

# RURAL HIGHER EDUCATION ANNUAL



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## FOREWORD

Three years back the Ministry decided to develop a few institutions into Rural Institutes. In many ways this was a new departure from the existing pattern of Higher education. Since the Institutes are situated in different parts of the country, it is necessary that there should be frequent opportunities for exchange of views and experience. It is only in this manner that the Institutes can develop a common social purpose and a common philosophy even though they may retain their individuality.

I am glad that the Ministry has decided to publish an annual journal which will provide a forum for discussion of problems connected with Higher education in rural areas and will establish closer ties between the workers who are interested in this experiment. I hope the journal will be of use not only to the Rural Institutes but also to other institutions of higher learning.

NEW DELHI;  
*July 25, 1958.*

K. L. SHRIMALI  
*Minister for Education,  
Government of India.*

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## Rural Institutes for Rural Service

**R**URAL Institutes have been established to serve the rural society. The Institutes must continuously remind themselves that there is no justification for their separate existence unless they identify themselves with the life of the people and become instrumental in raising their standards. It should be the constant endeavour of these Institutes to understand the needs of the rural people and to build up programmes of education which would enable them to improve their living conditions and bring greater joy in their life. The rural youth who come to these Institutes must go back to their communities for social service.

The real malady from which Higher education suffers today is lack of social consciousness. Acquisition of knowledge and learning is meaningless unless man can also put them to social use and thereby promote the cause of civilization. The youth in our country go to the college to acquire knowledge but they do not know what use they can make of it and how it can help them in serving the people. Knowledge is considered useful only to the extent

that it helps them in finding suitable careers and in improving their material prospects so that they can rise higher in the social ladder. Knowledge is used for promoting selfish individualism and not for the service of society.

Academic standards are necessary but more important than the maintenance of standards is the development of social consciousness among the youth. The atmosphere of the Institutes should inspire and stimulate the youth going out of the Institutes to give a real part of their intellect, energy and time to the service of the rural community. Whatever occupation they choose, they must dedicate themselves to the task of ameliorating the conditions of rural life and of bringing increased prosperity and happiness to the homes of villagers. Rural Institutes will give full opportunities to the individuals to develop their professional competence according to their abilities but they will always identify themselves with the rural community and will subordinate their personal interests to the welfare of the community. The Institutes will train engineers, doctors, teachers and social workers but

they will always act for the common good. There are two dangers against which the Institutes must guard.

In the first place, when money is made readily available, sometimes the Institutions lose the spirit of service which inspired their founders and which has been their distinctive characteristic. If this happens, the Rural Institutes will become ivory towers and will lose the confidence of the people whom they wish to serve. The danger is all the greater when the institutions grow rapidly and are swamped by young and immature teachers who do not understand their ideology. Most of the young teachers are products of old institutions and through sheer force of habit have a tendency to revert to the traditional pattern. The Institutes must fight against this tendency continuously and keep the spirit of service alive. It is a happy sign that the Government have recognised the value and importance of these Institutes and are giving financial assistance but this should not deaden the spirit of the workers.

Secondly, the Institutes must guard against the tendency to impose their ideas of rural reconstruction on the villagers. The service should be rendered in response to public demands and needs. It is the duty of the Institutes to make knowledge available to the people but if it is thrust on them without their realising the need for it, it will kill all initiative and ulti-

mately create distaste and aversion among the people against new ideas. Villagers are conservative and do not change rapidly. Rural Institutes should not accelerate the pace of change to the extent of killing the initiative of the people altogether. They should certainly anticipate the needs of the rural people but at every stage they should win the cooperation of the people in the execution of the plans.

The main philosophy underlying Rural Institutes is their devotion to human welfare. This philosophy should be exemplified in the life of the staff and students, in instruction, research and extension work. Rural Institutes emphasize professional education because the individual can make his best contribution to social progress through his profession. Liberal education is not ruled out of these Institutes but is not purely academic and remote from the life of the people but it is something which affects people's life and work. Liberal education is also useful education. Study of knowledge for the sake of knowledge may have its usefulness but in the Rural Institutes it is ruled out. Similarly in the field of research, the Rural Institutes will try to establish a balance between pure and applied research. Research will be linked up with practical problems, and fundamental research will be pursued to the extent that it helps in the solution of practical problems. The main purpose of scientific research in the Rural Institutes will be to amelio-

rate the conditions of rural life and to bring increased prosperity and happiness to the homes of the rural people. Similarly the extension will aim at the educational and cultural advancement of the people. It will go beyond co-operative extension which includes agriculture, home economics and veterinary medicine. It will serve as a meeting place for men and women of different professions, besides being a centre of education for Social Education organisers, *Gram Sevaks* and *Gram Sevikas*, Health workers and teachers. It will serve people of all kinds and classes and will aim at imparting not merely skills and techniques but in developing democratic atti-

tudes and values. The purpose of extension is to take knowledge and skill to the door of the villages as well as the social ideals of the Institutes.

