in India to improve the quality of life for the rural people. But, the policy makers and administrators lost track in adhering to the Gandhian philosophy, due to overriding considerations for faster growth under the influence of modernisation. The Gandhian philosophy, which emphasises the principles of self-help, cooperation, self-reliance, village as an independent republic, effective role for PRIs and sustained use of natural resources to satisfy human need but not the greed, was ignored. As a result, the quality of rural development programmes suffered. However, compelling reasons such as the faster depletion of natural resources, reduction in the capacity of local resources to meet the growing needs of a rising population, and the adverse impact of environmental degradation on ecological balance have forced all concerned to realise the relevance of Gandhian approach to rural development. Thus, there appears to be a favourable climate in the country to promote Gandhian approach in the present juncture, especially in the context of the need to bring about an improvement in the quality of rural development programmes.

# Paper for Presentation at the Second Round Table scheduled for Feb 27, 2008 at NCRI, Hyderabad.

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The situation calls for the NCRI to initiate a dialogue between the Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD) and the rural institutions so as to bridge the gap between the tasks of rural development functionaries at the grassroots, supervisory and managerial levels and the skills imparted in various courses offered by the rural institutes. The Council should strengthen the network of rural institutes by productively linking them so as to facilitate the sharing of ideas and experience in different facets of rural development. It should facilitate the rural institutes to evolve a broad framework of curriculum for various courses at different levels (from the secondary school level to higher education) and restructure/ update the syllabi from time to time, to suit the needs of rural development functionaries at the respective levels. The rural institutes could also be encouraged to design new courses at tertiary levels around emerging rural occupations, in view of the NCERT emphasis on vocationalisation of education at higher secondary and graduate levels. The Council could organise curriculum development workshops involving the representatives of the rural institutes (including identified university departments and other institutions offering rural development courses) and representatives of agencies implementing rural development programmes (GOs, NGOs and Corporate Sector) to bring about uniformity in terms of broad framework on the syllabi of rural development courses for three levels of rural development functionaries/ professionals.

Simultaneously, the NCRI should make efforts to establish a direct link between the rural institutes offering courses in various fields of rural development and the respective state governments departments engaged in rural development work to open up a channel of employment for the products of the rural institutes in these departments. The rural development functionaries at the village, block/ mandal and district level are being recruited by the state service commissions adopting a set of criteria which do not lay any emphasis on special skills in rural development work. The practice of deputing the functionaries from different departments to DRDAs, PRIs, DWAMA, DPAP, DDP, ITDP, etc., which are directly engaged in rural development work should be stopped forthwith because these functionaries most often do not have proper orientation to the tasks required. Experience has shown that even with the help of intensive training, these functionaries failed to live up to the expectations at various levels, as reflected by the poor quality of planning and implementation of rural development programmes in different parts of the country. The method of recruitment of rural development functionaries should undergo a sea change, giving preference to products of various courses offered by rural institutes, so as to introduce the element of micro level planning in designing and implementing the rural development programmes by the state governments. The NCRI could play a crucial role in facilitating the MoRD to issue necessary instructions and guidelines to the state governments to effect changes in their recruitment policy for the rural development functionaries by prescribing relevant qualifications at different levels as follows:

1. Managers – Post-graduate diploma/ degree in Rural Development or other subjects directly related to Rural Development.
2. Supervisors – Graduation in Rural Development and other courses directly related to

rural development, offered by universities or any special institutions like Community Polytechnics, Community Colleges or other institutions.

3. Grassroots/ Field level functionaries – Certificate courses in Rural Development offered by KVKs, ITIs, Jan Sikshan Sangh, Shramik Vidyapeeth, Gurukuls, etc.

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In order to fulfil the objective of encouraging the field-oriented courses offered by rural institutes, the NCRI needs to assess the difficulties of these institutes and come to their aid in effectively running such courses. The fieldwork has two important elements – block placement towards the end of the programme and concurrent fieldwork throughout the programme. While block placement helps the students to understand the functioning of a governmental or non-governmental organisation or the implementation of rural development programmes, the concurrent fieldwork helps them to understand the problems encountered by rural people in their day-to-day life. The concurrent fieldwork would also be useful in providing the extension services. Most of the field-oriented courses have the component of block placement but not the concurrent fieldwork. The absence of concurrent field work in these courses could be mainly attributed to lack of transport facility required for taking the students to rural areas on a regular basis. The resources of rural institutes do not permit them to acquire vehicles on their own for use of students for concurrent fieldwork. If the NCRI could give a one-time grant for acquiring a van or mini-bus to rural institutes, provided the latter would be willing to meet the recurring expenses on their own, the concurrent field work component could be included in the curriculum of rural development courses at different levels. The Council could install a management information system (MIS) to monitor the progress of field-oriented courses run by rural institutes from time to time and suggest appropriate measures for improvement. The Council could also strengthen the field-oriented courses run by rural institutes by sanctioning additional staff positions in case of dire need, depending upon the availability of resources.

