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Reduce
Zero Waste
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A tentative end to the debate on 'Waste to Wealth'

OUR ZERO WASTE JOURNEY

Let's do our part.

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A tentative end to the debate on 'Waste to Wealth'

The Government of India provides capital cost to set up Solid Waste Management (SWM) units in Gram Panchayats (GPs). The GPs have to generate own revenue sources to be able to meet the operational expenses. The logic put forth by some of the SWM consultants is that it is possible to generate sufficient income, converting 'waste into wealth'. This has sparked off a debate on the grounds that the idea of converting waste into wealth has many serious limitations to overcome. Moreover, even if a Gram Panchayat managed converting all the garbage collected into usable/saleable items, does it offer a breakeven? A series of case studies [of SWM units across States]conducted by the NIRDPR has come out with a tentative conclusion to this debate.

When toilet coverage in rural areas is crossing well over 96 per cent, the next big thing coming up in rural areas under Swachh Bharat Mission (G) is Solid Waste Management (SWM). The SWM component has been designed in a specific way in the guidelines of SBM-G is which the government shall provide capital cost for setting up the SWM units – ranging from ₹ 7 lakh to ₹ 20 lakh, based on the size of the Gram Panchayat. The onus of finding funds for operational expenses (such as salary of garbage collectors, maintenance of waste collection vehicles, etc.), shall rest with the Gram Panchayat, except that there are IEC funds in order to educate and prepare communities for household level waste segregation. There shall be no funds made available from the government's side for meeting the actual operational expenses of the SWM units.

One argument is, waste is not waste and it's only a perception, meaning it's possible to covert waste into usable compost, reusable and recyclable items which can become a source of income for Gram Panchayats to meet their operational expenses. This has sparked off a debate that first of all, the idea of converting waste into wealth has many serious physical and technical limitations to overcome, and hurdles that put you [a Gram Panchayat] off. Secondly, even if the Gram Panchayat managed to convert all the garbage collected into usable/saleable items, does it offer a breakeven?

The debate goes like this. While it is true that kitchen waste can be composted, or converted into bio-methane gas for cooking and items such as plastics, bottles, cardboards and papers can be sold out to recyclers, do all these hand enough money to meet the operational expenses? Waste collection and processing is a labour-intensive proposition. Once it starts and a system is put in place, it has to go on regularly. There is a lot of physical work, logistics and coordination to be done. It involves supervision, planning, execution, monitoring and so on, which involve wages/salaries. Some enthusiastic Elected Representatives (ERs) started off waste management units in their Gram Panchayats, fascinated by the idea of converting waste into wealth - passed on by some experts in a training hall - gave up no sooner than they started because they found expenses are far more than income they could generate from such units. Such examples scare away others from making any such attempts.

How do we end this debate? Waste management has to take place for it is becoming a medical emergency from the point of view of health. Further, it is more an expression of cultural practice and quality of mindset, than a matter of visual aesthetics. Our perspective and reasoning may differ, but the fact remains

that none of us want to live on a pile of garbage. Garbage must be collected regularly and disposed scientifically, regardless of it being understood as wealth or waste or for-profit or as a civic duty of a Gram Panchayat. The point is, a waste management system introduced must be sustainable in the long run. Waste management cannot be a project with an end-date. Case studies conducted by NIRDPR across States offer a tentative answer to this debate on wealth to waste. Four brief case studies are presented below to unfold and find out what insights these stories can reveal.

Case – 1: Mudichur Gram Panchayat (near Chennai), Tamil Nadu: This is almost at the outer ring of Chennai. Total population is 15,000 (2011) and the number of households is 5326 (2012). There are 12 wards with 209 streets and lanes. There are more than 520 shops and two marriage halls. SWM system here has been put in place about 7–8 years ago by the Gram Panchayat with the help of an NGO called Hand-in-Hand in Kancheepuram with the support of DRDA. The NGO played an instrumental role in initial setting up and evolving a management model. The NGO trained 26 sanitation workers ['Green Friends', as they are locally known], including one supervisor, and one person taking care of the vermi-compost unit. The total average monthly operational expenditure reported is ₹ 1.6 lakh and the average expenditure reported is ₹ 1.3 lakh. Major portion of the incomes comes from households and shops that pay monthly user fees. Income from the sale of vermi-compost is hardly ₹ 3000 per month, and the GP has the practice of bestowing the Green Friends with incentives by giving back whatever sale proceeds they get after the sale of dry wastes such as plastics and bottles. A point to note here is, a considerable number of shops and households do not pay. The GP does not insist on their paying. In Mudichur, the

GP runs an RO plant for drinking water supply. This was set up by the Gram Panchayat and is operated by the local SHG women. The commission (share from the profit) that the GP gets from the SHGs helps the GP to compensate the loss incurred in running the solid waste management unit. Thus, the SWM unit is running successfully through a cross-subsidy model like this.

Case–2: Kurudampalayam Gram Panchayat (near Coimbatore), Tamil Nadu: This GP is located very close to Coimbatore city in Tamil Nadu. It has 14 wards with a population of about 33,000 people which would amount to 11,360 households. There are marriage halls, restaurants, shops and other establishments. SWM unit here was set up in the year 2013. The amount of waste generated (in eight of the wards) is 800 kgs per day. The GP had covered only eight wards at the time of conducting this case study.

> " The message should not be: You create waste, we are here to manage, rather it must be to move towards progressive reduction of waste from being generated in the first place "

The basic approach at Kurudampalayam SWM unit is that any waste can be converted into wealth. The GP is very liberal about collecting user charges. The GP president, who is the torchbearer of this effort, believes that waste to wealth shall pay off the entire expenditure incurred in due course. There are many products produced from waste. They include vermicompost, vermiwash, ordinary compost, earthworms, panchakayam, cleaning powder from orange peels, eggshell powder, eggs from ducks, and biogas generated for cooking food to the workers, etc. The expenditure incurred in the last six

months was ₹ 35.28 lakh, and the income from converted wealth, including the user fees collected add up to ₹ 12 lakh. There is a big gap between income and expenditure. The loss incurred is recouped by the respective chairpersons/ members of Board of various companies in Coimbatore, who are friends of the GP president (a local politician). At times, the DRDA also helps through some funding to uphold the name DRDA Coimbatore has earned because of this SWM unit.

Case–3: Brahmanagar Samabay Krishi Unnayan Samity Ltd., Ruipukur, Nadia, West Bengal: This is a multi-purpose cooperative society in Krishnanagar-Block 1 of Nadia district, West Bengal. The secretary of this society took up the lead to set up solid waste management unit in Ruipukur GP. Ruipukur has 21 Sansads, whereas SWM activity was taken up only in three Sansads covering 400 households. The main activity undertaken is making vermicompost from kitchen waste and sale of earthworms. They do not look for recyclable items from dry waste because of the culture in most West Bengal villages where the households preserve the recyclables to be sold to *kabadiwalas*, who visit them once in a fortnight or so. The dry wastes that the waste collectors of SWM unit get are all residual waste that cannot be put to any use. There is no income that can be counted on from such dry wastes.

The main sources of income are sale of vermicompost and earthworms. There are nine workers and three tricycles involved. The workers are engaged in door-to-door waste collection and vermicompost. The workers are trained in making vermicompost by Bidhan Chandra Krishi Viswavidyalaya (BCKV). The total annual expenditure reported is ₹ 5.4 lakh and the income reported is ₹ 2.05 lakh. Since this is managed by a cooperative society, they have not given a thought about collecting user charges, meaning no user charge is collected. The

cooperative society is incurring a big loss due to SWM activity. Yet, it is running because of the interest the secretary of the society has in producing and selling vermicompost, in the interest of organic farming. This is again a cross-subsidy model. The loss incurred is made good by the surplus earned by the cooperative, otherwise.