Rural Institutes in this way will become centres of social service and powerful instruments of rural reconstruction. They will try to revive the spirit of service and sacrifice which characterised the struggle for independence and which has recently disappeared from our life. Rural Institutes will make a new attempt to link up education with service and in this way curb selfish individualism and provide a suitable atmosphere for the development of social individuals.

## The Concept of Rural Higher Education

**E**DUCATION has a deep relation with the life of a society as a whole and, as such, the type of education will vary from society to society according to the divergence in its social and cultural structures. The suggestion that education is a cause of social change is as true as its converse that educational changes are evolved out of social changes. Ideas sometimes originate from the minds of men, and new inventions and new theories are propounded which bring a deep impact on the life of a society; but, on the contrary, to help originate these ideas and theories, the educationist has to play an important part. The educator who is to lay down the pattern of education has a twin task to perform. He has to evaluate and assess a society with a view to suggesting a pattern of education, and also to reconstruct the society in the light of his own philosophy of life. Mr. M. C. V. Jeffreys regards education "as nothing other than the whole life of the society viewed from the particular standpoint of learning to live that life".

The task of the Indian educator is doubly difficult. He has not only to

evaluate the society as such, but also to consider the fact that for centuries together the rural community remained in a dismal abyss of ignorance being deprived of any access to an organised system of education. In the middle ages, this society remained cut off from the seats of learning that were invariably located near places of metropolitan importance. During the British regime the educational system centred in urban areas only to suit the needs of the regime. Thus at no time in the history of India was any organised education available to people in rural areas. They, therefore, remained ignorant and static. Any educational system for them should take into view their intellectual starvation, way of life and their future.

The Radhakrishnan Commission Report observes that "in the course of world history seldom the greatness of a nation long survived the disintegration of its rural life. For untold ages man by nature has been a villager and has not long survived in any other environment. Almost every study of the subject which has been made in Europe and America, has revealed that as a rule, city families survive only a few generations. Cities grow and



thrive only as they are constantly replenished from the rural population. So long as a nation's rural life is vigorous, it possesses of life and power. When, for a long time cities draw the cream of life and culture from the villages returning almost nothing, as has been the case in India during the last two centuries, the current village resources of culture and energies become depleted, and the strength of the nation is reduced".

In India, as elsewhere, the city life has prospered at the cost of rural people. The constant drift of talented rural youth to cities in quest of knowledge has quite perceptibly impoverished the countryside of its resources in talent. Such of the abler persons as could afford the expenses of costly education in the cities were so transformed in their way of life, attitudes and values that they never returned to their parent community. This depletion of resources has resulted in the complete fossilisation of the rural society.

India is a land of villages. As reported by the 1951 census, there are about 5,58,089 villages where 82.7% of the Indian population live. A popular government which is committed to a socialistic pattern of society has to consider the reconstruction of this society as a necessary condition for the preservation of its hard won independence and for the realisation of this goal.

Rural people have to be made conscious of their role in a democratic set-up. They have not only to be educated for democracy, but, as Prof. Dewey points out, "they have to be trained also in democracy"\*. The rural educator has to play an important role. On the one hand he has to realise the present possibilities and on the other to make the society fit to cope with future requirements. Education, it is said, is a process of growth. The pattern of education has, therefore, to take into consideration the evaluation of the present and the possibilities of utilising the present for current advancement and to take care of the future which grows out of it. The present as well as the future is very important as the future may turn out to be different from the present. The rural society has now shed its lethargic past, and is pulsating with new aspirations. The education may begin with the present but shall grow with the growth of the society to cope with the future. Thus, the critic who considers the present scheme of Rural Higher education as something ephemeral, is mistaken in believing that the pattern of education will not change with the growth of the society.

