

Programme Schedule

30th May, 2008

Inaugural session

10:00 a.m to 11:00 a.m

Welcome

Dr. Chitra Naik, Chairperson, BOT, IIE

Inaugural address

Padma Vibushan Dr. Mohan Dharia, President,

NCRI's goals

Dr. S. V. Prabhath, IAS, Chairman, NCRI.

Vote of Thanks

Dr. S. R. Gowarikar, Member-Secretary, BOT, IIE.

2. Session – 2
Micro –planning

11:15 a.m to 01:00 p.m

3. Session - 3
Micro Planning

01:45 p.m to 02:30 p.m

4. Session - 4
Action Research

02:30 p.m to 03:45 p.m

5. Session - 5
Wrap-up

04:00 p.m to 06:30 p.m

31st May, 2008

Visit to Shivapur

08:00 a.m

- a. Round Table &
- b. Interaction with animators of IIE
- c. Visits to

09:00 a.m to 12:00 p.m

12:00 p.m to 02:00 p.m

- i. Women Centres
- ii. Handicap Centres
- iii. Agriculture Centres

Theme paper for the 4th Round Table on NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR RURAL INSTITUTES

The NCRI was established with appreciable objectives. There is a need to revisit these objectives and to draw up a vision plan for a focussed action agenda.

The objectives for which the Council is established are:

1. to promote rural higher education;
2. to develop institutions engaged in programmes based on the Gandhian philosophy of basic education and Nai-Talim and consolidate their networking;
3. to encourage other educational institutions and voluntary agencies to develop in accordance with the Gandhian philosophy of education;
4. to strengthen teacher training facilities for Gandhian basic education;
5. to design a variety of courses at the tertiary level around emerging rural occupations;
6. to strengthen the curriculum of all these institutions with emphasis on science and technology;
7. to encourage field-oriented courses of rural institutes;
8. to promote research as a tool for social and rural development;
9. to promote extension services to these institutions through micro level planning; and
10. to advise the Government of India on all matters pertaining to rural institutes as may be referred by it from time to time;

As part of the exercise aimed at developing a vision the NCRI has so far conducted 3 workshops and a National seminar.

The first round table looked at the gap between the objectives and achievements besides, identifying steps required for taking NCRI forward towards fulfilling its goals. Apart from critically reviewing the working of the Institute by way of self-introspection, the meeting looked at strategies for framing and implementing an action plan. Secondly, the meeting also tried to define the contours of the goals of NCRI to fit into the XI Five-Year Plan in the light of Gandhiji's philosophy and its significance in the context of globalisation.

The second round table discussed the ways and means by which the NCRI can promote rural higher education on the basis of Mahatma Gandhi's ideals of education, besides trying to work out strategies for networking with the institutions that are trying to implement Gandhi's ideas of rural development and rural transformation.

The deliberations of the third round table centred on the following issues:

- relevance of 'Nai Talim' system of education
- criteria to be followed for defining the scope of the proposed Rural Institutes
- reasons for disappearance of many rural institutes
- coordination among different rural institutions--need for institutional back up
- introduction of innovative programmes in the rural Institutes
- role of NCRI in promoting and developing Rural Institutes
- network among rural institutes
- action-based participatory research
- changes proposed in the functioning of NCRI

The national seminar, organised on 15th and 16th March, 2008, in New Delhi, on Revitalising Rural Institutes: Problems & Prognosis, covered the following objectives:

- Review linkages between higher education and rural development, as viewed by Mahatma Gandhi.
- Take an overview of challenges before the rural institutes. This is aimed at reviewing the condition of rural institutes in different fields of knowledge and service and the way forward for them in the 21st century India within the liberalisation - globalisation paradigm.
- Rediscover the role and relevance of Gandhian institutions

The seminar gave an opportunity for in-depth discussions on papers dealing with the following themes.

- Relevance of higher education & issues in rural development:
- Strengthening Gandhian institutions.
- Activities and programmes of specific rural institutes/NGOs.
- Revitalising Panchayati Raj Institutions.
- The Priorities of the 11th Plan for Rural India.
- Networking of Rural Institutes/NGOs.
- Strategies for inclusive Rural Development.

Issues for the 4th round table

Some of the issues identified for the purpose of the 4th round table in addition to the ones touched upon by the earlier three round tables and the national seminar are:

- Focussing on the future directions and positioning of the NCRI through the establishment of a Vision and Roadmap for the NCRI.
- The XI Plan proposals of NCRI-- need for a larger allocation to meet the projected commitments.

- Building concrete programmes that will lead to the streamlining and consolidation of the NCRI's activities--coalescing all activities into a programme mode
- Identification of Action Research Programmes
- Strategies for the flagship programmes proposed:
 - a) teacher training,
 - b) peace and conflict resolution and
 - c) micro-planning
- Strategies and suggestions for improvements in the selection of projects for funding (filtration, group approach instead of single agency, avoiding duplication, transparency, etc.)
- Suggestions for revival of nai talim
- Designing courses at the tertiary level around emerging rural occupations
- Advising the Government of India on matters pertaining to rural institutes
- Networking with Government agencies with regard to specific programmes.
- Building support basis for policy advocacy for design of programmes on Gandhian lines.

Some of the parameters for the proposed activities are:

- to agree on objectives and strategies
- to negotiate on responsibility sharing
- to empower local communities and involve local institutions
- to combine local knowledge with technical information
- to accord importance given to the gender aspects of development.
- To sensitise policy makers and heads of Rural Institutes/Gandhian institutions about the plight of socially disadvantaged groups and to impress upon them about the need for affirmative action to enable them to close the gap.
- Reflections on the ways to incorporate livelihoods-oriented perspective in the programmes of Rural Institutes/Gandhian institutions/NGOs.