To strengthen further the field-oriented courses run by rural institutes, the NCRI could request the MoRD to direct the state secretaries/ commissioners in the department of rural development and panchayati raj to write to the district collectors to allow the students of rural institutes for placement in the DRDAs/ ZPs/ and other departments, in order to enable them to gain hands-on or in-situ experience of rural development programme. The students of rural institutes could also be involved in the monitoring and evaluation of the ongoing rural development programmes, which would be useful for the government to identify the deficiencies and improve the quality of implementation. Thus, the field work could be organised in such a manner that it would be beneficial both to the students and the government departments. In view of this, the Council could request the MoRD to direct the state secretaries/ commissioners in the department of rural development and panchayati raj to issue instructions to the district collectors to make a special provision to pay a nominal stipend to the students of rural institutes while on placement, to partially meet their lodging and boarding expenses. This would be helpful for improving the skill levels of students and shaping them as rural development professionals on one hand and to ensure the effective implementation of rural development programmes on the other.

The NCRI could achieve its objective of promoting extension services to the community through micro level planning by facilitating the rural institutes to reorient the field-oriented courses offered by

them to include the extension component. The Council could also facilitate the rural institutes to include extension services as an integral part of the fieldwork of different courses offered by them. Besides, the Council could include in its annual budget a provision for the sanction of innovative projects aimed at providing extension services to the community through micro planning to the rural institutes and reputed NGOs. The projects need to be innovative in that they should promote appropriate technologies for conservation of resources and safeguard the environment, ensuring the active participation of the community along with the governmental and non-governmental agencies, and result in bringing about an improvement in the quality of life of rural people in accordance with the Gandhian philosophy.

By sanctioning innovative projects to the rural institutes and NGOs, the NCRI could also accomplish its objective of promoting research as a tool for social and rural development as these projects invariably have an element of action research. In addition, the Council could also lend a helping hand to the rural institutes to establish rural technology parks in their campuses for disseminating new technologies in the different arenas of rural development to the surrounding communities.

Finally, the NCRI could collaborate/ enter into MOU with the rural institutes and NGOs which come forward to take up innovative action research projects in micro planning and provision of extension services. The list of rural institutes needs to be broad-based to include, besides the rural universities and institutes specially established for this purpose, the identified university departments, rural development centres in the IITs (New Delhi and Kharagpur), NIRD, IRMA, agricultural extension departments in agricultural universities, and all other institutions (KVKs, ITIs, Jan Sikshan Sangh, Shramik Vidyapeeth, Gurukuls, etc.) which are engaged in training, research and extension activities in rural development for the purpose of such collaboration. The Council could prepare the directory of institutions in India, which offer courses relevant to rural development.

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From C. Umamaheswara Rao, I.A.S  
NCRI – 2<sup>nd</sup> Round Table Conference

A few Suggestions:-

1. Critically examine the reasons for the dormant nature of some of the Gandhian institutions. This probably can be entrusted to a committee appropriately selected. Action can be initiated once the report is received. This study could be funded by MHRD/NCRI.
2. With almost 60% of the population being young (in the age Group of 15 – 40) the challenge today is to capture the imagination of the youth. That an idea /concept imaginatively presented would capture the imagination of people is demonstrated successfully by two movies.
  - (i) Gandhi - by Sir Richard Attenborough.
  - (ii) Munnabhai

The first movie depicted Gandhi's personality and the 2<sup>nd</sup> an idea/approach of Gandhi – Both are successful. The way small movies/documentaries are encouraged, provide for making regular commercial movies depicting Gandhian ideology. Incentives could be considered.

3. Induct about 1000 bright youngsters @ 40 to 50 members in each state and provide a one year training at Wardha and other Gandhian institutions with a stipend of about Rs.10,000 p.m and let them work in 1000 villages for a period of 5 years to establish or create working models on Gandhian philosophy. They should be provided an honorarium of Rs. 15,000 p.m initially and raising it to Rs. 25,000 - 30,000 in the final year.