Now let us evaluate the society of the present day. It is a mass of humanity leading a life of destitution, disease and ignorance. It continues to live in mud-houses in the most unhygienic and

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\*Education and Democracy

insanitary conditions, without any modern amenities. Yet it has its way of life, a rich culture and some vestiges of past greatness. Prof. Richmond compares the life values of the city people with those of rural people in the following words:

“It can hardly be denied that the men and women who live most closely related to the rhythm of the natural world possess a greater integration among themselves than is common among those in cities. They are more serene and inwardly poised, less susceptible to fluctuations in spiritual moods and depression of material resources”. Further, “in the great cities, relations tend to be episodic, kaleidoscopic, as in a cinema film; in the village they continue in an enduring setting as in a saga”, and “the countryman finds his food for thought in his own experience of life rather than in literature or views from the outside world. The countryman may not be a philosopher, but he is a moralist”.

In days gone by the entire village society lived as one family actively participating in the joys and sorrows of each other. Attached to the village farmer, was the family *purohit* who besides serving the farmer's spiritual needs was a family doctor, an intimate counsellor in his family affairs, such as marriages of children etc. Besides, a village carpenter, a barber, a smith, a waterman, and a weaver gave their ser-

vices to him and all of them received in return, a present, a fixed amount of money, on ceremonial occasions. The amount was fixed so that the rich and poor could afford it. This corporate, simple and unostentatious life was regulated by a strong village *Panchayat*, which was just, prompt and impartial in the dispensation of justice. Each elderly man in the village regarded the honour and repute of the village as his own, and had no hesitation in taking any defaulter, to whatsoever family he belonged, to task. Rich or poor, all lived alike.

This way of life and this precious culture had survived the force of modern changes and the simplicity of rural life, its attitudes and values continued to persist and kept the rural folk at a level of spiritual serenity so much so, as Havel says, the Western scientist could sit at their feet for years together to learn the lessons of a moral life. But now the impact of increasing industrialisation is drawing these simple, unsophisticated people, away from their serene moorings. To the extent this change is unwholesome, it is necessary to preserve wherever possible, those elements in earlier rural life that contributed to a fuller and more satisfying existence. This does not necessarily imply that the villagers should be kept out of the realm of the scientific world, but what is needed is to retain this simplicity and the divine faith which gives strength to every nation. To recapitulate, the pattern of education will

aim at making democracy a success through equal opportunities of education, and a judicious preservation of their culture in the process of training them in the democratic way of life. In effect, the process of democratisation should not disrupt the society, or jettison its existing strong points that have stood the test of time.

The critic might ask: "What exactly do you mean by retaining the simplicity and culture of these rural folk? Is it the idea to keep these people contented with their poverty? Do you want to set up different standards, one for the urban and another for the rural areas? The warning is also given that if you thrust a special type of education upon rural people, it would be resented by them; and if the present pattern of education is something good for them why not adopt it for the urban people as well? Why differentiate between these two?"

It has earlier been stated that education depends on the total way of life of a society and changes with the growth of that society. To answer the above questions, therefore, one might ask "what is the education for?" And this might lead to another question, "what is life for?" The answer to this question is the answer to the objection why a separate pattern of education is necessary for the two societies, rural and urban. According to Mahatma Gandhi, "Education should aim at raising not the living but the life". In the

wider sense, the pattern of education aims at raising life as a whole. In the narrower sense, it has to be interpreted in terms of the dual function that education has to perform which corresponds to the dual role of a person in his life as an individual, and as a member of the society. It has to take into consideration the whole social milieu, the prevailing *ethos* of the society around its present and future needs. Mr. Ottoway, therefore, rightly says that "if education depends on the total way of life of a society, then the kind of education provided will be different in different kinds of society. The study of these differences is the field of comparative education. Each society has its own type of men, or cultural heroes for the young men to emulate and accordingly the development of personality will vary from one person to another".

It is important to note that each nation has two societies, one urban and the other rural, where the people invariably differ in size, dress, way of life, tastes, attitudes and values. This difference has, in some countries, been reduced to the minimum through continuous diffusion on account of rapid industrialisation. But in India no such miracle can be envisaged in the near future. Even in a country like Russia where the industrial development has reached a very advanced stage, the urban and rural societies continue to exist in their own way. India, for a long time to come, has to

remain predominantly rural, and, therefore, the proposed pattern of education will continue to be useful for a pretty long time, though its growth will correspond to the growth of the society.

Before describing the pattern of education, it is necessary to enumerate its aim in the words of the authors of the Report on Rural Higher Education, which are as follows:—

“(a) It should on the one hand aim at developing the personal qualities and talents of the individual and on the other it should inspire youth with a sense of social responsibility.