Case – 4: Pratapadityanagar Eco Park in South 24 Parganas District, West Bengal. This is a large Panchayat with a population of about 33,000 (7500 households). This Eco Park is close to Kakdwip and so is almost a Town Panchayat. It has 21 Gram Sansads, several shops and market areas. A local burial ground has been converted as the location for waste segregation and processing unit. The initiative came from the vice-president of the Panchayat.

This SWM unit was started in 2016 with technical assistance from a local NGO called: Amara Sushama Jalaprapat from Tamluk, East Midnapore. There are 40 workers and a supervisor. There are 11 tricycles and three mini vans involved in waste collection. Two of the mini vans are regularly hired and paid monthly on the basis of trips made. Kitchen waste collected from households and restaurants are composted (both vermicompost and ordinary compost). They sell a killogram at ₹ 10 and ₹ 6, respectively. The dry wastes (such as plastics, bottles, cardboards) are sold to recyclers. As per the Panchayat's resolution, all the households, shops, restaurants, marriage halls, vegetable and petal leaf markets, etc., pay monthly user charges at different rates as decided by the Gram Sabha. Payment from the entire category of service-users is regular. There are destitute households that live on government pension. They have been exempted from paying the user fee.

The total monthly income reported (for September, 2018) is ₹ 2.84 lakh. The expenditure incurred for September is ₹ 2.97 lakh. The contribution from the sale of vermicompost and other dry wastes is

₹ 44,161, which is hardly 15 per cent of the total income. The remaining 85 per cent has come from user charges collected from households, shops and restaurants. Yet, there has been a small gap between income and expenditure, which is being met out of the own funds of the Gram Panchayat. The GP vice-president and the staff appointed by the West Bengal State Government in the Gram Panchayat office are confident that a strict follow-up of user charge collection can help achieve breakeven and it can also help expand SWM activities to other wards of the GP too.

Pratapadityanagar Gram Panchayat in South 24 Parganas in West Bengal stands as a proof in support of the statement that it's possible to meet the expenditure incurred in solid waste management by proper collection of user charges regularly; and that converting waste into wealth can contribute only a small portion of the expenditure, which is 15 per cent in the case of Pratapadityanagar Gram Panchayat.

Let's get back to our debate

Waste collection from the point of view of doing 'good' to the environment or as a medical necessity is admirable. However, the debate here is about financial sustainability of these units in the long run, especially when it is pretty clear that operational expenses have to be met by the Gram Panchayats through own revenue sources, be it from converting waste to wealth or any other means.

Some of the commonalities and insights we draw from all the four cases we studied above are:

(i) Three of the four GPs studied are located close to cities, which are almost like town Panchayats. Village at the vicinity of cities and towns tend to generate more waste compared to the ones that are remote and interior.

(ii) All the four SWM units studied have the backing of not only BDO or DRDA, but also NGOs/Societies/ (Corporates) CSRs, who are willing to offer technical guidance and at times, financial support as well.

(iii) Three of the GPs collect user charges, whereas the one located in a typical Indian village setting (Ruipukur, Naida, WB), does not collect user charges. Even in GPs where user charges are collected, not all the households pay user charges.

(iv) In all the three GPs where waste to wealth is attempted, the highest contribution to SWM unit's kitty comes from user charges and hardly 15–20 per cent comes from the 'waste to wealth' activities, be it from the sale of vermicompost or sale of recyclable items. The payment from waste to wealth efforts is very minimal.

(v) The idea of making products from waste materials, beyond vermicompost and ordinary compost

for instance, washing powder from orange peels or eggshell powder from eggshells, etc., are good, but there is a need for additional expenditure, even if we play down the issue of the efforts required to market such products (eg., Case Study 2). At Pratapadityanagar (WB), they do only vermicomposting and ordinary composting; and the recyclable items are sold to the recyclers. They largely depend on user charges, which is forthcoming. The gap perhaps, is because nearly 104 destitute families and small shopkeepers have been exempted from paying user charges, which is a conscious decision by the Gram Panchayat. Otherwise, Pratapadityanagar GP proves that it's possible to breakeven if we properly collect user charges at differential rates from different categories of service users. Perhaps, this is possible in all the other three GPs also, provided the ERs are willing to charge the users. Secondly, the GPs need to pay attention on reducing the expenses by prudent waste collection arrangement and simplify rather than complicate the ideas of waste to wealth.

(vi) Finally and most importantly, one needs to take note of the fact that a GP exists not only to manage waste or keep the village clean, but there are several other socio-economic development functions a GP has to take up and implement. Waste management should not overshadow the other development works a GP is supposed to take up.

Tentative conclusion to the debate

As a matter of fact, operational expenses need not scare away Gram Panchayats from taking up waste management. All that is required is a pragmatic understanding of waste to wealth - not an overstated one, neither a fantasised one. Gram Panchayats should follow a no-nonsense approach when it comes to estimating where income flows from; and what kind of expenses are inevitable at all. A very crucial question that every GP functionary who is about to take-up waste management activity should ask himself/herself is: What is my take on clean village? In other words, is my purpose, a clean village or reorienting my village to get involved in waste management business, keeping all other works of a GP in a cold storage.

'Solid waste management' is an important component that must go into the Gram Panchayat Development Plan (GPDP). It's good and it is prepared in the form of a viable business model, meaning it must pay for itself, at least within a period of 2 to 3 years. Therefore, whatever perspective a Gram Panchayat can adopt on generating a business model with regard to waste management, it should be a model that creates value to the citizens and something that people are willing to pay for. Waste management at the GP level must be viewed like a social enterprise. The intent is not profit, but common good at an economic breakeven. Thus, the insights we get from case studies across States are illuminating to unpack and end this debate.

I don't get into answering if there is enough wealth in waste or not. After studying so many cases on the ground, my humble interpretation of 'waste into wealth' is that it is an overstatement. I shall get into a limitless experimentation of waste into wealth if someone, other than the Gram Panchayat, is ready to foot the bill. What is clear as of now, not very innovative though, is the possibility to meet the operational expenses, provided the ERs are willing to charge the users for the service – every household, every shop, every restaurant, etc., must pay user charge. Two cases (case – 1 & 2) indicated it, and the last one (case - 4) emphatically put it. A corollary to this is that the users are willing to pay, provided GPs are able to demonstrate at least in a few wards, to begin with, by putting in place a functional waste management system. Something that works, is regular and reliable.

Some lessons we can distil from these case studies are presented for easy grasp.

1. Let's begin in villages that are close to cities and towns, where people strongly feel waste as a real problem. The chances of gaining firm grounding is high in villages where people already feel that it's a problem.

2. A budgeting exercise at the GP level seems to be a must. It allows a mental dry run of how much is likely to be the expenditure, to determine which category of users shall pay how much user charge so that up to 80-85 per cent of the expenditure incurred is collected through user charges. Many SWM units were closed down after a short stint, especially because the GPs functionaries were drawn into it with the idea of waste-to-wealth, without having done any exercise on the likely operational expenditure.

3. Determine deferential rates for different categories of users of waste collection service (households, shops, restaurants, marriage halls, and other establishments) and have it approved by the Gram Sabha.

4. Identify an NGO or an institution with experience/expertise in waste management to mentor/guide the GPs.

5. Realise that waste management is more a socio-psychological problem, rather than a problem that technologies can solve. Simplify and build a strong management system.