Catalyst role of NCRI in catering to the young and in developing leadership among the youth.

NCRI: 4TH Round Table: 30-31 May, 2008
List of Participants

Officials

1. **Dr. S.V.Prabhath, IAS:** Chairman, National Council of Rural Institutes (NCRI).
2. **Shri. Arun Sinha:** OSD, National Council of Rural Institutes.
3. **Prof. C. V. Raghavulu:** Former Vice-Chancellor, Acharya Nagarjuna University.

Non-officials

1. **Dr. Mohan Dharia :** Former Union Minister and Dy. Chairman, Planning Commission, freedom fighter and great Gandhian thinker. At present, Chairman of Confederation of NGOs in Rural India (CNRI) and President, ‘Vanarai’
2. **Dr. Chitra Naik :** Former, Member, Planning Commission, Govt. of India, At present Chairperson, Board of Trustees (BoT), Indian Institute of Education (IIE), Pune.
3. **Shri Pramod Kale :** Former Director, Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre, Vice Chairperson, Board of Trustees, IIE, Pune.
4. **Dr. S.R. Gowariker :** Former Vice Chancellor, Technical University, Patiala. Chairman, Executive Committee, IIE, Pune.
5. **Dr. Ram Takwale :** Former Vice Chancellor, University of Pune, YCMOU Member Bo T, IIE, Pune.
6. **Prof. Gautam Sen :** Professor of Strategic Studies (retd.). At present Hon. Director General, IIE and Member Bo T, IIE, Pune.
7. **Prof. Pratap Borade :** Principal, Institute of Information Technology, Vidyanagari, Bramati and Member, Bo T, IIE, Pune.
8. **Dr. G.T. Panse :** Former Dy Director, NCL., Member, BoT, IIE, Pune.
9. **Shri S.C. Behar, IAS (retd.) :** Former Chief Secretary, Madhya Pradesh Govt. and former Vice Chancellor, Makhanlal Chaturvedi University.
10. **Dr. Sudarshan Iyengar :** Vice-Chancellor, Gujarat Vidyapeeth, Ahmedabad.

- 11. Dr. S.S. Kulkarni** : Former Professor at NIBM. At present, President, Narayan Ashram, Koloshi, Kankavli-416 610.
- 12. Prof. K.B. Powar** : Former Vice-Chancellor, Shivaji University, Kolhapur and Secretary General of AIU.
- 13. Prof. Narayan Hegde** : President, Bhartiya Agro Industries Foundation (BAIF).
- 14. Prof. Arunkumar Dave** : Director, Lokseva Mahavidyalaya, Bhavnagar, Gujarat.
- 15. Prof. D.N. Deobagkar** : Vice Chancellor, Goa University.
- 16. Shri P. D. Thakkar** : Director, Lokseva Mahavidyalaya, Lok Bharati Community Science Centre, Bhavnagar, Gujarat.
- 17. Dr. Ambika Jain** : Director, Centre for Educational Studies, IIE, Pune.
- 18. Prof. A.G. Nevase** : Former Professor of Agriculture, IIE, Pune.
- 19. Smt. Vasudha Kotwal** : Hon. Director, Grameen Mahila Vikasini, Shivapur, IIE, Pune.
- 20. Prof. R.K. Mutatkar** : Professor of Anthropology (retd.), University of Pune.
- 21. Dr. K.N. Bavale** : Director, State Resource Centre, Pune.
- 22. Dr. M.G. Takwale** : Former Vice Chancellor, Shivaji University, Kolhapur.

Welcome Address by Dr. S. V. Prabhath, IAS, Chairman, NCRI

We are privileged to organise the 4th Round Table in collaboration with the Indian Institute of Education, Pune. The earlier workshops and the national seminar have identified a wide range of factors that should be taken into account, while formulating the NCRI's plan for the next four years.

This is an opportunity to build a viable plan and for this we need more than a vision, to tackle unprecedented challenges in the current era. We are grateful to Tai and other distinguished functionaries at the Indian Institute of Education for gracefully accommodating our request to hold the fourth Round Table at a short notice. I am particularly delighted with the professionalism, speed and preparedness for going that extra mile. For the NCRI to reach another step, it is important to complete this exercise in a time bound manner. Our purpose, as stated earlier, is to develop a vision plan for the NCRI. This exercise calls for a multipronged approach; firstly we have to incorporate different perspectives and views of various institutions and intelligentsia. Second, to clearly identify the tasks ahead we must draw a road map by taking into account the requirements of the country and the prioritisation of our goals. Third, the programmes worked out should be based on problems and issues of rural India and such programmes generated should be in sync with the mandate of the NCRI itself.

It is in this context the deliberations of the 4th Round Table assume considerable significance. A shared vision should emerge from our discussions.

Some times we face antipathy towards chosen approaches aimed at addressing the core issues of development facing the country. Some view Gandhi and rural development as reaching a point of diminishing returns as it comes up in the wake of intense urbanisation and the changing preferences of society. Through this dialogue we have to clear such misperceptions.

Approach : The proposed approach is intended to achieve a more strategic and coherent structure of objectives for the functioning of the NCRI and its programmes. A result-oriented, consolidated plan for all NCRI programmes with time-bound targets and baseline indicators will be drawn up as part of the vision plan. As such, programme execution is expected to clearly focus on results to be achieved in line with the objectives of NCRI. This will entail transparent and open-ended deliberations with a sense of objectivity and integrated thinking – contributing to innovation and knowledge.