Thrust areas that could be considered:

- \* Development of local artisans and their technology.
  - \* Developing artisans with multiple skill set and integrate them into the village economy ensuring a reasonable standard of living for them.
  - \* Propagating conservation and alternative food Crops.
  - \* Encouraging physical exercise and yoga.
  - \* Documenting alternative medicines
  - \* Total Sanitation.
  - \* Environmental protection.
  - \* Dispute resolution mechanisms.
4. Conduct essay Writing/ Elocution competition to High school Students and college going students with innovative prizes.
  5. Reinterpret Gandhi's philosophy/teaching suited to the current situations.

6. Compulsory study of Gandhi at all degree courses.
7. A scheme to encourage rural development projects rooted in Gandhian philosophy. These could be taken as action research programme and productivity oriented to be taken up by NGOs and other institutions working in Rural Development, Capacity building, etc. A funding mechanism for this is to be involved and provided for.
8. Establish alliances and networks with organisations with a common cause.
9. Are non-violent methods coupled with initiatives for development an answer to terrorism and left extremism? A detailed study is necessary.

**C. Umamaheswara Rao, I.A.S**  
**Commissioner, AMR – APARD,**  
**Rajendranagar, Hyderabad – 5000 30.**

**NCRI's Role in Funding Projects**  
(Second Round Table, 27<sup>th</sup> February 2008)

Prof. N. Linga Murthy  
Vice-Chancellor  
Kakatiya University  
Warangal

I commend the NCRI for funding a project handled by The Economics Department of our University. The project is on exposure of school and college teachers to Gandhian ideas. The first phase of the work has been completed successfully. We intend to take up a survey in Bhoodan Pochamapally (Nalgonda dist) where the late Vinobha Bhave launched his Bhoodan campaign and found resounding success. We want to find out, through a survey, the current state of the situation about land donated under the Bhoodan. We wish to inquire into a number of issues: Whether there are any beneficiaries? If so, to what extent they have benefited? To what extent the land has been grabbed by others either through direct purchase or through forcible occupation?

NCRI should promote research on Rural Development and Gandhian ideas in Universities. Keeping this in view, it may start centres for Gandhian studies in Universities. Alternatively it may enter into MOUs with Universities for specific purposes so as to promote networking.

Up until the late 1980s, we used to have Basic Training Institutes in each district in A.P. Later on they were replaced by DIETs. The former were set up on Gandhian ideas of basic education. Now these ideas are forgotten. It is a sad state of affairs. Intervention is necessary in the curriculum on training of teachers, both in the DIET and B.Ed colleges. At least one paper in the curriculum should be on Gandhian ideas of basic education.

NCRI should also develop links with District Rural Development Agencies (DRDA) and conduct training programmes for DRDA officials so that their exposure to Gandhian ideas can be incorporate in their programmes.

**Strengthening and Reorganisation of NCRI**

Few other points for consideration:

1. The NCRI should be made a central funding agency like ICSSR/UGC/ICHR in our country with the ideal of propagating the ideals of Mahatma Gandhi under the overall control of HRD industry of Government of India. But it should be allotted more funds now when compared to earlier years.
2. Its Governing body should consist of more academicians also apart from Government officials in order to focus its activities on research and training on Gandhian ideals.
3. The NCRI can establish its linkages with environmental studies centre already established to propagate eco-friendly philosophy of Gandhi leading to sustainable development.

## **NCRI and Training Programmes**

Dr. Venkata Reddy  
Associate Director  
Vivekananda Rural Development Society  
GARIDIPALLI  
Nalgonda District

The country has enough persons with professional training at the degree level or above. Many of them either go abroad or settle in good jobs in the urban centres. In the remote villages the people suffer because they don't have the skills or the availability of persons with skills for engaging them in services. Even semi-skilled people are not available. Our organisation got a project sanctioned for training people in 'intermediate skills'. Under our project training is provided to Scheduled Tribes persons in sericulture, dairy, vegetable cultivation, grading and packing of vegetables and fruits. We also train the women in embroidery, tailoring, pickle making, etc.

NCRI should provide financial assistance for projects on training in 'intermediate skills' to people in the rural areas. One should select for this purpose, people in remote villages so that benefits to the trainees would be at an optimal level. The trainees of such programmes would remain in the respective villages in contrast to the graduates in agriculture, animal husbandry, fisheries, etc. Those who have completed vocational training programmes conducted by us, have been staying in the villages instead of migrating to urban centres.