6. There must be IEC activities taking place for household level waste segregation. Let them take responsibility. Consider seriously the possibility of preparing the households towards home composting. Let them manage the kitchen waste and the dry waste can be collected once a week by our sanitation workers.

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Improving quality of education in public schools through Little Leaders – Little Teachers concept: A model by Vandemataram Foundation

Dr. W. R. Reddy, IAS, Director General of NIRDPR, Hyderabad Interacting with students at Vandemataram Educational Research and Training Centre

Background

The quality of children of any country is the backbone for the future development. Recognising the importance of investment in the children, the Government of India has passed the Right to Education Act in 2009. Under this Act, every child aged 6-14 years has been given right to have free and compulsory elementary education. Despite spending Rs. 4385 per child per year under the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, three per cent children aged 6-14 years were out of schooling in the year 2016 and this percentage increases as the age of child increases. By the year 2017, 14.4 per cent children aged between 14-18 years were not currently enrolled in any school or college. At the age of 14, only 5.3 per cent are not enrolled, but by the age of 17, this quadruples to 20.7 per cent and further increases to 30.2 per cent at 18 years of age.

The main reason for many young children failing to progress to the secondary school after completing elementary schooling, as studied by ASER over the years, is that completion of elementary schooling does not guarantee even foundational reading and simple arithmetic skills. Majority of youth who had discontinued their studies attributed the reason to 'lack of interest'. So, why do they lack interest in schooling? ASER 2016 found that 27 per cent children in standard VIII are unable to read a standard II level text and 57 per cent were unable to do simple division that is taught in standard IV. These learning deficits were observed across all grades and it got accumulated with each grade. So, how can a child, who is unable to read and do simple arithmetic, accomplish the curriculum of standard VIII that includes algebra, science, and geography?

In addition to this, in traditional teaching methodology the teachers are briefed to complete the course curriculum and in doing so they are able to teach/mentor only top students of the class whereas majority of students are left without addressing their needs and interest. Hence, the majority of students are compelled to discontinue their studies. There is no mechanism within our school system to effectively address the needs of children who have fallen behind. Keeping in view the above-mentioned issues of education in India, Vandemataram Foundation (VMF), a private educational, research and training centre located in Kalwakurthy, Nagarkurnool district of Telangana, has made an impressive effort to improve the quality of education in government schools, especially in rural areas by evolving scientifically validated teaching methodologies. Therefore, CHRD, NIRDPR has made an effort to carry out a case study on the processes and activities of Vandemataram Foundation.

Objective of the case study

The main objective of this case study was to document the efforts made by Vandemataram Foundation to ensure the quality of education in public schools especially in rural areas. However, the specific objectives are as follows:

1. To understand the pedagogies developed by Vandemataram Foundation to reduce the growing gap between expected and possessed competencies of students.

2. To document the process of activities

carried out by Vandemataram Founation in order to bring the qualitative improvement in the educational competencies of students of public schools.

3. To assess the feasibility of this teaching model for recommendation purpose.

Data Collection

The information for the case study was collected by using mix method such as in-depth interviews with senior officials, staff members and students who were residing on the campus of Vandemataram, and secondary sources such as reports and documents available at Vandemataram office.The data for the present case study were collected at the office of Vandemataram Educational Research & Training Centre (VERTC)- Aksharavanam located in Kalwakurthy, Nagarkurnool district.

Objectives of Vandemataram

The overall objective of this organisation is to improve the quality of education among the children of public schools, particularly those studying in Classes VI to IX. To achieve this, three basic skills, i.e. language, logic and life skills (LLL model) were chosen as they are essential for any child to grow in the academics. However, specific objectives of the Vandemataram Foundation are as follows:

● To improve the language skills thereby enabling the communication skills;

● To improve the logic skill for cultivating computational and learning skills; and

● To improve the life skills among children in order to inculcate values, ethics, teamwork, leadership and management skills in them.

Three essential learning skills

To improve the essential skills among the children, this organisation has developed a Learning Enhancement Programme which focuses on why language, logic and life skills among the children are important for their academic growth and how these skills can be improved substantially in every child with minimum input (cost) support.

1. Language skills: The language skill here refers to a child's ability to read, speak and understand a text. Reading and ability to understand is the first and fundamental step to climb up in educational attainment. However, we know that 25 per cent of children aged 14-18 years in India are unable to read the text in their native language. Therefore language skills are very important. To improve language skills, this organisation focuses on building the reading habits among children by motivating them to read books of their own interest/choice at their own pace, with no time limit. Unlike the conventional teaching method, this model (learning enhancement programme) recommends that we should neither demonstrate the behaviour of correcting their mistakes nor ask them to recollect what they have remembered while reading the book. This helps in building reading habits, thereby improving language skills. Majority of students at Aksharavanam have read on an average 100 books. Once the language skills are built-up, it boosts the confidence of the children and helps in communicating/ presenting things in a better way.

2. Logic skills: In process of learning language skills, a child has to learn logical skills simultaneously. Logical skill means the ability of a child to understand the numbers' relationship, in other words computational skills. It is a universal finding that majority of students report mathematics as the most difficult subject among all subjects simply because they fail to understand the numerical relationship or computational complexities of numbers. The inability to understand the numerical relationship creates a psychological fear in the child about the numbers which slowly get translated as a fear of gland in child's brain. As a result, the child stops participating in teaching and learning and keeps himself disconnected from the classroom environment. So, the major challenge before academicians, researchers and policymakers is how to remove the fear of numbers or mathematics from a child's brain.

So, the removal of fear of math or numerical relationship and providing a conducive environment of learning for the children was the prime objective of this organisation. To overcome the fear of numbers' relationship, Vandemataram has developed a scientific reliable tool called Minimum Numerical

Facilitators evaluating the answer sheets while some of the students undertake the test

Skills (MNS) test, consisting of 40 numerical questions at the level of student of Classes VI to IX. Several series of this test have already been developed. The MNS test has also been validated by the State Council of Educational Research and Training (SCERT). After achieving a certain level of proficiency in MNS test, students are promoted to Minimum Learning Abilities- Math (MLA-Math). Like MNS test, MLA test is about improving the essential mathematical capabilities and confidence of students so that he/she can connect his/her self with the classroom teaching environment. Once you have overcome the fear of numerical relations, your confidence and interest in mathematics increases and you tend to learn more about mathematics in the classroom.

3. Life skills: Ethics, values, teamwork, leadership skills, and management skills are the fundamental skills for any student to become a good learner. Therefore, the Vandemataram focuses on these skills by organising balasabha, arts activities, and sports and games. Balasabha is organised by the students themselves.

Methodology to implement learning activities

Although Vandemataram recognised the importance of all three Ls, i.e. language, logic and life skills, due to several constraints at present, the programme is modeled on improving mathematics and logic skills of the students. To impart the logical and mathematical skills among the children, Vandemataram has evolved following innovative strategies:

Fearless Learning Environment: Based on research, review of literature and their own experiences, Vandemataram felt a need for drastic change in the learning environment of the children where they learn skills and abilities. Therefore, Vandemataram has designed such a learning environment for students where they should feel free and can learn by themselves at their own pace and should not solely depend on teachers. This design basically focuses on personalised learning and self-assessment.