A theme paper by way of a brief note, prepared for this purpose, has been circulated to facilitate this dialogue.

Indian Institute of Education, Pune
Fourth Round Table held by the National Council of Rural Institutes
30th, 31st May, 2008

Inaugural Address by Padma Vibhushan Dr. Mohan Dharja

Friends, I am pleased that the Government of India in the Ministry of Human Resource Development is thinking of promoting Gandhiji's Nai Talim idea through NCRI and its affiliated Rural Institutes. I see that in the three Round Tables already held and in this fourth Round Table as well, a vision of the goals and functions of NCRI is expected to emerge. This is a good national effort and I wish it every success, in the interest of India's rural population.

I feel that the NCRI vision must be based on the totality of Gandhiji's vision of 'Gram Swaraj'. The major tasks visualized by Gandhiji for a free and awakened India were (a) creating a national education power of head, heart and hand for gaining knowledge and creating knowledge (b) discarding the notion that education means getting information only from a teacher and accepting that learning takes place through self-effort and particularly through work-experience. Gandhiji had said, "By education I mean an all-round drawing out of the best in child and man, in body, mind and spirit" (Harijan, 31.7.37). "He had also said, "Man is neither mere intellect, nor the gross animal body, nor the heart or soul alone. A proper and harmonious combination of all the three is required for the making of the whole man and constitutes true economics of education" (Harijan, 8.5.37)

According to the Nai Talim concept, education must enable people to provide for themselves good sanitation, acquire good health habits along with simple but nutritious diet, and overcome socio-economic and political inertia. In the rural areas in particular, people must be educated to exert themselves and use new knowledge to achieve self-dependence. This 'swaraj' alone can help village communities to prosper. Nai Talim also means systematic labour based on knowledge. It is on this basis that the mission of the Rural Institutes should be guided by NCRI. Rural Institutes (RIs) must help the rural communities to gain the knowledge and the mental and physical capacity necessary to gain and retain 'swaraj'. The role of the NCRI should be to strengthen the RIs for carrying out this mission of enabling the rural communities to gain such 'Swaraj' essential for democracy.

Another important agenda for the NCRI should be to help Rural Institutes (RIs) to connect their work and the work of such voluntary agency as believe in Gandhiji's philosophy. The important role of many voluntary-agencies in rural education and development is now acknowledged by government and society also. There is now a Confederation of NGOs in Rural India (CNRI) having more than 6000 organisations as members. In a recent conference of CNRI held on New Delhi on 25th to 27th April, 2008, more than 3000 delegates attended. They were drawn from all over the country and from

all sections of the Indian society. The focus of the conference was saving India's farmer community from various types of disasters.

It was an honour for me to inaugurate and guide that conference. The resolutions adopted by the Conference place special emphasis on helping the NREGS programme which can provide livelihoods for millions of rural families, along with creation of long-term infrastructural assets for the community, assuring it of stable economic development. NCRI may encourage RI's to give training, education and technical support to NREGS in their neighbourhood. This would be an excellent community education programme. Besides, NCRI can facilitate the Panchayati Raj to develop creatively, through RI programmes. Training, advocacy, publications, help in micro-planning may be the activities that can cover a large programme of rural development. Panchayats can be given technical advice by RIs for construction of roads, bridges, water-supply project, improved agriculture, and so on. What is now most important is to give support to rural women's Self-Help Groups and build this into a strong social and economic movement. NCRI can also help RIs to build linkages with NABARD, SIDBI, and other funding agencies, for transforming rural economy through financial education and economic empowerment of rural women.

The questions of climate change, destruction of forests, unplanned use of land and water, lack of improved agricultural, horticultural and livestock development practices, population education, promoting small-scale industries are essentially matters for educational action. NCRI can help RIs establish contacts with the concerned government organisations, industries and various sources of assistance for such education and development programmes, must urgently needed.

As Gandhiji said, "Education and development of the people must ultimately be designed and conducted by the people themselves. The activities of RIs should be directed towards this goal." But for the pursuit of these great purposes, NCRI and RIs must be kept free from old-fashioned bureaucratic administration. If NCRI can have this point included in its vision, it would be making a great contribution to national education and development. It can also help demolish the designs of WTO and money-lending organisations to prevent India's agricultural growth, so as to keep India forever poor.

I thank the Chairman and officers of NCRI and also my colleagues in the Indian Institute of Education, for giving me this opportunity to meet you all and to place my thoughts before you for consideration. I look at this Round Table in great hope and faith. It may help India to realise that Gandhiji's ideas on rural education are still relevant despite worldwide political and economic changes. Gandhiji's dream was freedom for all, 'Swaraj' for all, so that peace may prevail for all. The efforts of NCRI in this direction would be a great contribution. I wish this Round Table all success.

Thank you.

NCRI : Vision and Functions

Address by Dr. Chitra Naik, Chairperson, IIE, Pune

The National Policy on Education, 1986, referred to the Rural Institutes established in the Second Five-Year Plan (as recommended by the Radhakrishnan Commission) and stated:

“The new pattern of Rural University will be consolidated and developed on the lines of Mahatma Gandhi’s revolutionary ideas on education so as to take up the challenges of micro-planning at the grass-roots level for the transformation of rural areas. Institutions and programmes of Gandhian basic education will be supported.”