## **NATIONAL COUNCIL OF RURAL INSTITUTES (NCRI)**

### **Second Round Table: A wrap up**

**Prof. C.V. Raghavulu**

- The original mandate for NCRI, based on the late Shri P.V. Narasimha Rao (the then Prime Minister)'s vision be kept in view. His vision in establishing the NCRI was distinctly Gandhian.
- Gandhi's vision, especially with regard to promoting the values of *Gram Swaraj* (village republics) self-reliance, *ahimsa* (non-violence), sustainable development and basic education should guide the NCRI's programmes.
- Half-hearted approach to programmes of vocational education with a Degree or Certificate orientation should be discouraged. At the same time, we have to balance a number of concerns. Besides skill development, the employability of the trainees is most important. Here, employability includes self-employment too.
- NCRI should network with Universities and Gandhi centers set up by the UGC with rural development programmes, government agencies and NGOs.
- Interventions and project funding, if any, should be preceded by studies/surveys.
- The credibility of the NGOs and the value systems of their leaders, besides the need for intervention, should be probed systematically before funding any projects.
- Monitoring, pre-project inquiries, appraisal and evaluation of projects is essential.
- NCRI should develop a national thrust programme on training of teachers in Gandhian values. A good example is that of Nai Talim teachers. The new generation of teachers be given training based on precepts of basic education, and other Gandhian values. To legitimize their role in the formal system, programmes of certification (e.g. Diploma) be conceived. The NCRI should take initiative in the networking of Gandhian institutions.

**RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE 2<sup>nd</sup> ROUND TABLE CONFERENCE OF THE  
NATIONAL COUNCIL OF RURAL INSTITUTES (NCRI)  
HELD ON FEBRUARY 27<sup>th</sup>, 2008 AT NCRI, HYDERABAD**

With a view to deliberate upon the objectives, perspectives and future course of action of NCRI, 2<sup>nd</sup> Round Table Conference was organised on February 27<sup>th</sup>, 2008 at NCRI, Hyderabad. The aim of the meeting was to discuss how the NCRI can promote rural higher education on the basis of Mahatma Gandhi's ideals of education. Secondly, the conference aimed at finding strategies for networking with the institutions that are trying to implement Gandhi's ideas of rural development and rural transformation in the background of fast changing rural scenario in the era of liberalisation and globalisation.

The following educationists, administrators and activists from NGOs participated in the meeting and deliberated on NCRI's future programme.

1. Dr. S.V. Prabhath, I.A.S, Chairman, NCRI
2. Prof. Lingamurthy, Vice-Chancellor, Kakatiya University, Warangal
3. Prof. C.V. Raghavulu, Former Vice-Chancellor, Nagarjuna University, Guntur
4. Prof. M. Ramchander, Former Director, Ramananda Tirtha Rural Institute & Former Head, Dept. of Political Science, Osmania University.
5. Prof. I. Ramabrahmam, Professor of Political Science, University of Hyderabad.
6. Sri Umamaheshwar Rao, I.A.S, Director, AP Academy for Rural Development, Hyderabad
7. Prof. B. Sambasiva Rao, Dept. of Economics, Nagarjuna University, Guntur
8. Prof. G. Sridhar, Dept. of Rural Development, S.K. University, Ananthapur
9. Dr. Hanmantha Rao, I/C Director, Ramananda Tirtha Rural Institute, Jalapur, Pochampally, Nalgonda.
10. Dr. Gangaiah, IES, Milinda & Bill Gates Foundation on HIV/AIDS, Hyderabad
11. Ms. Padmaja, Jattu, (NGO), Parvathipuram
12. Dr. Venkat Reddy, Former Deputy Director, Research Division, APAU, working for an NGO Presently with Vivekananda Institute of Rural Development, Gaddipally, Nalgonda
13. Dr. J.L.N. Rao, Associate Professor, Dept. of Political Science, Osmania University
14. Dr. Kishore Reddy, Associate Professor, Ramananda Tirtha Rural Institute, Jalapur, Pochampally, Nalgonda

The meeting began with Dr. S.V. Prabhath, Chairman, NCRI, welcoming the guests and participants. As the Chairman of the NCRI, he explained the aims and objectives of the organisation which include:

- Promotion of rural higher education on the basis of Gandhian ideals of education
- To design various courses around rural occupations in tertiary sector keeping the needs that are required in meeting the challenges of present world and exploiting the emerging opportunities in various sectors.