(b) The youth of the country should be educated not merely in the structure and processes of democratic Government but should clearly understand the ethical value and the philosophy of human relations upon which democracy is based.

(c) It should give the rural youth that training and skill which would make them effective leaders of the community.

(d) It should have due regard to the occupational needs of the students, and help in bridging the gulf which unfortunately exists in our country between culture and work, between the humanities and technology and between the practical and the ideal.

(e) The concept of rural education should be so broadened as to include a general responsibility for

extension work in the area—to provide a link between the community and the Institute.

(f) It should direct application of planned intelligence to attack the problems of rural life and rural development in a practical way. The Rural Institute must maintain a two-way channel of communication between the rural population and the research laboratory.”

The above statement can be synthesised and put in a simple form—“how to secure for the countrymen economic opportunities and social amenities which the townsmen enjoy, without disturbing, at the same time, all the advantages which accrue from the rural setting of life and labour”. Prof. Richmond puts this question in another form asking whether a way can be found “to make the best of both the worlds—to accept the largesse of an industrial civilisation while retaining the imponderable virtues of rural culture”. The reply was given by Rousseau long before the question was asked and it is: “back to nature”. But we may improve on this answer by asking whether it is not possible for the industrial marvels to coexist with the bounties of nature. Some of the existing Rural Institutes have provided the answer where cosmos has been fashioned with the process of industrial civilisation by blending the rural charm and simplicity with the utilitarianism of the urban economy.

The Government of India have undertaken a colossal programme of community development in all spheres of rural life. Newer techniques of farming, improved seeds, artificial and chemical manuring have been introduced. Roads are being set, modern methods of communication have been introduced; means of irrigation are being improved; canals, wells, tanks are being dug; water reservoirs, constructed. The countryside is being electrified. This colossal programme needs all resources in labour and talent, but nothing is more conducive to the achievement of targets than the enthusiasm and cooperation of the people themselves. Yet the leadership in all spheres has gone to the share of the urbanised trained personnel who, by the very nature of their training, are at a very disadvantageous position in winning over the confidence of the rural people. Mr. Chester Bowles narrates the sad experience of the rural officer who was told by the villagers that "we have had only two kinds of visitors before, those who came to collect revenues and those who came to beat us; which are you?" In such an atmosphere of distrust, it is a hard job for the development workers to produce better results. The remedy is to produce leadership from the rural area itself. This is another aim of the Rural Institutes.

I should take up the second point again—why the existing system of University education does not meet the re-

quirements of the village people. It may be stated that the existing University education has been continuously criticised as a system of education which is unrelated to life, is bookish and examination-ridden. It has been assailed for its rigid curriculum and a faulty examination system. If this has been considered as unsuitable for the city people, it is more so for the rural people. The aim of the western type of education, according to the minutes of Lord Macaulay, was to produce a class of persons, 'Indian in blood and colour, but English in taste, opinions, morals and in intellect'. This education has produced a class of 'educated proletariat' which drew its inspiration earlier from its alien masters and after their departure tend to fill up the vacuum. It will be a grievous mistake to set up Institutes in rural areas with this pattern of education. It is also not desirable to first effect a total reform in the existing University education and then to apply the reformed pattern to the rural areas. Prof. Huxley said that "all new truths begin as heresys, and end as superstitions". The old system of education has undoubtedly a hold of a superstition on our body-politic, and it is better to set up Institutes on an experimental basis with a specially designed pattern which is closely related to the life of the people and which answers their total needs than to try wholesale reform. In evolving, therefore, this pattern, the idea was kept in view that these Institutes should not only offer

liberal education but provide an integrated system, blending classwork with research and extension activities, and should also eliminate all the existing flaws in the University education. The external curriculum should be less rigid, and the examination should place adequate emphasis on the assessment of the student throughout his period of stay in the Rural Institute. The external examinations should be more objective and take note of the cumulative record of the student. Further, these Institutes will work in the rural areas as centres of planning and development of the entire community. Their students will have an intimate touch with the rural people, live in their problems and find solution for them. This will eliminate much of the criticism which goes against the present day University education. The aim, therefore, is to take the best of the existing educational systems, without any affiliations, and to adapt them to the conditions of rural India.

