

Proceedings of the Workshop on 'Academic Initiatives of NIRD&PR and SIRDs' held at NIRD&PR on 12.7.2016

The Workshop was held at NIRD&PR on 12.7.2016 under the Chairmanship of Dr.W.R Reddy, Director General, NIRD&PR with a view to sharing the initiatives and experiences of SIRDs as also to review action taken on the decisions of the National Colloquium of SIRDs held on 15.6.2015. The representatives of SIRDs, CRTCN, Heads of CHRD, CESD, DDU-GKY, NRLM NRLM and CWEPA of NIRD&PR attended the deliberations.

The programme started with the design of the workshop and articulation of key issues by Dr.P.Durgaprasad, Adviser & Head (Training & Networking) and Dr.V.K Reddy, Adjunct Faculty, CRTCN, NIRD&PR. Briefing the house on the agenda for deliberations they indicated that the purpose of the workshop was to help SIRDs excel in their activities and invited the delegates to share their initiatives and concerns so that follow up action can be taken at appropriate levels. He invited the Director General to offer his remarks and guide the proceedings.

Director General in his observations expressed that the deliberations have been planned to learn more from the experiences of SIRDs and indicated readiness of NIRD&PR to help them become more vibrant and productive academically, even while providing a fillip to RD programmes in their constituencies. In this context, he referred to the National Colloquium of ETCs held at NIRD&PR in June 2nd - 3rd 2016 and the ideas which came up with useful suggestions for strengthening training and research inputs for Rural Development and Panchayati Raj. He shared his observations of his recent visits to SIRDs in West Bengal and Assam and expressed his desire to visit more SIRDs in future to learn more about their initiatives. DG indicated that NIRD&PR is seized of the problems of SIRDs & ETCs and will take up the same with MoRD, Gol. He referred to his recent interaction with the officials of the Ministry on the issues relating to fund release and hoped that the pending issues will be settled soon.

DG shared with the house his thinking to get the grants from MoRD to NIRD&PR and disburse the same to SIRDs & ETCs so as to avoid delays and cut the administrative layers in the process. Director General called upon SIRDs to play a major role in Research Activities. He referred to the proposal of MoRD to encourage Research Studies on different aspects of MGNREGA with a view to strengthening the programme management. While proposals were called from NIRD&PR, SIRDs and other institutions like IRMA, IIM etc. he wanted the SIRDs to come forward with Research Proposals which can provide feedback on the operational aspects of MGNREGA.

Director General referred to another initiative relating to development of Parameters for a Model SIRD by NIRD&PR, as part of which we will identify and document the “Best Practices and Initiatives of SIRDs”. The objective is to help the SIRDs to replicate the model SIRDs for making them vibrant.

The other initiatives of NIRD&PR, namely, India Panchayat Knowledge Network (IPKN) and establishment of a web based ‘rural connect’ which will be put in place. Referring to the latter, he said that the objective is to build a knowledge bank on rural development by drawing the field reflections of the functionaries. Secondly, the idea is to demystify the role of paper writing so that every field functionary will feel free to write short case studies, reviews, research papers and best practices for creating a knowledge pool. The NIRD&PR website encourages the field functionaries to place their documents on the interactive NIRD&PR website for editing and publication in the web or in its newsletter and the Journal of Rural Development (JRD).

In the course of his observations, Director General has drawn the attention of the delegates to the huge demand for training and capacity building of officials and functionaries of rural development and elected representatives of panchayati raj and to the fact that what is being offered is only the tip of the iceberg. The crux of the problem is that the training institutions are not able to impress the departments on the importance of capacity building and value addition. Performance improvement and

optimal utilization of physical and human resources would be corollary. Therefore, what is needed on the part of SIRDs & ETCs are is to scale up their academic activities to meet the emerging demands.