The 1992 revision of NEP reiterated this policy without any modifications. Socially useful work, social service and academic studies were to be integrated in the programmes of these Institutes with the aim of rural reconstruction through micro-planning in which the local communities are fully involved.

National Council of Rural Institutes : Expectations

The question of consolidation and, where necessary, further development of institutions already engaged in educational programmes based on Gandhian principles needs to be taken up by the Council on a priority basis. For this purpose, a quick study of the potential of such institutes needs to be undertaken. This will facilitate their selective development and allocation of funds for their special responsibilities.

Programmes of Rural Institute

Gandhiji’s vision of rural education and development must be reflected in the programmes of Rural Institutes. Alongside, RIs must know about and supportively participate in the programmes of the central Ministries and State Govts, focused on rural development, so as to evolve alternative systems of people-oriented education, convergent with their developmental requirements. Innovative education and training programmes for rural/tribal populations of all ages could thus be evolved. For this purpose, Rural Institutes could come together and share information and ideas under the umbrella organization NCRI.

The Gandhian standpoint of ‘Swaraj’ would have to prevail in the administrative and financial relationship between Rural Institutes and NCRI. A major thrust of RIs should be mobilization of the Panchayati Raj Institutions so as to involve them in a planned development process. This would require education for the whole village community. This may be both formal and non-formal, with emphasis on empowerment of the oppressed, especially women and other oppressed sections of rural society.

NCRI effort for institutional growth in XI Five Year Plan

The XI FYP period may be used by NCRI for planned establishment of RIs in all the States and Union Territories so as to concretize the intention of the National Education Policy (1992), in this regard.

Science and Technology in Rural Education : NCRI role

Investment of science and technology in rural education and development is of prime importance. A movement in this direction has arisen in recent years. For instance, CSIR has invited rural artisans to evolve rural technologies and the response has been enthusiastic. These technologies need to be tested for use in different agro-climatic areas and population-groups. NCRI could assign the task to RIs in accordance with their capacity.

Remote sensing has provided district-maps showing forests, water-supply, arid lands, etc. These could be of much use in development planning. Use of appropriate computer software, communication through mobiles, open education supported by TV lessons or even virtual class-rooms in some areas on an experimental basis, can improve the extent and quality of rural school education, adult education and all kinds of non-formal education essential for better incomes through improved skills of production, management, financial planning, marketing, and so on.

ICAR and state-level Agricultural Universities may require outlets like Rural Institutes to try out their research-results. Collaboration with State Institutes of Agriculture, polytechnics and so on would be essential for micro-planning. Generation of rural employment through the National Rural Employment scheme could create long-lasting national assets like shelters, bunds, bridges, culverts and other structures as well as roads and so on which are essential for better livelihoods, productivity, market-access, health and sanitation, water-supply and so on.

Trained labour alone can use new construction materials, understand new processes and RIs could collaborate in this task with concerned Govt. departments, thus combining educational and developmental programmes. Rural primary and secondary schools may participate in such programmes. This would offer not only technology and development oriented education through local activities but change the teaching-learning process also. Higher education does not mean bookish knowledge and programmes of RIs can demonstrate this truth. Persons of all ages, castes, communities can acquire 'higher knowledge' in terms of skills, culture and values if RIs can focus on collaborative and forward-looking education and work-culture 'for all' in rural communities. Gandhiji was not against mastering technology. He was against technology mastering 'man'. RI programmes can demonstrate this Gandhian principle.

Developing innovations like autonomous Rural Institutes based on Gandhian principles and engaged in mobilising rural communities to strive for 'Swaraj' is not an easy task.

They may have to face cultural, political and administrative road-blocks. This is where NCRI would have to give them the needed support.

NCRI as Development Co-ordinator

(a) Co-ordination between RIs and Government Schemes

The role of NCRI, essentially, should be to help RIs to know about the relevant schemes of all concerned Ministries and integrate them with efforts for Nai Talim style of community education. Also, universities, autonomous organizations, various concerned institutes and laboratories could be persuaded by NCRI to come together to help RIs plan and achieve rural development through innovative formal and non-formal education, training programmes and constant flows of technical information essential for 'Development Education' based on the Gandhian principles of Nai Talim and 'Swaraj'. Such programmes are also supported by India's Constitution through provisions concerning 'weaker sections' of society. Various legislative measures also seek to safeguard the rights of the weaker sections. NCRI could supply to RIs information about current steps contemplated by Govt. in this context. Also, NCRI should spread information about RIs, Nai Talim, Gandhian philosophy, through the media, consultations, conferences and so on. The contours of NCRI's role in Gandhian education for rural development must also be made known in India and abroad.

(b) Co-ordination between mainstream education system and Nai Talim

The RIs established in II FYP conducted Diploma courses in Co-operation, Rural Engineering, Rural Social Work, and Teacher Training. These included considerable amount of practical field work. While Gandhian philosophy was put into practice, through these courses, they permitted the study of English also. But in III FYP, the Ministry of Education wound up the RI programme and directed the RIs to get their courses recognized by any traditional university functioning under the control of UGC. The diploma courses had, therefore, to be scrapped and formal courses prescribed by the universities had to be accepted for the survival of the institutions, particularly in the case of their academic staff. However, Gujarat became an exception because the then State Govt. upheld Gandhian values and gave special recognition and equivalence to Nai Talim matriculation level and higher education courses as alternative channels of learning at those stages. Keeping this past of RIs in view, NCRI would have to ensure that UGC, AICTE, Boards of Secondary Education and so on, gives equivalence to RI curricula and certificates for jobs and further education. Also, the State Govt's. would have to be persuaded to approve NCRI graduates for employment under government.