Another drawback in our present University education is a free elective system which gives the student of a liberal arts college an unrestricted choice to select various unrelated and unallied subjects. This has been described by Mr. Dongerkery as a factor which turns the liberal arts college into an 'intellectual cafeteria', where there is no guarantee that the students would receive a balanced education. Prof. G. N. Morrison also described the elective sys-

tem "as the greatest crime of the century against the youth". This disadvantage of the system has been realised by the authors of the Rural Higher education, and the curriculum set for the Three-Year Diploma Course, restricts the choice to a group out of eight which comprises two related and allied subjects, which not only offer full scope for liberal education up to University standard, but also tend to specialise the graduate in a particular vocation in life. Thus, a student in Three-Year Diploma Course has to study five core subjects, one of them being 'Introduction to Rural Problems' and select one group comprising two University subjects. The education is not, therefore, lopsided but a balanced one.

Similarly, we have introduced Agriculture and Engineering courses. It may be stated that the principles of engineering and agriculture remain the same everywhere. That is so, but the emphasis in the Rural Institute is on educative field work, rural background and integration of classroom activities with extension and research work. The graduate will not, therefore, be an officer for the desk job, as is the criticism against the present output of the Agriculture and Engineering colleges, but an active participant in the rural life. In the Engineering course also note has been taken of the requirements of the development schemes. At the moment what is required is a primarily civil overseer with a working knowledge of electrical and mechanical engineering

who should be able to coordinate activities in all fields of development. The aim of the Rural Institute is to produce such an overseer, while the duty of producing specialists in all spheres is left to the existing institutions. It will, therefore, be seen how the new pattern

of education differs from the old one, and how it is required to meet the needs of the existing society. The pattern is not a rigid one, but holds out a promise of improvement through experience and in the light of the growth of the society.

## Rural Education in the United States

WITH more than 80 per cent of India's population in the villages and the literacy rate low there, Indian officials may feel overwhelmed with the problem of bringing adequate education to these rural folk. India is in the twentieth century and the complex of international forces demands fast action. America as it was developing its educational system enjoyed physical isolation. The world was small then; so the task could be accomplished with deliberation and relative calmness. However, India can take courage from the history of rural educational progress in the United States because the real transformation occurred in the last 25 years.

The first settlers seeking largely religious freedom and economic opportunity had among them many well educated persons. Several private colleges were founded early. Education was for the elite and gifted. Private common Elementary education slipped backward. In the hard life of the pioneer, muscle and endurance and a very practical set of skills not then available in schools were what were needed. The formalistic education of the day was heavily weight-

ed with religious and moral teaching; it did not meet the needs and gradually fell into disfavour. Growing illiteracy was widespread for a time and was not considered much of a handicap.

However as the frontiers became more settled the need to be able to read and write and do simple arithmetic in order to carry on trade became evident. At first, the school effort was by the church but soon it became a matter of general concern and the public Elementary school was devised supported by taxes.

For one hundred and fifty years progress was slow. In most States parents had to pay some tuition fees but about the middle of the nineteenth century public Elementary education became, in full fact, free schools for everyone in most of the United States.

The fact that should be noted is that there were, in most States, no departments of education concerned with public Elementary education. Statistics and financial reporting were handled by the other departments of government. Even the supervision of these Elemen-



tary schools was done by the regularly elected township officers.

Thus it can be seen that public education started at the rural level and gradually developed upward to higher levels. Elementary education came first and expanded upwards. Likewise as it developed local school supervisors were elected who had teaching experience and so the beginning of professional education can be said to have evolved. State Departments of Education came a bit later.

At first, the goal was to make possible for all rural children eight grades of education. At the close of the nineteenth century, compulsory attendance laws were enacted requiring attendance up to the age of 12 but they were not enforced very well. It was common practice for older boys not to commence school until the harvest was gathered and to leave school when spring work began. This meant that they attended school about four to five months out of the seven months' school year. The quality and quantity of education was not good. This Elementary education was largely terminal.

From the middle of nineteenth century, a rather elaborate system of private and semi-private Secondary academies developed which, among other things, served as teachers' training institutions. As a consequence, the level of teaching improved.

At the opening of the twentieth century, the concept that High school education could and should be public education had caught the public imagination. The before-mentioned private academies were rapidly turned into public free High schools. Some Rural High schools were established in small villages. Soon the watchword was that all children were entitled to High school education at public expense but progress in this direction was slow.