How to create fearless learning environments: Studies have mentioned that the traditional way of teaching in the Indian context has not been effective mainly due to huge variation in competency level of the students and hence to reach out every student of the classroom by class teacher is not possible. Due to this, many students in the classroom are left with their unaddressed doubts which further create frustration in them. So, this creates a rigid and distress kind of learning environment
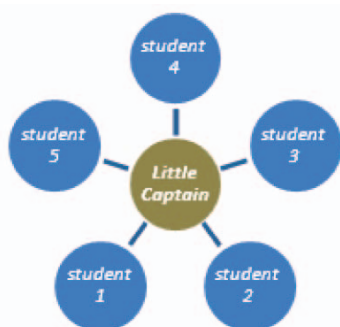
in the classrooms and generates fear among students to ask the questions which result into demotivation. To get away this traditional blackboard teaching and distressed learning environment, the Vandemataram has introduced the system of learning through peer groups which is called as Little Leader – Little Teacher (LLLT) method. In this method, a select group of students will work as teacher/leader for their own classmates and will help in learning or solving the numerical/mathematical problems, if at all they are not able to solve the problem themselves. How this method works is detailed below:

Formation of teams, groups and houses

Since learning through peer groups is central to this teaching methodology, the selection of levels of peer groups is imperative. To select these peer groups, the first step is to carry out a 'baseline test' at school level. This test consists of 50 questions representing 50 different types of minimum learning abilities. Based on the score obtained, students are categorised into different levels of abilities and accordingly they receive treatments to improve those skills. Students are further sub-divided based on different scores into teams, groups and houses. Following is the methodology to form

Teams

5-6 students form a team and the most academically advanced student of the team is selected as Little Captain (LC).

Groups

Similarly, 5-6 teams form a group and among them the most academically advanced student is selected as Little Teacher (LT).

Houses

A house is formed by taking two groups. The most academically advanced student of the house is selected as Little Leader (LL).

teams, groups and houses at school level.

Besides, a facilitator (for every 200 students) at school level will be there to manage the overall learning environment. In addition, he/she will also interact with other facilitators at school level in order to answer those questions which had not been answered by little leaders. This entire structure of the students creates a very healthy and fearless environment for the students to learn from each other at their own pace of learning.

How this structure works

As mentioned earlier, the structure has been evolved in such a way that one student learns from other. However, if a student himself/herself is unable to solve a question, he/she will first approach his/her other team members, if they are unable to answer, then he/she will approach Little Captain. If Little Captain is not able to answer, then he/she (LC) will approach other Little Captains and they, as a group, discuss among themselves to find out solution. If unable to find out answer, LC will approach his/her Little Teacher (LT) for help. In case this Little Teacher is unable to solve the problem, he/she (LT) will contact other LTs and try to find out the solution. However, if solution still is not found , this LT will approach his/her Little Leaders (LL) and if even he/she fails in answering the question, the other

LLs can be approached and together they can find out solution. Ultimately, if all LLs are unable to answer, all LLs can discuss the problem with facilitator who is at school level. This method provides eight opportunities/options for a student to get the answer of his/her question compared to only one in traditional method of teaching.

Self-assessment as a tool to improve numerical and mathematical abilities

The best part of this learning model is that it does not focus only on how to create enabling environment for students to learn but also provide a scientific way for analysing the learning achieved, abilities acquired and the abilities which they need to gain. In addition, through this scientific method, the speed of learning can also be assessed and hence one can project the time required to learn any specific skill.

Impact of the intervention (Model)

The success of any intervention or model is recognised if the outcomes of the intervention can be measured and it should have the quality of reliability and validity. As far as measurable outcome is concerned, the secondary data were sourced from Vandemataram. The data provided by Vandemataram show that there is significant improvement in the basic mathematical skills of the students during one year of course. Figure1 shows

improvement in mathematical learning abilities over the period of only one year among the students of different schools where this model was carried out and measured during 2016 to 2017. The basic mathematical skills among the students of different public schools have increased from on an average of 3-4 skills to 10-12 skills on numbers out of 50 in one year.

Similarly, minimum numerical skills among the students from Classes III to IX during 2017-2018 have increased from an average of 0.24 -5.57 (3rd to 9th) at the time of baseline in 2017 to 3.71 - 28.57 skills in 2018 (shown in Figure 2). So, the impact of the teaching methodology evolved by Vandemataram on improving the quality of education is clearly visible.

A few of in-depth interviews were also conducted with students of government school studying in Classes III to IX, who are the campus residents of Vandemataram Educational Research and Training Centre. These students have sought special permission from their school authority to be allowed to continue education under the guidance and mentoring of VERTC. All of them were found to have high motivation and aspirations for their future. Some of the basic questions are as follows: How do you feel about VERTC? What did you learn here? How is it useful for you? What do you want to become in future?
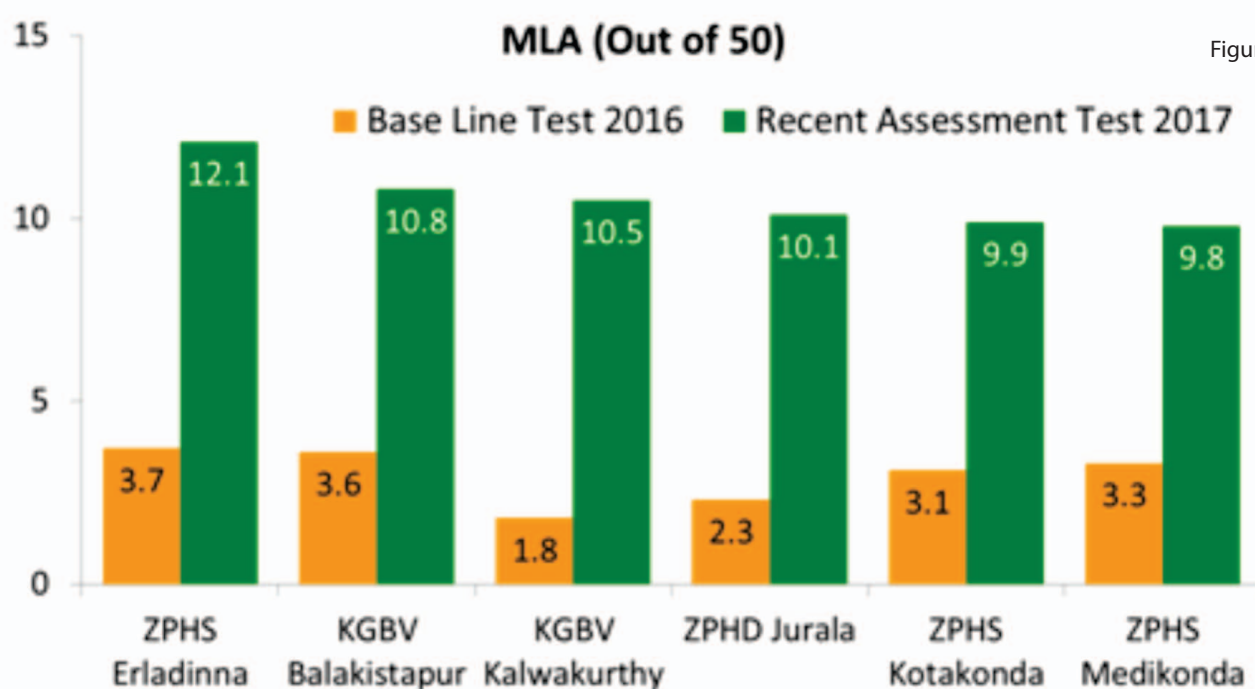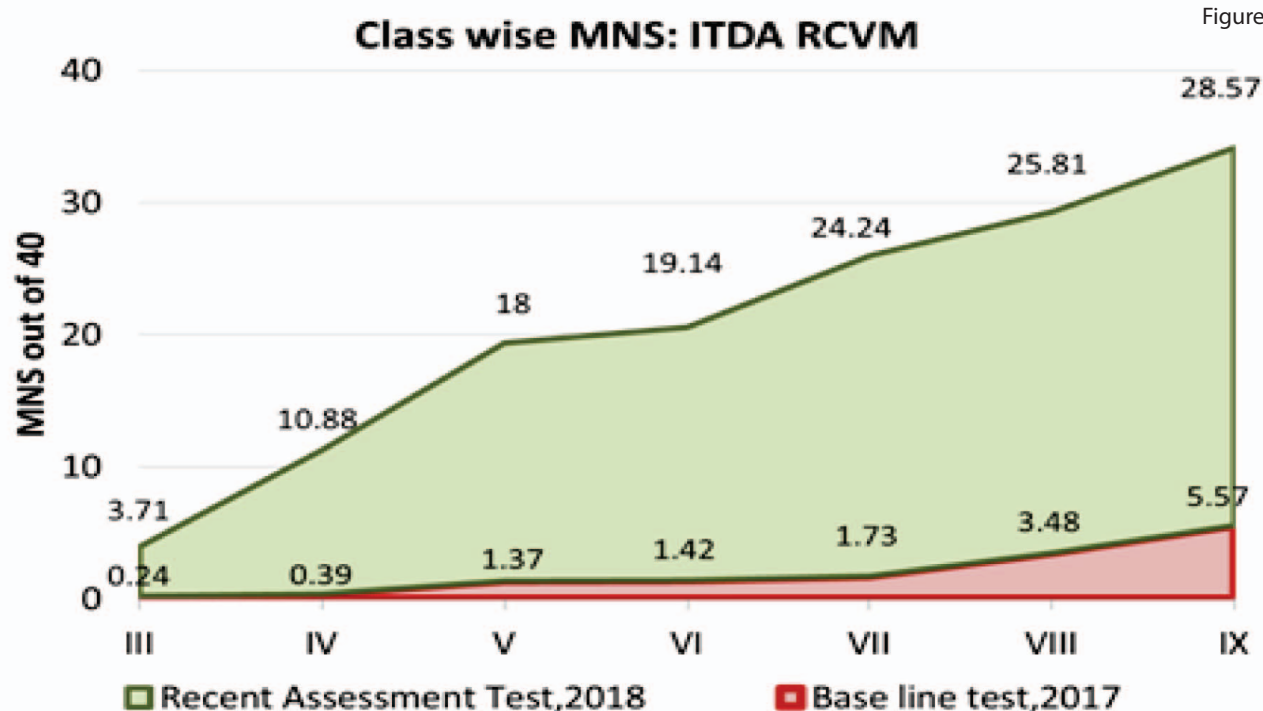