Dr.R.R Prasad, Head (CESD), NIRD&PR briefed the delegates on the Sustainable Development Goals: 2030 and urged the SIRDs to take up a quick field study on 'Dream Village'. He indicated that out of total of 18 goals 8 related to rural development. He was keen that the SIRDs partner NIRD&PR in this endeavor of Dream Village. He circulated a set of guidelines to SIRDs with details of what to do and how to do in the context of Dream Village. He explained the process involved in carrying out this exercise and requested SIRDs to send the outputs based on their analysis by 22nd July, 2016. In this regard, Director General has drawn the attention of the house to the excellent exercise carried out by SIRD, Assam and wanted like the same to be shared with other SIRDs through the NIRD&PR website.

Dr (Mrs) Gyanmudra, Professor & Head (CHRD) & CRTTC (Research) briefed the participants on the faculty development programme (FDP) relating to Research and hope that the last National Workshop of NIRD&PR on 'Effective Proposal Writing'. She informed the decision of NIRD&PR to include faculty of SIRDs as Trainers in such programmes. In this connection, the Director General highlighted the faculty development programme planned for ETCs incorporating competency building in methodological aspects of training and research. The programme for the ETCs will be first held at NIRD&PR in September and later moved to the States for organizing similar programmes regionally. The training of all the ETCs faculty members in training and research methods would be completed in the next two years. The purpose of this initiative is to enable the ETC faculty members to develop materials based on documentation of field experiences in the implementation of various development initiatives and to use the same as input for discussions in the training programmes. He referred to the NIRD&PR initiative to extend funding up to Rs.1.00 lakh per ETC per

annum for taking up research studies and hope that the SIRDs will guide ETCs in this regard.

The presentations were followed by sharing of experiences by the representatives of SIRDs. One of the core issues highlighted by the delegates relates to the delay in sanction of Non-Recurring and Recurring grants under Central Sector Scheme of MoRD. They have also brought to the notice of the Director General on the problems / anomalies in the draft revised guidelines of central scheme and requested the DG to bring about such changes as would be benefit the SIRDs and ETCs. In particular, they wanted the DG to impress upon MoRD to ensure that the feedback received from the SIRDs is taken into consideration before the guidelines are finalized. In this connection, they have expressed their concern about the cost norms prescribed under the guidelines that have a bearing on the performance of SIRDs & ETCs. Given the limitations of budgets allocated by State Governments, the condition to utilize a major portion of Recurring grant for organizing training programmes will affect the day to day functioning of the institutions. In this connection, the representatives of SIRDs requested the DG to get allocations exclusively for training programmes so that the funds available under Recurring grants can be utilized for the management of the SIRDs & ETCs. The delegates requested that there is a need for some more support for infrastructure development in the form of development of accommodation for trainees. It was pointed out that for want of funds for organizing training programmes, the capacity of the institutions was utilized only to a limited extent. In this connection, it was mentioned that in the absence of regular funding support exclusively for training from MoRD, SIRDs & ETCs have to depend on programmes sponsored by other departments.

Besides, it is proposed that the national level faculty development programmes (FDP) for ETCs on subjects like research methodology and training methodology should be organized on off-campus mode, so that a larger number of faculty members will be

benefitted. In addition, exclusive programmes should be organized at NERC, Guwahati, Assam for the faculty of SIRDs & ETCs of the NE region.

The representatives of SIRDs shared some of the initiatives relating to training and research activities and projects being implemented in action research mode. These include action research projects taken up with funding support from World Bank, UNDP and other Ministries of Government of India by UP-SIRD; massive training of panchayat raj functionaries implemented by HIRD Haryana; the five pillar approach on RD flagship programs of MGNREGA, Swachh Bharat Mission, Natural resources, Watershed and rural housing, being implemented by SIRD, Gujarat, sponsored courses taken up by TSIPARD Telangana; pilot project on bio-digestive toilets; CSR projects and entrepreneurship development programmes by SIRD, Meghalaya; use of IT platforms for knowledge connectivity and material development by MG-SIRD MP; restructuring of SIRD Jharkhand; preparation of manuals on Livelihood and RTI by HIPA; extending SATCOM facility to all the district, block and GPs by ANSSIRD, Karnataka; Capacity building of PRIs by TPIPRD, Chhattisgarh; demand based training programmes for youth and community by SIRD Nagaland and Shifting cultivation & sanitation by SIRD, Mizoram. The representative from SIRD, Kerala shared the collaborative research programmes that they are implementing with the universities. He also referred to the GIS Certificate Course being offered by SIRD, Tamil Nadu was highlighted. The representatives of SIRDs of Jharkhand and Andhra Pradesh have requested for guidance as the States are in these process of establishing themselves.