- Involving NGOs civil societies in rural development schemes
- To redesign teacher training

To conform to the ideals of the NCRI charter, Dr. Prabhath stressed on the necessity of a vision for the institution. He asked the participants to provide a direction to the institute on the basis of their experience in the field of rural higher education and balancing the institute's goals with Gandhi's revolutionary ideas on education.

The Chairman also spoke on the ways and means to develop a network with institutions working on Gandhian ideals and opening communication channels to benefit from their rich ideas and experience.

Dr. Prabhath also emphasised the need for research to understand problems and offer solutions. In this context, he laid stress on field-oriented studies. The chairman of the NCRI, shared his impressions on Gandhigram Rural University. He said the University retained its basic goal i.e., emphasis on rural development and rural transformation inspite of introducing a number of conventional courses under pressure. The institute could do this by introducing rural development component in every course offered by it.

Prof. C.V. Raghavulu initiated the deliberations after the Chairman's address. He requested the participants to come out with ideas on NCRI's charter and mandate. The questions included are:

- How to sensitise NCRI on the needs of rural people in the area of rural higher education?
- How NCRI participates in the rural development?
- What NCRI should do to realise its goals?
- What type of organisation and structures NCRI requires to reach the target groups?

Prof. Raghavulu requested the participants to start discussions on the issues. Dr. Gangaiah, I.E.S, made the first presentation. He made the following remarks:

- Since there are number of rural institutions working in the field of rural higher education, NCRI can work like a network organisation connecting all these institutions and coordinate their activities.
- NCRI can also work closely with various rural development departments of various ministries.
- To take up research in the area of policy advocacy
- Work towards skill upgradation for sustainable employment in rural areas for people with skill, semi-skill and un-skilled.
- Move in the direction of income generation programmes by widening the market for rural people.
- Resource generation to prevent rural migration to urban areas
- NCRI can create a website to link the agencies and organisations working on rural development and work for a micro-level planning at village level.

Prof. Sambasiva Rao, pointed out that a number of institutions such as NGOs, Universities, Technological institutions have started working for the rural upliftment. All these institutions are working in their chosen area and independently from each other. There is no coordination in their

work and sometimes they work for cross-purposes. To avoid such a scenario, Rao advocated that NCRI identify the thrust areas with definite programmes to help the rural folk. His suggestions include:

- To implement rural development programmes effectively, NCRI should come forward in providing training for people working with Panchayat Raj institutions.
- NCRI can also involve NGOs and Universities for this purpose.
- NCRI & Universities can collaborate and work together in studying and evaluating the rural development problems, schemes and programmes.

Ms. Padmaja representing JATTU, NGO, Parvathipuram, who is working for the tribal upliftment in the area, suggested that NCRI could strengthen ashram schools as their performance is very low. The functioning of the ashram schools is not different from other schools since both are emphasising on securing higher marks in exams.

She opined that NCRI can provide better training for people in meeting their rural needs. She made an observation that the training provided by corporate foundations was not catering to the needs of rural people. Basically such a training was only aiming at meeting corporate bodies' needs. There was a wide gap between people's needs and corporate body needs. NCRI could fill up the gap by providing necessary training to the people from rural areas to enable them to overcome their handicap; Ms. Padmaja argued.

Mr. Venkat Reddy, stressed the need for extensive training in the areas of sericulture, dairy, fisheries, packaging and growing vegetables. His NGO had been working in generating more income by encouraging the people to work in the field of sericulture. It also providing training in different fields to supplement income coming from agriculture. Mr. Reddy sought financial assistance from NCRI in providing training for more number of people in the villages.

Prof. Linga Murthy pointed out that Dept. of Economics, Kakatiya University was given Rs. 40 lakhs by the NCRI under Action Research Project to involve academicians and experts working in the area of rural development. He made the following suggestions.

- NCRI to be a research funding agency
- To propagate Gandhian values by starting a Dept. of Gandhian Studies in every university & to take up research on Gandhi
- Introduce an exclusive paper on Gandhi with emphasis on vocational training
- Propagate Gandhian ideas on environmental protection & sustainable development

Mr. Umamaheshwar Rao, I.A.S, in his presentation raised a few basic questions. They include:

- How to capture the imaginations of students on Gandhi?
- How to articulate Gandhian ideas?