Figure-1

Figure-2

Class wise MNS: ITDA RCVM

A few of verbatim in response to questions are as below:

"My friends are my teachers and that is the best part of this school. There is no fear of teacher, who sometimes used to beat us. We play together. We get newspaper every day to read, lots of books are available here, and people are very friendly. I don't feel fear in asking questions to my friends. I was very afraid of English but now I can read English very easily. I want to become an English teacher," said a Class V student.

"I was afraid of mathematics as I was very weak in the subject. In my school, I was afraid of my math teacher as he used to beat if I failed to solve the question. Because of this fear I never interacted with him. I was just attending classes. Whatever he taught there I did not understand anything. Now, I started liking the subject and have learnt how to solve the math questions as I get lot of support from my friends and others. We get lot of practice booklets. I want to be a scientist," says a Class IX student.

Outreach of the programme
The secondary data provided by Vandemataram show that so far 74,000 students of Telangana and Andhra Pradesh have been benefited by this programme. In addition, 1600 teachers of 1008 public schools have also been trained on new pedagogies of

teaching methodology developed by the organisation. The model has been successfully implemented on demand basis in the public school of Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Maharashtra.

Conclusions

Based on the participatory observations and in-depth interviews with staff and students of Vandemataram in two different times, it may be concluded that the Vandemataram, to a large extent, has been successful in achieving the goals of improving the quality of education in the government schools keeping in view the limitations of the case study. Vandemataram has done good research on the quality of education in India and therefore, understood both macro and micro issues of education in detail. Vandemataram has spent significant time in developing a new teaching methodology with education experts and validated this methodology repeatedly before implementing in public schools. The proposed model of teaching method is child-friendly - there is no traditional teacher in this method, rather students themselves are teachers for each other. The method is called as "One Facilitator-Many Student Teachers- Many Students" instead of traditional method of "One Teacher- Many students." The proposed

model of teaching mainly focuses on the most important issue of education, i.e. 'discontinuation of study' and its main reason of 'lack of interest in the study'. The fear of mathematics has been cited as one of the important reasons for lack of interest in study which further leads to discontinuation of study among students. That is why Vandemataram has decided to help the students to acquire basic essential learning abilities in mathematics which helps the child to stay connected to classroom teaching thereby he/she continues the schooling. The learning materials and its implementation procedures are scientific and measurable. The proposed methodology is cost-effective. The success rate of the programme has been appreciable as several district administrators of different States have offered to implement this teaching methodology in the government schools of their districts to improve the quality of education and retention of the students in the school. Based on the above discussion, it may be concluded that this teaching methodology has the potential of improving the quality of education in public schools of India.

The case study was done by
Dr. Lakhan Singh,
Assistant Professor, CHRD.

Strengthening decentralised democracy

Prof. M.A. Oommen, Honorary Fellow, Centre for Development Studies, Trivandrum

"No local government can function on grants-in-aid alone and serve the expanding demands of the people. One suggestion is, every State should constitute a committee to go into defining a viable size of a GP in each State and then identify non-viable Panchayats. To proceed as if the majority of Panchayats are "poor" and should be spoon-fed is to accept a non-dynamic, static decentralised governing system," says Prof. M.A. Oommen.

Prof. M. A. Oommen, Honorary Fellow, Centre for Development Studies, Trivandrum answers the questions from Dr. R. Ramesh, Associate Professor, CRI, NIRDPR, Hyderabad.

Q. Kerala is often cited as an exemplar State for Panchayati Raj System and decentralised planning, what do you think are the lessons other States of India can draw [from Kerala], for strengthening the process of decentralised democracy in other parts of the country?

A: Strengthening decentralised democracy is the critical need of India: It is a constitutional mandate. Most States have failed in this. Kerala indeed is relatively better because the State could put-up a pluralistic social fabric, despite its deep caste, religious and class divide. This is probably the main lesson that the rest of India should understand and put into practice.

Q. What do you think are the factors that are contextual (unique) to Kerala, which one needs to be alert about, when trying to replicate Kerala's model of People's Plan Campaign?

A: It is very difficult to replicate the People's Plan Campaign (PPC). Every State/community has its tradition, culture and politics. PPC of Kerala was a political project in which civil society organisations like the Kerala Sastra Sahitya Parishad also cooperated. They also had the contributions of the association of neighbourhood groups called *Kudumbashree which* work as a subset of the Panchayats. This is unique to Kerala. What is important for local democracy and decentralised governance to succeed is handholding by political champions, followed by efforts towards institutionalisation. PPC was an exercise in 'learning by doing'. How far can other States do this bootstrapping is the real issue?

Q. Generation of 'own source revenue' is one thing that every development professional advises to Gram Panchayats. You have also written extensively about it. Certainly, this is a fond wish of every GP. What advice you have for GPs with regard to enhancing own source revenue?

A: The first step to augment own-source revenue is to disabuse one of the notions of fiscal illusion. When you ask for more like Oliver Twist, you cannot go too far. One cannot bank upon grants from States and call yourself as 'institutions of self-government' which every Gram Panchayat or municipality is expected to be in due course. Property tax is the most potential source of revenue, besides collecting user charges after providing for reasonable exemptions to the vulnerable categories. If rich States like Haryana are dispensed with property tax, you undermine tax effort. You cannot eat your cake and have it too. Bearing tax burden for local development is a civic duty. Unless citizenship grows and matures, you put the clock of democracy backward.