Participation in the first World War pushed America out of its isolation and violently into the turbulent stream of international affairs. The educational achievement of every soldier was tested. (Scientific tests and measurements movement was just getting under way). The statistics of the level of educational achievement of the American soldier in 1918 shocked America into social action. The level of educational achievement of the rural citizen-soldier was particularly distressing. It was self-evident that neither technical progress nor national solidarity were possible with public education as it was especially in the rural areas.

The slowest to awaken to this realization were the farmer folk of America but when they did capture the vision they moved fast. Part of this slowness to act was because the farmer was a very practical person and he was not satisfied with the kind of urban High school education he saw. These High schools were largely college preparation insti-

tutions heavily weighted with foreign language, mathematics etc. He saw his boys and girls, educated in these High schools, go off to the cities seldom to return to the rural community from which they sprang. He wanted his children to have all kinds of opportunities but he vaguely felt that the opportunities of rural life were not being presented to his children in their formal education. He recognized also that his children did not see any close connection between their classroom learning and the problems of the farmer and the farmer's home. Consequently he gave little enthusiasm to this largely urban public High school movement.

Out of this feeling of rural dissatisfaction multiplied many times throughout the nation was born the Multipurpose High school—in the United States often called the Comprehensive High school. The boy or girl, who because of certain ambitions, wanted college training could still prepare for college. The boy who wanted to continue on his father's farm now found an opportunity to study scientific agriculture and through a project managed by him on his father's farm could prove it out. He came to feel that there were many good things in the farmer's way of life. The girl who also liked rural life could study home-making slanted toward the problems of the housewife in rural conditions. There were shops for the mechanically inclined. There were commercial courses including secretarial work for those inclined to business.

The farmer and his son could now see a real connection between classroom instruction and the affairs of real life on the farm. They now backed this type of High school earnestly. The movement really gathered momentum in the 1920s.

There was also an economic reason for the development of the Multipurpose High school in the rural areas. In cities with large enrolments there could be special High school for trades, for commercial work and for other applied types of High school training but in the rural areas, it was simply too expensive to do this. Hence the various phases of vocational training and the college preparation had to be followed together in one house and placed under one administration to cut down expenses. Vocational laboratories are very expensive. Hence they should have the fullest use possible. A shop might serve for farm mechanics training and for basic training for mechanical trades. Examples of this type of economy can be multiplied.

In rural America when we speak of the Multipurpose High school, we are talking about the six grade High school or the combined junior High school and the senior High school. It represents grades 7 through 12. In the smaller cities a Multipurpose High school often means the senior High school or grades 9 through 12. Economy and efficiency are the determining factors. A rough standard of 700 students as a desirable

minimum for efficient operation of either types of organization has been established by research.

To have a minimum pupil population of 700, a system of school-owned buses is necessary to transport pupils from their homes to the central Multipurpose High school. The rough standard here is that a student should not be on the bus more than an hour in the morning or in the afternoon. It is evident at once that fairly good roads are a necessity for both rapid and safe transport.

Because this central school is at a long distance from the homes of the students, provision for lunch must be made by the school. Self-service cafeterias were developed to satisfy this need. Here students can buy hot meals at prices which represent cost of the food wholesale. Most schools in America now have cafeterias. In the big cities, it may be a convenience but in the rural areas, it is an absolute necessity.

Because it would be too costly to provide the space to feed large numbers of students at the same time, the "staggered" lunch period has been devised. Perhaps one third of the students have lunch at one class period, another third at another class period and a final third at still another class period. Thus for each of these lunch periods, two thirds of the students are in their classes. The school is in continuous operation from

the time the school opens until it closes in the afternoon. The library and study halls provide suitable places in which the student can study when he does not have a scheduled class.

Because in the rural sections the social utilities are meagre, such as, library, assembly facilities, meeting places for clubs and business organizations, various sports etc., the central school is thrown open at night and on Saturdays for these purposes. As a result some part of and many times almost the entire building is in use nearly every night in the week. The school becomes the community centre in a vital sense. It is a hub of community life. The school staff recognize this as a service that they must foster.

After the Multipurpose High school had been operating for a time it was found that an important socializing process was going on. The college preparatory student found out that the boy that was studying agriculture was his equal or nearly his equal in ability. The secretarial student learned by personal contact that the girl studying home-making was quite her equal mentally and socially. This tolerance and appreciation of each other was good training for citizenship.

The device in the Multipurpose High school that does much to accomplish these social ends is the core subjects like social studies, language (vernacular), general science, biology, general mathe

matics etc., taken by all students. In these classes students with very different ultimate objectives, study and recite together. They get the measure of each other. Close association in social events and sports are further means of reinforcing this mutual understanding.