NCRI and RIs

NCRI may have to determine the extent of freedom to be given to RIs regarding the Nai Talim curricula for various stages of learning so as to ensure equivalence with curricula in the formal system. RI courses must not lead to fragmentation of education. On the

contrary, Nai Talim and conventional learner groups must be helped to accept alternatives which give not only freedom of choice to the learners concerned but enable them to enter a wider field of work and education. Also, the question of language-learning in RI courses needs to be decided. In the RIs the medium of instruction would normally be the mother-tongue/regional language but facilities must be available to all learners, from the level of neo-literates to that of post-graduates, to learn one or two other Indian languages and also English as a requirement in a globalised and 'wired world'. Therefore, while accepting Gandhian philosophy and the value-system of Nai Talim, adjustment may have to be made from time to time to meet socio-economic changes world-wide and their impact on India.

NCRI : Legal Status

In recent years, there have been instances of Govt. of India taking a few tasks out of the authority of the HRD Ministry/State Education Dept. For instance, Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, State Resource Centres (for Adult literacy), Jana Shikshan Sansthan (for technical skill training of rural and slum-based learners), and so on are directly controlled by HRD Ministry, as they are given annual grants of Rs.60 lakhs and Rs.30 lakhs respectively. However, teacher-training has been placed under the National Council for Teacher Education established by legislation passed by Parliament. **The 'Vision of NCRI' could emerge strongly if NCRI were to be established by a law of Parliament. This would also save the NCRI and RIs from demolition when unappreciative governments, at the State or Central levels, acquire authority.**

NCRI : Funds

As regards funds, the kind of Nai Talim programmes of rural education and development visualized by Gandhiji, combined with the recommendations of the Radhakrishnan Commission, would require highly motivated personnel, functional infrastructure, an innovative management style and 'swaraj' to evolve a new education system for the people.

Security of funds for each RI is essential if this Nai Talim programme is to move forward without obstruction. The best way to fund RIs would be to reject the British-style 'grant-in-aid' system and adopt the Indian 'endowment' system in which the interest on endowment can meet the annual expenditure. In this system government can get more work done at less cost because the interest would be received from the banking sector and Govt.funds would not be required for annual grants. Such a system would reduce the office work of NCRI and leave it free to look after coordination of the research and extension work undertaken by RIs.

The 'Knowledge Commission' constituted by the Prime Minister has recommended that a truly substantial allocation should be made for education, particularly secondary and higher education. In this provision, NCRI should be included and heightened allocations should be forthcoming for NCRI. If we are serious about propagating Gandhian Nai

Talim, XI FYP should finance the establishment of one Rural Institute in every State and Union Territory during the plan period.

This allocation can easily be adjusted in the total allocation for Higher Education as it stands at present. At the minimum, NCRI could be allotted Rs.1000 crore (if possible more) as the nation's tribute to Gandhiji's memory and by way of a Trusteeship example to be set by the Govt.of India before the corporate sector which is gathering enormous wealth as a result of the economic reform policies of Government of India.

The proposal of Govt. to establish eight new IITs, seven new IIMs, five institutes of Science Education and Research, and thirty new Central Universities in XI FYP can easily carve a small niche for concretizing Gandhiji's Nai Talim philosophy and process through a staggered programme of establishing Rural Universities i.e RIs. This would be a proper tribute to the Father of the Nation who brought 'swaraj' to India at the cost of his life. NCRI may consider this vision and pursue it.

1. **Shri Pramod Kale : POSSIBLE ROLE OF A RURAL INSTITUTE**

We need to properly conceptualize the role of rural institute. While the primary role of such an institute remains education, the rural institute can also have multiple roles that can contribute to the betterment of the quality of life for the rural population around the rural institute. The rural areas that are close to large fast growing urban areas face continued pressure from the near by urban areas. The population in such areas requires specifically newer approaches for their educational priorities.

We definitely need to adhere to Gandhian ideas of “Nai Talim” about the methodology to be adopted for imparting education. The basic ideas regarding dependence on some specific skill set should remain the same but as more than sixty to seventy years have passed since Mahatma Gandhi expressed his ideas we need to take into consideration the changed circumstances. We need to consider the skill sets required now in the light of the access to information, access to markets and access to technological applications.

We need to take into consideration the newer skills set that are now necessary for employment or entrepreneurship. These skill sets should specifically include in the skill sets required by the local industry. The syllabi for the educational courses to be conducted in the rural institutions need to be developed in consultation with the local industry and need to be periodically updated.

The rural institutes imparting education based on Gandhian ideas need to make efforts for getting the courses offered accepted as ‘Equivalent’ by the local University.

Many of the agricultural universities have been running extension centres and are rendering services for the population. We need change in the role of such extension centres. We need to learn from the farmers. We need to make certain that our rural institutes document such information and practices which then can be shared with larger population. Our rural institutes need to be learning organisation.

The rural institute, set up as an educational institution will be recognized by the people as a credible institute if it provides certain services and practical advice that are needed in the local area. A large rural population today requires authentic and timely information. These services need to be local and area specific and should be provided in addition to the educational courses conducted at such an institution.

Most of the rural institutes have access to internet. These days the computers can be operated through the Indian languages and a learning rural institute can contribute the information gathered at the rural level to a common pool.