Q. Increasingly, operation and maintenance of all the assets of a Gram Panchayat are being handed over to the Gram Panchayat – be it drinking water supply, solid waste management, payment of electricity bill of the Gram Panchayat, etc. Maybe, this is doable in well-to-do Gram Panchayats where there are many sources of revenue (licensing fees for shops, house tax, professional tax, etc.). Such Gram Panchayats are very few in India. There are a large number of poor GPs that do not have any source of revenue, what do you suggest for them? How do we expect them to pay O&M or show own source revenue to become eligible to get Performance Grant from FFC? For poorer Gram Panchayats, what are your suggestions to increase their own source revenue – within a short span of time or gradually over a period of time?

A: You raise the issue of unfunded expenditure responsibilities. This is dangerous. Functions and finance should be devolved simultaneously. Moreover,

this is not only a question of functional mapping, but an issue the State Finance Commission (SFC) should try to address. We have to address the question of raising own source revenue and try to rationalise the transfer system. No local government can function on grant-in-aid alone and serve the expanding demands of the people. One suggestion is, every State should constitute a committee to go into defining a viable size of a GP in each State and then identify non-viable Panchayats. To proceed as if the majority of Panchayats are 'poor' and should be spoon-fed is to accept a non-dynamic, static decentralised governing system. Only Gram Panchayats which are genuinely poor, identified in terms of known criteria such as fiscal needs,

taxable capacity, tax effort and so on, you can identify the poor Gram Panchayats. Help is warranted only then. Local bodies are not intermediaries for administering grants. As a given locality expands in economic growth, trade, commerce transport and so on, taxable capacity and revenue potential expands. So develop your area first.

The curse of local governance is poor maintenance. For maintaining assets, both road and non-road, the first step is to make an inventory of assets and then assess the need for operation and maintenance. The SFC can make suitable recommendations on the basis of this.

Kerala, on the basis of estimate (not necessarily scientific), provides 5.5 per cent of State's own tax revenue for

maintenance of assets and make inter se allocations on the basis of need.

Q. Gram Sabhas in many parts of the country are not very active. People's participation in Gram Sabhas is not forthcoming to the extent desired. Why is this? What can be done about it?

A: This is because the people do not consider the local body as an institution which they own. People should own GPs. If people are convinced that their efforts will lead to dedicated water supply, street light, roads, healthcare and so on with assurance of quality of outcome, participation would not be difficult. They are likely to participate with a sense of partnership. Tax compliance is also an index of participation.

LIBRARY
TALKS

Prof. Umesh Arya delivers lecture on neuro-linguistic programming

Prof. Umesh Arya from Guru Jambheshwar University of Science & Technology, Hisar, Haryana interacting with audience during his lecture on neuro-linguistic programming (NLP)

Neuro-linguistic programming (NLP) is a psychological approach created by Richard Bandler and John Grinder in California, United States in the 1970s that involves analysing strategies used by successful individuals and applying them to reach a personal goal. It relates thoughts, language and patterns of

behaviour learnt through experience to specific outcomes.

Each individual behaves and responds according to a set of behaviours consisting of habitual thoughts, feelings, reactions, beliefs, and traditions programmed in his/her mind. A change in this behavioural pattern can bring in

positive changes in his/her perspectives and approaches.

A person trained in neuro-linguistic programming knows how such programmes are structured in the mind and how to access them so that autopilot behaviours can be changed.

The Centre for Development Documentation and Communication at NIRDPR had launched Library Talks as an initiative to organise academic discussions and debates on various topics that can benefit the faculty members, staff and students of various centres. In the Library Talks held on October 26, 2018, Prof. Umesh Arya from Guru Jambheshwar University of Science & Technology, Hisar, Haryana handled a session on neuro-linguistic programming (NLP).

Dr. Akanksha Shukla, Head, CDC, introduced the speaker.

"A professor of mass communication, Prof. Umesh Arya is a multi-faceted person, who has delved into spirituality, past-life regression therapy, deals with the present life ghosts of our life to extreme end of IT usage. Neuro-linguistics deals with mind, the healing powers of mind and how to go forth in life. It's a spiritual realm based on self-healing," she said.

Prof. Umesh Arya started the session with a quote from Apple CEO Steve Jobs about the customers. "According to Jobs, Customers do not know what they need. Steve Jobs made an instrument for them and told them that this is what you need. At the stroke of a pen, he brushed aside all management theories and consumer insights, and people are happily using Apple products," he said.

"NLP says that human beings are habitual of behaving in a patternised way. For instance, when you take a bath in the morning, all your actions are programmed in the same way for the past few years. Same applies to the way of our reaction. Subconscious programme is the seat of learning, which is guiding our responses and patterns. Sometimes, we behave in a different way and we don't know why we are behaving in that manner. Neuro-linguistic programming says we should use the language in order to talk to this subconscious mind so that we can programme it accordingly and it can execute the function the way we want, not otherwise," he said.

"NLP says that the angle of perception, which human beings adopt to see a particle or situation, is decided as per their way of action or pattern.

Prof. Umesh further asked the audience whether they believe that the past can be forgotten.

Evaluating the response, he said nobody can forget the past.

"If you expect a person to perform miraculously, and if he has failed many times in the past, he/she will not be able to perform in similar situations in the future too. The external factors are providing all kinds of incentives. The past guides the present and the present guides the future. If the past was turbulent, you will be feeling the shockwaves right now. It will have an effect on your present life too. According to NLP, an individual is conscious of only about 5 per cent of the cognitive activity. All your actions, patterns and behaviour emotions depend on 95 per cent of brain activity, which is beyond the conscious awareness," he said.

"NLP says everything should work effortlessly and perform smart work which is utilising our subconscious mind. We have to update the software. Any memory has a structure in order to be there in the mind. We have demolished it and it won't come back provided the memory deletion is performed the right way. Subconscious mind cannot differentiate reality and imagination and hence past can be repaired. Moreover, we cannot judge a person as he/she is behaving as per the patterns of the past," he said.

He further guided the audience through a few processes for memory deletion, reliving the happy moments from the past, shielding mind from negative thoughts and constructing the future as per the desire of an individual.

Prof. Umesh Arya wound up the session by stating that thoughts are like electromagnetic fields. "NLP says focus on your thoughts. The whole exercise of NLP boils down to improving the thoughts," he added.

Smt. Radhika Rastogi, IAS, Deputy Director General, NIRDPR, faculty members, staff and students attended the programme.

NEURO-LINGUISTIC PROGRAMMING

Neuro-linguistic programming (NLP) is an approach to communication, personal development, and psychotherapy created by Richard Bandler and John Grinder in California, United States in the 1970s. NLP's creators claim there is a connection between neurological processes (neuro), language (linguistic) and behavioural patterns learned through experience (programming), and that these can be changed to achieve specific goals in life. Bandler and Grinder also claim that NLP methodology can "model" the skills of exceptional people, allowing anyone to acquire those skills. They claim as well that, often in a single session, NLP can treat problems such as phobias, depression, tic disorders, psychosomatic illnesses, near-sightedness, allergy, common cold, and learning disorders. There is no scientific evidence supporting the claims made by NLP advocates and it has been discredited as a pseudoscience.