The outstanding fact to remember is that the transformation has largely happened in the past 25 years. It could happen in India also. Compulsory education is now enforced up to 16 years in rural areas. Roughly speaking before the first World War only one in ten entering the first grade graduated from the High school in the rural areas. Today nearly six out of ten have some High school training and four out of ten graduate.

It seems significant also to recall that the great advance in Elementary and Secondary education in both city and country parallels the tremendous industrial upsurge in America. It is somewhat hard to determine which was the chicken and which the egg but it is perfectly obvious that neither would not have progressed if they had not gone

forward hand in hand. As far as rural transformation is concerned, certainly Elementary education widely dispersed came first. It seems safe to say that it was fairly good education that made it possible for the American workman to apply to the job the technology that wide scale mechanization of industry required. The great evolution that scientific agriculture brought required a high level of education.

These hard facts have implications for India as to where the chief training emphasis must be placed especially when funds for education are in short supply. But if the emphasis is placed on the critical areas it is possible to transform the national life in a relatively short period of time.

The opening statement of the chapter on Education in the Outline of Second Five-Year Plan is a **FUNDAMENTAL TRUTH**: "The nature of the system of education in a country has a determining influence on the rate at which economic progress is achieved and the benefits that can be derived from it."

## Rural Institutes

(Talk given by Shri G. Ramachandran, Director, Gandhigram at the All India Radio, Madras on 28-9-1957)

THE very idea of Rural Institutes appears as something new and strange to many people today. But, is not that itself something very strange in a country with the immemorial educational traditions of India? When we look back at the panorama of the history of our country, we see the *Gurukulas*, the great hermitages of the scholars and philosophers and also Universities like those of Nalanda and Taxila. The tradition of what we now call the Rural Institute was thus in the blood and bone of the history of India. And, yet the very idea of a Rural Institute has now become something strange and even fantastic to many of us. Is not this another proof of the perversion of Indian history in the last few centuries? The ancient Indian idea that Higher education should be made available to all young aspirants, whether rich or poor, in peaceful surroundings far away from the bustle and noise of the cities and linked to productive and useful bodily labour has run like a golden thread through the history of education in India. And are not these among the essential characteristics of a Rural Ins-

titute? But, under British rule and perhaps even earlier, the rural areas became more and more neglected and emphasis shifted to a few hundred towns and cities. What went on during this period was a relentless process of sucking up into the towns and the cities all that was of value in material and human resources in the villages. Like every other good thing, Higher education also migrated from rural to urban areas so that a time came when parents of village boys and girls had to sell their lands and property to keep their young folk at colleges in the cities. This was a terrible predicament and full of far reaching consequences in the life of the people. Among the consequences was the one under which all Higher education became the prerogative of a small fraction of the fortunate few and it clearly went out of the reach of millions of those who needed it and for whom it was nothing less than their birthright. Under British rule most of the external and inner symbols of culture and higher life were slowly plucked out from the rural soil and replanted in urban ground. The universities and colleges were all in the

cities. so much so, the city and the Higher education became hopelessly linked together in the minds of the common people.

It took a long time for any healthy reaction to reassert itself against such a fatal tide. But reaction did come. It started first in a small trickle and then gathered speed and sweep and we are all yet in the grip of it. We have certainly not seen its final stage. In the first and early tide of healthy reaction, we see the emergence of the Gurukula University at Haridwar established by the Arya Samajists, the Visva-Bharati University at Shantiniketan established by the great poet and philosopher, Rabindranath Tagore, the National University at Adyar founded by Dr. Annie Besant and a few other similar institutions. And then some thirty years ago came to be established the great Vidyapeeths when Mahatma Gandhi swept the country with the first great Satyagraha Movement and of these, three at least remain today, and have earned a great name for themselves. These are the Vidyapeeths of Gujrat, Bihar and the Jania Millia, the last of which is so intimately connected with the name of Dr. Zakir Hussain, one of the greatest educationists in India today.