The above presentations were followed by briefing on the training and capacity building programmes contemplated under NRLM and Deen Dayal Upadhyay Grameen Kausalya Yojana. Shri K.P Rao, Project Director, NRLM shared his experiences in partnering with SIRDs in capacity building and wanted the latter to extend their cooperation to SRLMs in organizing the programmes. He indicated that resource persons have been developed under NRLM and their expertise can be utilized in the programmes of SIRDs & ETCs.

Shri Padmanabha Rao, Deputy Project Director, DDU-GKY Cell, NIRD&PR shared the training programmes which can be organized for the PIAs and development functionaries under the scheme and requested SIRDs to include the programmes under their plan of activities. He also requested the delegates to help the Cell to translate the materials of the scheme in the local language for wider use and also take up Evaluation Studies for Assessment of impact of the scheme.

Dr.R.P Achari, Associate Professor (CRTCN), NIRD&PR highlighted the performance of NIRD&PR networking programmes organized through SIRDs during last three years and the targets and achievements. He has brought to the notice of the delegates the shortfall in achievements in respect of some SIRDs as also the pending progress report and utilization certificates and requested them to organize the programmes as planned and submit the progress reports and UCs. Director General desired that SIRDs to make use of grants, furnish the reports and pending UCs by 1st August, 2016. As far as NIRDPR Networking programmes planned for calendar year: 2016-17, he assured that there will not be any fund constraints.

Dr.P.Durgaprasad, drew the delegates' attention to the preparation of State Training Policy for RD&PR as decided in the last Colloquium and to expedite the same. Director General decided that to facilitate the exercise the National Training Policy for RD&PR which had already been prepared and circulated to SIRDs be put on website for reference. he referred to the existing reporting procedures on the activities of SIRDs to NIRD&PR and requested the delegates not only to send the overall targets and achievements but also the details of the training and research programmes in terms of the themes, duration, venue, target groups, achievements etc. Information on the training programmes organized for panchayat raj representatives should also be furnished. These details may be made available to NIRD&PR on quarterly, half yearly and annual basis so that the same can be used for review in the National Colloquium. Dr.V.K Reddy, Adjunct Faculty (CRTCN) has requested the delegates to examine the draft

recommendations of the Committee on Human Resources of SIRDs and provide feedback so that the committee can finalize the recommendations and submit a report to MoRD shortly. Elaborating the criticality of human resources in designing and delivering training programmes with focus on ToTs he highlighted the need for a common framework for selection of faculty, even while underscoring the importance of continuing education of the faculty. He was of the view that the core faculty of SIRDs should be regarded as adjunct faculty wherever there are regular faculty positioned in the SIRDs.

Director General in his concluding observations thanked the delegates for their views and assured them that NIRD&PR will do its best to get the issues examined and appropriate action initiated. As for the additional faculty requirements of SIRDs are concerned, Director General proposed that they should identify resource persons who can be certified by NIRD&PR. He referred to the certification programme being worked out by NIRD&PR under which all the Resource Persons identified will undergo a training programme and get certified and be available for training programmes organized by SIRDs & ETCs. Referring to IT platforms developed by MG-SIRD, Madhya Pradesh, he requested them to share with other SIRDs. Returning to the point of National Training Policy, for RD&PR, he desired that SIRDs develop their State policies for RD&PR for effective and efficient training and research programmes. Referring to research activities of SIRDs, he desired that the SIRDs take up studies on implementation aspects with sizeable sample so that the findings can be generalized and made use of for effective implementation of RD&PR programmes. He wanted the SIRDs to think big and hope that NIRD&PR and SIRDs and ETCs will work together to take rural development into a new orbit. Dr.R.P. Achari in his vote of thanks, thanked the Director General for steering the deliberations. He appreciated the valuable contributions of the SIRD representatives. He also thanked the faculty and staff of CRTCN.