2. Dr. Ram Takwale : VIRTUAL RURAL INSTITUTE OF GANDHIAN EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

The paper presents a concept of developing a virtual institute for India in which the NCRI can play a coordinating and promoting role. All the existing rural institutes such as IIE can become a member of this virtual institute. They can work together in partnership and each one can contribute its core expertise and experience to cooperative education of the virtual institute, which will operate on an e-platform with a total e-governance offering all administrative and managerial services.

The model is to provide ALL the services essential for learning and development of a single farmer/villager along with his/her family and pariwar for enriching livelihood resources (farm and non-farm). The entire global resources and liberalization will be made accessible and available to all connected rural people.

All the member institutes and NCRI will work together by developing their workflows and carrying out their assigned role in providing learning and developmental services to a single person, his/her learning Pariwar and their community - - real as well as virtual.

The working is cooperative and through well linked teacher teams, each one contributing according to their core expertise and experiences to a value chain starting from knowledge and ending with transformation. Here values are not only monetary but also non-monetary. The values will be measured in terms of productivity, quality and excellence, profitability and sustainability and the system in terms of its transformative value.

The Nai Talim is made an integral part of the virtual education system proposed for the virtual institute and includes production learning, service learning and innovation learning. It also emphasizes the Gandhian core values in developing partnerships, pariwars and communities. They include openness, cooperation and collaboration, sharing caring and sacrificing, participatory decision making, transparency and accountability.

The partnerships are to be based on win-win approaches. In the existing Indian situation, we propose to develop public, private and community partnership on win-win basis. One of the goals of the Virtual Rural Institute is to create a urban (rural+urban) society with locality/panchacroschi as an autonomous unit in a sustainable and self-supporting development environment with omnipresence of global knowledge resources.

The Vision and Action Plan for NCRI can be created on the basis of the Virtual Rural Education System proposed. It is implementable with the existing Information Communication Technologies.

3. Dr. Sudarshan Iyengar : NAI TALEEM'S FUTURE ROAD MAP - SOME REFLECTIONS

Nai Taleem was formalised by the Dr. Zakir Hussein Committee in 1937. The principles apply from primary school up to higher education. It is not just a *method* in education. Such an interpretation and use of it would confine it in the positivist framework and lose the essence of it. Gandhiji called Nai Taleem also as *Buniyaadi* Taleem – basic education. Gandhiji had focussed on training the learner for work and for developing a character with integrity. His ideas on education are strongly rooted in his ideas of the society. His approach is holistic. For him education system is a sub system that helps other sub systems in building sustainable and non-violent society.

Recently, the National Focus Group on ‘Work and Education’ that was part of the curriculum revision effort taken up by the NCERT categorically recommended that unless work is made an integral part of the curricula, we cannot build a viable and meaningful national education system. Use of hand for learning is not only important to train the mind but also the mindset. Unfortunately, this basic aspect was overlooked in the education system that we have institutionalised today.

NCRI has been mandated to mainly work on the Nai Taleem curricula for higher education. But NCRI should also take a total view and influence the school education curricula in the country. There are a few good institutions working in the country that follow the Nai Taleem principles. NCRI should identify at least one in each state and support it for next three years and network them at all India level.

At higher education level too there are some good rural institutions. NCRI should initiate dialogue with the state governments to grant critical autonomy to these higher education institutions and work with them to make the curricula more relevant and rigorous. The new Nai Taleem institutions should choose what is best in the S&T for sustainable development. The new vision for India is not creating another America, but a country where everybody has work, adequate food and opportunity to improve the inner self. NCRI's ultimate mandate should be to support this vision. Nai Taleem is then the means to achieve the end.

4. Dr. S. S. Kulkarni : NCRI : (a) GOALS (b) MICRO PLANNING, (c) ACTION RESEARCH

A) Goals : Most thinkers like Gandhiji agree that education is not a process of lecturing by a teacher but it is an exploration by learner. Gandhiji's life values can be synergized with new technology of ICT. It will lead us to knowledge society which is inspired by love and compassion. Knowledge without love will destroy the world. The desirable future world will consist of connected self-reliant villages through satellite technology. Education is the means to achieve these goals.

B)MICRO PLANNING-The planning process should be decentralized. It will start from problem identification stage itself. The information necessary for problem identification and decision making can be gathered with the help of ICT and from local traditional wisdom. The facilitator organization will help villagers to learn, to plan and to execute. The community learning home(Swadhyaygrih)will be the place for it. Public participation will be encouraged to build and to administer the community learning home. In this way, the micro-planning of educational facility will be related to micro-planning of village development.

C)ACTION RESEARCH:1)Helping open universities /open schools to design courses relevant to rural life (eg: Arogyamitra of YCMOU).

2)Motivating peripatetic friendly teacher with a laptop connecting the various groups in the world (Discovery channel, google, wikipedia, chat groups, etc.) and discussing village related problems to promote information seeking skills.

3)Help NGOs to set up Community learning homes which will act as information centres as well as workshops where village youth and women can learn new relevant technology. It will have a small botanical garden where children can play and the elders can chat. All age groups from village can use this place as a small group study room and community hall. The atmosphere will be closer to Shantiniketan of Ravindranath or Totochan in Japan.

Action research needs to be conducted for constructing Community Learning Homes.

5. Dr. N. G. Hegde : EMPOWERMENT OF SOCIALLY CHALLENGED RURAL WOMEN THROUGH CAPACITY BUILDING

Among the weaker sections of the rural society, socially challenged young and middle aged women in the age group of 20-35 years are facing serious problems of survival and dignity.