While raising these questions he observed that peoples' dependence on government/state had increased and Gramswaraj of Gandhi has more or less disappeared. He further pointed out that most of the artisan classes marginalised from the rural areas creating a vacuum and crisis in rural India.

Mr. Rao suggested that NCRI could do a lot to change the scenario of the rural India. It should create multi-task artisans to meet the present day challenges. NCRI should think of work through KVKs, Khadi, & village industries board and other agencies for the rural upliftment.

Present age needs Gandhi's idea of non-violence more. Its necessity is felt now than in the past.

Dr. Hanumantha Rao stressed the need to change the mindset of people. He suggested that the NCRI study the missing links between different departments working on rural development. He pleaded that NCRI should promote skills that were in demand to improve standard of living in the rural areas.

Prof. I. Ramabrahmam exclusively emphasised on the role of NCRI in the field of research to study social problems such as contextualising development, crisis in agricultural sector and finding parameters to explain the crisis, literacy campaign in rural areas and impact of globalisation on rural life.

He suggested that NCRI should seek the services of Universities by financing research, creating academic positions and chairs to study these problems.

Prof. Sridhar in his preparation wanted NCRI to function as a nodal agency for all rural institutions. He proposed that NCRI should have a role in the recruitment of rural development functionaries and in providing training at local, middle and managerial level functionaries.

Participating in the deliberation, Prof. Ramchander said that the basic aim and objectives of NCRI were rural development. Rural development could be possible only when rural masses were empowered. Empowerment of powerless was a prerequisite for rural development. Empowerment could be achieved through capacity building in rural masses. Capacity building could be possible when rural artisans, skilled, semiskilled and unskilled workers were imparted the necessary inputs to learn and to upgrade their vocational skills. Introduce rural/small technologies to rural areas so that the masses could escape the drudgery of life and earn a decent livelihood.

More than 50% of the rural masses were uneducated. Provide the necessary reading, writing and communication skills to them so that they could become responsible citizens.

According to programme the basic task of NCRI is to identify organisation and institution including NGOs and universities which could fit into the task of rural development. Fund such institutions that could really take up the challenges that are encountered in the task of rural development.

The NCRI could entrust research projects to study the impact and evaluation of various projects funded by NCRI so that it could review its funding policy. The council may provide necessary financial assistance and entrust Impact and Evaluation studies of various rural development programmes and projects implemented by Central and various State Governments to Universities and eligible Institutions. This would give an opportunity to the council to assess the impact of the projects. These studies would provide an opportunity to NCRI for policy advocacy and provide necessary inputs for policy formulation.

After the presentations, the meeting was adjourned for lunch. The participants met again to deliberate upon the future course of action to be taken up by the NCRI. A number of suggestions have come from the members in defining a concrete role for the institution in rural development. Recommendations were made in the context of Dr. Prabhath remark that out of the 13 or 14 rural higher education institutions established only 4 or 5 are surviving whereas other had converted themselves into conventional institutions

or have gone in the market way. Therefore he stressed upon retaining the basic character of these institutions and developing a vision and the role NCRI can play in future. The following suggestions/ recommendations were put forth:

- NCRI can relate its role and commitment to Rural Development institutes in the form of encouraging research projects in universities, government agencies working for rural development
- Providing training to teachers and people in vocational courses
- Planning a P.G. diploma in rural development
- Starting Gandhian Philosophy oriented courses
- Involving NCERT and State bodies to develop course content on rural development at school level
- Exploiting emerging opportunities in rural areas in the form of imparting skills in providing services in mobile phone and TV repairing and basic computer skills such as data entry, internet purpose etc.,
- Introducing rural development subject as one of the optionals in the competitive examinations.
- Providing training to school teachers on Gandhian values .
- Documenting Gandhian life style.
- Upgrading skills of rural artisans.
- Tapping resources from IGNOU and collaboration between NCRI and IGNOU in developing course content in distance mode of education.
- Designing an inter-disciplinary course containing all aspects of rural development and practical training to impart skills.
- Conflict resolutions by involving legal institutions.
- Role for NCRI in micro-planning with the partnership of Panchayat Raj institutions, teachers of schools and universities.

To entrust impact and evaluation studies to universities on various rural development programmes and projects so that the NCRI could recommend to Government to review these projects wherever necessary.

Winding up the Round Table, the, NCRI Chairman thanked all the participants for their valuable comments and suggestions.