Scientific reviews state that NLP is based on outdated metaphors of how the brain works that are inconsistent with current neurological theory and contain numerous factual errors. Reviews also found that all of the supportive research on NLP contained significant methodological flaws and that there were three times as many studies of a much higher quality that failed to reproduce the "extraordinary claims" made by Bandler, Grinder and other NLP practitioners. Even so, NLP has been adopted by some hypnotherapists and also by companies that run seminars marketed as leadership training to businesses and government agencies. It uses perceptual, behavioural and communication techniques to make it easier for people to change their thoughts and actions.

Source: Wikipedia, various websites

Regional ToT programme on Strategies for E-Governance for Better Service Delivery

Dr. K. Prabhakar, Assistant Professor, CGGPA (front row, first from right) along with the participants

A regional ToT programme on 'Strategies for E-Governance for Better Service Delivery' was organised by the Centre for Good Governance and Policy Analysis (CGGPA) during 24-28 September, 2018 at B. R. Ambedkar Institute of Panchayats and Rural Development (BRAIPRD), Kalyani, West Bengal.

The strategies for e-governance for better service delivery training programme aimed at addressing the following objectives:

- To discuss the need and concept of e-governance in service delivery
- To draw inferences from the best practices of e-governance initiative
- To generate knowledge and skills about the role of e-governance for better governance achievements
- To make the participants adopt e-governance initiatives for better service delivery

The training programmes focused to cover the following four modules :

Module 1: Good Governance: A disciplinary transformative concept

Module 2: E-governance: A significant transformation in contemporary society

Module 3: E-governance is leading to best practices, i.e., transparency, accountability and better service delivery

Module 4: Strategies for e-governance as empirical factors for State's performance.

The training programme contents were delivered through a judicious mix of lecture-cum-discussion, role playing, debate, exposure visits, group exercises, mock Panchayats, group and individual presentations, and report submission.

Shri Suvendu Ghosh, WBCS (Exe), Director, B.R. Ambedkar Institute of Panchayats and Rural Development (BRAIPRD) addressed the participants during the inaugural session and highlighted the importance of e-governance strategies to improve service delivery, accountability and transparency. He also highlighted e-governance initiatives by different State government departments of West Bengal.

This programme was planned to cover different topics related to 'Strategies for E-Governance for Better Service Delivery' by different subject experts by covering the topics like aspects of e-governance in India, good governance-Indian perspectives and significance of e-governance in rural development, e-governance strategies by NIC, WB, e-governance, ICT in agriculture and rural development, Panchatantra Grama Panchayat Online System - ZP Mysuru-case of Karnataka, Aadhaar-enabled Public Distribution System - successful e-governance service delivery initiative by State of Andhra Pradesh, State-specific governance in MGNREGA programme, e-governance strategies for better service delivery - NIRDPR experiences (e-office) and Smart Meeting System (SMS), Online Paddy Management System - (OPMS) – an e-governance initiative by Telangana State Civil Supplies Department, e-governance in PMAY-G and successful cases for discussion and group work activities.

On the fourth day, participants were taken to RD&PR department headquarters located in Kolkata city to have a hands-on experience of different e-governance strategies adopted by MGNREGA and SRLM units. During the field visit, participants interacted with Shri Dibyendu Sarkar, IAS, Additional Secretary, Commissioner, MGNREGA and Dr. Niranjana Das Gutpa, Special Secretary, SRLM, Government of West Bengal.

On the final day, participants made a presentation on their training and field visit learnings.

Totally, 18 State and district level participants, including Deputy Secretary, UDA, SSP, TC, ADC, PPGC, PPGM and PDO(HQ) participated.

Dr. K. Prabhakar, Assistant Professor, Centre for Good Governance & Policy Analysis (CGGPA) organised the five days off-campus regional ToT programme.

Exposure-cum-training visit by delegation from the Northern Provincial Council, Sri Lanka

Dr. W. R. Reddy, IAS, Director General, NIRDPR in a discussion with the delegation from the Northern Provincial Council, Sri Lanka

The Centre for Good Governance and Policy Analysis (CGGPA) at the National Institute of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj (NIRDPR) coordinated an international exposure visit of a delegation from the Northern Provincial Council, Sri Lanka during 17-21 September, 2018 on the Institute's campus. On the whole, 18 delegates participated out of whom nine elected representatives of the Northern Provincial Council, Sri Lanka, including the Chairman, Deputy Chairman and members and six government officials (Chief Secretary, Secretary – Ministry of Education, Director – Social Services and three representatives of The Asia Foundation (TAF)) were present.

The purpose of the exposure visit was to analyse the recently launched Sri Lanka Subnational Governance Programme (SNGP) which seeks to improve the subnational governance in Sri Lanka through the effective institutionalisation of tested models for resilience, representation and redress. Given that a key component of the SNGP is consistent engagement with the National Provincial Council, NIRDPR was chosen for the capacity building of these officials as it is a globally recognised

centre of excellence in rural development and decentralised governance.

The international collaborative exposure-cum-training to NPA delegation at NIRDPR is a cross country exchange of knowledge and sharing of experiences. The main objectives of this visit were to focus on exposure to Indian model of decentlisation, in particular, functioning of Panchayati Raj System and rural development programmes towards poverty eradication, skilling, etc. The exposure visit has sought to enable the participants to strengthen local governance by sharing insights on the pioneering initiatives of NIRDPR in participatory planning and social welfare programming.

The visit was intended to focus on rural development and decentralised practices in devolved institutions. It aimed at equipping the delegation with the knowledge and experience that would help them make informed decisions and put in place effective policies within their local settings to improve policy formulation and implementation.

Following a thorough research of the specific needs of the programme and the range of participants, NIRDPR undertook the following exercises prior to and

during the visit:

- Designing a course for a week-long exposure tour

- Identifying appropriate resource persons/institutions for conducting technical sessions on selected themes/topics

- Identifying appropriate local government institutions for field visits to showcase live examples of policies and practices

- Liaising with the identified institutions to organise a presentation of the leading practice, followed by interactions with key officials and process managers

- Conducting a debriefing session/event to help the officials in learnings and observations for follow-up action in Sri Lanka

The training programme contents were delivered through a judicious mix of lecture-cum-discussion, role playing and field exposure. The major topic and field exposure covered during the visit mainly focused on gender governance, sharing of Indian and Sri Lankan experiences and challenges in rural development – panel discussion, History of Panchayati Raj in India, The Constitutional (73rd

Amendment) Act 1992, Gram Panchayat Development Plan (GPDP), good governance as an essential indicator of change management - exposure visit to CGG, Hyderabad, appropriate technologies for rural development, visit to NIRDPR's Rural Technology Park, visit to Gangadevipalli village – a community led and driven village, role of SHGs in rural women empowerment and promoting social entrepreneurs – the experience of Naandi Foundation.

Dr. W. R. Reddy, IAS, Director General, NIRDPR inaugurated the Sri Lankan delegation's exposure-cum-training programme. In his opening remarks, he mentioned that the NIRDPR fraternity have learnt lessons from the interventions. One of the major interventions was to provide work to any person irrespective of caste, creed and sex. If the local government or State government cannot provide work within stipulated period of time, they have to be compensated. The second strategy based on their experience was building social gap. The attempt is to empower women to create social capacity and enabling the women in the form of groups. It is a long process of social gap to equip women empowerment. The Director General also pointed at the major interventions like NRLM and skill development. Finally, in the concluding remarks, he stated that "whatever may be the schemes you have or we have, ultimately the capacity of the people should be utilised."