Realising their plight, the Bhartiya Agro-Industries Foundation BAIF decided to develop a suitable training programme for such women to enable them to gain gainful self-employment or secure suitable jobs in various development sectors in rural areas. With this background, BAIF started a training programme called “Yashaswini” in 2007.

The training is conducted for eight months and without any fee. Selected women are provided lodging and boarding facilities. The minimum qualification for the course is H.Sc.

During the training programme, the women are trained in various basic skills required to take up either self-employment in agriculture and dairy sector. They are also taught about leadership development, promotion of People’s organisations(Pos), micro-finance,

micro-enterprise, community health, management of anganwadis and various income generation activities.

While developing such training courses, it was observed that there are enormous opportunities for the candidates to settle at the village level, organize SHGs, user groups and federation of Pos. In fact, these women can play very effective roles by maintaining women's groups and by making the skills available whenever needed. Most of these women have also learnt about the promotion of agro- based development programmes, including providing livestock breeding and primary health care services. The first batch of trainees graduated in May 2008.

A third of the 18 trainees have opted to return to their villages for taking up agriculture and animal husbandry for assured income in the future, another one-third will take up employment with BAIF and other voluntary organizations and the rest are in favour of pursuing higher education.

For the first five years, BAIF intends to provide fellowships to the participants as many of them cannot afford to meet the expenses. Subsequently, it is hoped to operate the programme by charging fees to cover the actual cost of training.

6. Dr. Ambika Jain : COLLABORATIVE RESEARCH STUDIES : CES & RI, SHIVAPUR

1. Study of Rural children's language:

It is observed that the introduction of standard language in grade I gives a culture shock to rural children. This can be avoided by including some of the features of the 'home-language' into the 'standard-language'. This study has been taken recently started and will go on for a year to yield expected results. Based on the findings, experimental reading materials for grade I will be prepared and tried out for further study of their efficacy.

2. Profile of women in Self-Help Groups (SHGs):

It is proposed to prepare an economic and educational profile of 1310 women participating in 69 SHGs organized by GMV which is contributing to the programmes of the Rural Institute. The study aims at finding out the possibility of further education for the members of SHGs, for academic advancement and for entrepreneurship. The final study will be classified village wise to provide inputs for micro-planning for local development.

3. Health programmes for women:

Women's health, education, work and family welfare are interrelated fields. These are being studied through (a) health and nutrition surveys, and (b) organization of health camps.

4. Sanitation:

IIE has established a rolling fund of Rs. 2.00 lakh to offer interest-free loan of Rs. 4,000/- for the construction of any design of toilet selected from the designs provided by Gandhi Bhavan, Pune. So far, mainly women from SHG have come forward to construct toilets and they have been given the necessary training. As many as 100 toilets have been constructed and 68 are at present under construction,(April, 2008). Out of these, 8 are Dinbandhu biogas toilets.

This project has increased women's initiative in organizing village sanitation programmes. They have written and produced puppet plays to emphasize the necessity of sanitation and construction of toilets by every family. Some SHGs have contributed to the rolling fund which now has about Rs. 2.5 lakhs.

5. Training of adolescent girls:

This programme enables adolescent girls to understand population problems, HIV/AIDs, nutrition for themselves, for children, old persons and so on. They discuss special health programmes of women and children and simple remedies also. The impact of this programme has to be studied. The coverage is in 6 villages including Shivapur.

7. Prof. Gautam Sen : POLICY PERSPECTIVES FOR ROLE OF RURAL INSTITUTES

Policy and planning is always influenced by political ideologies and the political gains that is envisaged by the politics in planning rather than in politics of planning. This is the single most important factor which has polarized the urban and rural divide in the post-independence period till 1990.

Higher educational institutions in India produced largest number of science graduates in the world without any one of the products having any notion of the requirements of the rural masses.

No other country in the world has been so dramatically affected and changed as India under the impact of Information Technology and the Internet. It is important to recognize that while the post-industrial age eradicated the problems of food, the post-information age will eradicate the problems of resources which entails that there will be more number of solutions than the number of problems.

Non-formal mode more suitable to the rural sector is equally important for situational learning for immediate use to equip the rural youth for employment, connectivity and interdependency between the rural and the urban areas which has now become essential to operationalise.

Education thus becomes the single dependent variable for development and safeguarding national interests and national security. India is too vast to incorporate a single standardized mode of formal or non-formal mode of education since each geographical region in India has a rich texture of cultural and civilizational attributes.

Gandhiji's "Nai Talim" can be used to connect the rural and urban India in an organic fashion. The technology available is stupendous and a model of using the cutting edge of space technology for sustainable development of rural areas has already been carried out by the Indian Space Research Organisation under the SITE programme visualized by Vikram Sarabhai.

8. Prof. G. T. Panse : INTEGRATED RURAL EDUCATION AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Resource mobilisation for developing society with a sound foundation of educational and moral fibre is a key step forward for achieving goal of development. Information and biotechnological techniques are means of modern life. Essential elements to focus are (i) energy, (ii) water, (iii) farming, (iv) health and (v) education. Review of work done after independence to transform rural India be considered for future guidelines on the subject and plan of action programme.

An important goal of modern society is to gain from nature suitable projects to be identified for sustainable growth. Such projects need proper focus and utilisation of technology for the good of the people.

Learning science and life skills technology by demonstration and actual hands on experimentation are necessary. The project work at renowned institutions like N.C.L. for select, talented teachers and students has resulted in propagating scientific temper among students of the schools and colleges. Our experiment of Gyan-Vigdyan Pratibha examination in Mahatrashttra State has been helpful in discovering young talent.

Different areas of science, art and commerce are essential and relevant to our youth for competition.

9. Dr. Arunkumar Dave : VISION AND ROAD MAP FOR THE NCRI

Religious scriptures and philosophy of all the nations, including India, proclaim one truth that the best medium of solving problems is education. Awareness among the people can be possible only through this powerful medium which can ultimately usher well-being to them. World summits of experts have finally concluded that solution to the problems of every field lies in Gandhian thought. Thus, education based on Gandhian thought requires to be applied in order to enlighten the human race. In other words, 'Buniyadi' / 'Nai Talim' is the only resort to be sought in this respect. .

India is a nation made of villages. The flow towards the urban areas requires to be stopped and there is a need for sustaining the prosperity of a village along with its long-established traditions, life-styles, culture and innate guts. The NCRI should support residential institutes which have been taking care of poor villagers with very little means. They have been dedicated to Gandhian thought for so many years in rendering services to villages.

There must be an effort to strengthen lost faith among committed faculty members and volunteers by making them once again alive and efficient for prosperous India. Such efforts will boost up intellectual, spiritual, educational and humanitarian approach as among them. This shall instill in them a strong faith by asserting the fact that they are not alone on this right and relevant track of education. When this vision is transparent, it is inevitable to prepare and execute proper action plan for the spread of basic elements of Nai Talim suitable to the need of present day circumstances. It can also solve the problems of terrorism and global warming.

Thus the NCRI should extend a helping hand to institutes of Nai Talim and thereby enlighten the flickering flame of Basic Education on the illuminated path of world peace and harmony.

**PROCEEDINGS & RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE FOURTH ROUND TABLE
OF THE
NATIONAL COUNCIL OF RURAL INSTITUTES,
HELD ON 30-31ST MAY, 2008
AT INDIAN INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION, PUNE.**

The deliberations of the 4th round table covered the following key areas besides other topics:

- a) Vision of NCRI
- b) Involvement of NCRI in micro-planning exercises of PRIs by lending support for this purpose to other organizations.
- c) Sponsoring and promotion of action research projects, to be taken up by Universities, rural institutes and NGOs.

The focus of the deliberations and main recommendations of the 4th round table are noted below:

1. Since NCRI's framework is based on a registered society it is restrictive. To enable the vision of NCRI to emerge and to allow it to play an enlarged role - - similar to that of the UGC and the AICTE - - **it should have a statutory status**, with an act passed by the Parliament.
2. The financial resources, the personnel structure and the infrastructure presently available to the NCRI are considered absolutely inadequate to meet the objectives enshrined in its mandate. Hence, it is suggested that at least Rs. 1,000 crores be allocated to it by the Union Government in the XI Five-Year Plan to strengthen its establishment and to meet its objectives.
3. NCRI should launch multiple initiatives to engage in partnerships with other institutions/organizations.
4. NCRI may fund projects of Rural Institutes (RIs)/Universities/NGOs with potential for action research after on sight inspection and review of their record.
5. NCRI should evolve strategies through RIs and other organizations, for its involvement in micro-planning exercises of PRIs, and also extend financial assistance for this purpose.
6. It is desirable for NCRI to fund projects on rural livelihoods through skill improvement programmes targeted at self-help groups of women and rural youth.
7. Nai Talim should be taken up in its original connotation, encompassing all levels of formal and non-formal education.

8. NCRI should encourage RIs/NGOs to provide the requisite inputs (information, training, education and technical support) to government programmes like NREGs, in their neighbourhood.
9. NCRI may support RIs to build linkages with NABARD, SIDBI and other funding agencies for transformation of the rural economy.
10. NCRI may assign to Rural Institutes the task of testing the rural technologies developed by artisans.
11. NCRI may act as a communication channel between ICAR and Agricultural Universities on the one hand and the RIs on the other for follow-up trials on the results of various experiments carried out by the former.
12. Rural Institutes be encouraged to train rural people in development education (skills, culture and values) and promote new technologies relating to construction, etc.
13. NCRI should help RIs with information on relevant schemes of government agencies and see that they are integrated with efforts of Nai Talim style of community education.
14. NCRI should take steps to spread information about RIs, Nai Talim, Gandhian philosophy, etc. through the media, conferences, seminars, etc.
15. By playing the role of a coordinator between mainstream education and Nai Talim, NCRI would have to ensure that the UGC, AICTE, Universities, Boards of Secondary Education and such other regulatory bodies give equivalence to RI curricula and certificates for jobs and further education. To enable this some sort of structuring, rather than fragmentation, of RI curricula may be necessary.
16. As more than seven decades passed since Mahatma Gandhi expressed his ideas, we need to consider/reconsider the skill sets required for employment and entrepreneurship in the present context.
17. A virtual rural institute of Gandhian education for all the RIs be promoted by NCRI with the objective of providing production learning, service learning and innovation learning aimed at enriching rural livelihoods. It be used for dissemination of information, knowledge and skills to rural youth.
18. Help be provided to RIs/NGOs to set up community learning homes which serve as information centres, as workshops in new technologies and as platforms for action research.

19. Projects aimed at providing training in skills (in agriculture, dairy, micro-finance, micro-enterprise, community health, etc.) for enabling self-employment of socially challenged young and middle-aged women deserve assistance.
20. Results of various research projects on further education/entrepreneurship of women in self-help groups (SHGs) and action research projects on application of Gandhian ideas in health and sanitation be compiled by NCRI for dissemination.