Dr. Gopa Kumar K. Thampi, Director, Economic Governance, The Asia Foundation, Colombo, Sri Lanka said that, "after a protracted conflict that lasted almost three decades, the Northern Province of Sri Lanka elected a new Council in September, 2013, following a historic poll that saw voters turnout exceeding eighty per cent of the eligible population. The incumbent Northern Provincial Council faces a daunting array of challenges, including rebuilding critical infrastructure, rehabilitating war affected population, leading economic development and ensuring political stability". Alongside, a key capacity challenge is to strengthen the knowledge and capacity of the elected council members and executives. "The exposure visit to NIRDPR, enriched us giving a first-hand exposure to rural innovations, process of decentralisaction and flagship programmes," he remarked.

Hon. C.V. Kandiah Sivagnanam, Chairman, Northern Provincial Council, Sri Lanka pointed that the learnings from the exposure visit would help them to apply some of the policies and practices in their province and also a training programme as such can be introduced.

The exposure visit of delegation from Northern Provincial Council was concluded with the valedictory remarks by Smt. Radhika Rastogi, Deputy Director General, NIRDPR. Addressing the participants of the programme she said "as government officials or elected representatives or NGOs, we are all here to make the society a better place. As we can see, life is much better today and I am pretty sure that nobody would prefer to rather live in the 1900 or 1800 era. If we want to live in the better future, we have a role to play. There is a hope for the better future. If we all can work together towards that, the outcomes of governance would be better. The people who are looking at the future are people with vision. Their energies are channelised in the right direction. I hope we all become leaders and we create a better tomorrow, a better future for everybody on this earth, together."

Dr. K. Prabhakar, Assistant Professor, Centre for Good Governance & Policy Analysis (CGGPA) coordinated the five days international exposure-cum-training visit.

Off-campus training programme on ICT Applications for Implementation of Rural Development Programmes

A session of off-campus training programme on ICT Applications for Implementation of Rural Development Programmes held at HIRD, Nilokheri

The Centre for Information and Communication Technology (CICT), National Institute of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj (NIRDPR), in collaboration with the Haryana Institute of Rural Development (HIRD), Nilokheri, Haryana organised an off-campus training programme on ICT Applications for Implementation of Rural Development Programmes during October 29-31, 2018 at HIRD, Nilokheri.

Forty officials, including two women from the targeted clientele from 15 districts of Haryana State, representing Rural Development, Panchayati Raj, Zilla Parishad (ZP)s, PRIs, DRDAs, SIRD, agriculture, minor irrigation and water use, and environment and forests

departments participated in this programme.

The main focus of the programme was to sensitise and provide knowledge to functionaries of Rural Development, Panchayati Raj, ZPs, DRDAs, SIRDs and line departments on the potential of ICTs and its applications, especially in the implementation of rural development programmes, Digital India, e-governance, e-office, Public Financial Management System (PFMS), Panchayati Enterprise Suite (PES) and providing skills in development of information systems.

To provide better insights into the potential of ICTs and e-governance, in addition to topics relating to information systems development, e-governance, Digital India, etc., role of Internet of Things (IOT) and Wireless Sensor Networks(WSN), Panchayat Enterprise Suite (PES), cyber security were also discussed during the programme. A fair amount of time was allocated on PES, e-Office and PFMS.

A visit to Badarpur Gram Panchayat in Ladwa block of Kurukshetra district was arranged to gain insights into utilisation of various ICT applications at the grassroots level, throwing light on issues and challenges that are being encountered and resolved in monitoring of rural development programmes.

The programme coordinator from HIRD and other faculty members of HIRD present in the valedictory session interacted with the participants and expressed their gratitude to the authorities of NIRDPR for organising such programme which helped the participants immensely.

All the participants actively took part and made the sessions lively. The programme was coordinated by Shri G. V. Satya Narayana, Senior Assistant Professor and Shri K. Rajeshwar, Assistant Professor from Centre for Information and Communication Technology (CICT), NIRDPR.

NIRDPR to introduce a diploma programme on Panchayati Raj Governance and Rural Development

The officials of NIRDPR, Hyderabad handing over the course material to the University of Hyderabad faculty members

A meeting with Prof. A Jeelani, Director, Centre for Distance and Virtual Learning (CDVL) and Dr. C Raghava Reddy, Professor, Dept. of Sociology from University of Hyderabad (UoH) was organised at NIRDPR, Hyderabad on 4th October, 2018, where the course material prepared for diploma programme on 'Panchayati Raj Governance and Rural Development' were handed over to the guests by the officials of NIRDPR, Hyderabad.

NIRDPR under the "Transforming India" initiatives has launched a significant project "Transforming India through strengthening PRIs by continuous training and e-enablement". The one-year diploma programme on

'Panchayati Raj Governance and Rural Development' is part of this project. This programme offers an opportunity to the elected representatives, Panchayat functionaries and others to acquire additional knowledge and skills on rural local governance. This programme is being offered through distance mode in collaboration with University of Hyderabad (UoH). The University was evaluated by the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) and awarded the top grade 'A'.

The one-year diploma programme is spread over two semesters. The minimum educational qualification for admission is graduation in any discipline.

Reservations for SC/ST/OBC students and physically challenged applicants will be in accordance with the policy of the Government of India and the guidelines of the University Grants Commission.

The duration of the contact classes will be 10 days per course and 70 per cent attendance will be compulsory.

Examinations, evaluation, declaration of results, issuing mark sheet, provisional certificate and other related matters will be as per the norms of University of Hyderabad and UGC guidelines. After successful completion of the programme, the candidate will be awarded a diploma from University of Hyderabad and the National Institute of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj.

The fee of the one-year diploma programme on 'Panchayati Raj Governance and Rural Development'' is ₹ 10000, (Rs. Ten Thousand only). The first semester of the programme is scheduled to start from January, 2019. The applicants can register online for the programme by accessing www.nird.org.in.

Dr. P R Ghanate delivers lecture on Shri Munshi Premchand's novel 'Godaan'

Dr. P.R. Ghanate, Editor, Shree Milind and retired officer of HMT, delivering a lecture on 'Godaan' novel, at the library, NIRDPR

Dr. P.R. Ghanate, Editor, Shree Milind and retired officer of HMT delivered a lecture on 'Godaan' novel written by famous Hindi writer Shri Munshi Premchand, at the library, NIRDPR.

Godaan, generally considered as Premchand's masterpiece, is a story of peasant India. It highlights the struggle between the peasants and money lenders, backed by various forces. It depicts an agricultural community that works hard seeking petty pleasures. The novel revolves around the community's exploitation, misery, frustration and hope.

Talking on the occasion, Dr. P. R. Ghanate highlighted that Premchand's artistry and realism are at their best in the creation of some of the central characters, particularly 'Hori', who emerges as an immortal symbol of the Indian peasantry. Hori in contemporary times is perceived as a symbol of Premchand's own life. Though Premchand had a tendency towards idealisation, his novel is realistic, controlled in form and disillusioned in spirit.

Dr. P. R. Ghanate pointed that Premchand's writings are extensively read and always reflected the 'rural face of society'. "The society we come across in his stories is very much alive and notable, even today," he said.

Smt. Radhika Rastogi, IAS, Deputy Director General, NIRDPR chaired the talk. The motive of library talk is to develop reading habits among staff and the faculty of the Institute. The above talk was organised by Official Language section under the guidance of Dr. Akanksha Shukla, Associate Professor & Head (CDC).

NIRDPR EVENTS

Smt. Radhika Rastogi, IAS, Deputy Director General, NIRDPR garlanding Gandhi statue on the Institute premises as part of Gandhi Jayanti celebrations on October 2, 2018 (Left); NIRDPR faculty members, staff and students led by Smt. Radhika Rastogi, IAS, Deputy Director General, NIRDPR taking part in plastic-free campaign as part of Gandhi Jayanti celebrations on October 2, 2018 (Right)

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