I wish to pick out specially the Visva-Bharati University at Shantiniketan for a very brief analysis to throw light on the characteristics of a Rural University. The Shantiniketan ideal of education was not merely the transplan-

ting of city education in a rural area. It was something much more and involved the deeper process of ruralising education so that it became on the one hand part of the peaceful rural background and on the other sought its synthesis with the main challenges of education in modern times. Shantiniketan proved that the highest education can be conducted in the midst of Nature and far away from the cities and under conditions of simple, clean and truly artistic living. Open-air classes and boys and girls growing up in harmony with the rhythm and cadences of Nature are at the centre of the Shantiniketan experiment and these would have been impossible in a city setting. Poet Tagore also insisted from the very beginning on what has just now become fashionable in our country symbolically at least in the universities and colleges, namely, bodily labour to produce bodily needs. Training in handicrafts thus became a vital corollary in the process of ruralising Higher education. The great poet also made it clear beyond any doubt that there were great values of Truth, Beauty and Goodness embedded in the ancient rural culture of India which must be rediscovered and renourished as part of the foundation of a Rural University. He, at the same time, pointed to the urgent need to effect a genuine synthesis between the ancient values and the great values created by modern civilisation. The contribution of Shantiniketan at this point has yet

to be fully studied and appreciated by those in charge of educational reconstruction in independent India.

In recent years, it is the University Commission generally known as the Radhakrishnan Commission which brought out conspicuously once again the idea of Rural Universities. But, somehow, the report of that Commission has been put on the shelf and some of its splendid and excellent ideas have not been taken out for experimentation. In the meantime, another school of thought has strongly taken the view that there should be no division of universities into urban and rural ones and that there should be established a chain of universities in the rural areas to be known as National Universities. This is only a battle over names. After all, do we not draw distinctions between industries and village industries, city health work and rural health work, city projects and village projects, and city housing and rural housing etc? When it is remembered that even today more than 80 per cent of the people still live in rural areas, that their villages are many centuries old and that we are engaged at many levels in rural reconstruction, there appears to be no need at all to labour under an inferiority complex when using such an expression as 'Rural Universities'. Every Rural University will be a National University, because it will be rooted in national realities and reach out to fulfil national needs.

It is certainly necessary to analyse the positive contents of a Rural Institute and its fundamental characteristics. This subject can only be very briefly touched upon in a single talk like the present one. The following ten points will, however, be relevant in any such consideration:

(1) A Rural Institute should be founded ideologically on the conviction that there are certain material, mental and spiritual values in the ancient rural civilisation and culture of India which require to be rediscovered and re-nourished and that not necessarily, in conflict with the values of the scientific and technological developments in the modern world.

(2) Among the values of a rural culture would be peacefulness of daily life in place of restlessness and the fret and the fury coming from such restlessness; cooperation and adjustments in place of competition and strife in the economic order; decentralisation of political and economic power and resources in order to reach out to hundreds of thousands of villages; the proper balancing of the material and moral claims of life and above all, a deeper and functioning artistry permeating the common life of the people. There will be no question of setting aside modern science or technology, but their application on a more broadbased human and humane manner will have to be truthfully accomplished.

(3) A Rural Institute should take Higher education to the doors of the

people where they live close to the soil and with agriculture as their main occupation. Therefore, inevitably much of Higher education in rural areas will be in and through agriculture.

(4) Closely allied to agriculture would be the place of village industries and handicrafts. Rural Higher education will thus be, in a measure at least, woven around village industries and handicrafts.

(5) A Rural Institute should neither be too big nor centralised. It should be comparatively smaller than the urban university but at the same time it should spread out its programme through extension methods.

(6) A Rural Institute should depend more and more on local resources both human and material and aim at a large measure of self-sufficiency through the productive work of its own teachers and students.

(7) Two languages at least will be compulsory, namely, the mother tongue or regional language and Hindi, the national language. Any other language like English may be added to these two, but there should be no subtraction from these two.

(8) There should be no steam-rolling to produce identical patterns everywhere, but local colour, tones and traditions must be allowed to come in freely without loss to certain general standards and attainments.

(9) While providing for a measure of specialisation in techniques, a Rural Institute will aim at the development of integrated personality in men and women so that the future citizen will know how to lead a balanced life. The economic, social and spiritual claims must be reconciled in the character and outlook of the growing generation.

(10) The Rural Institute must revitalise a whole rural area in which it is situated. Life inside the campus should illuminate and reflect itself fully in the increased education, prosperity and happiness of the people in the rural area. That certainly would be a real test.

Mahatma Gandhi was the first great teacher in the modern days in India to point the way to the rebuilding of life in rural areas. For him rural reconstruction was without a doubt national reconstruction. Educated India, before the coming of Gandhi, had forgotten even the rudimentary arithmetic that eighty per cent of the people in the rural areas represented the nation far more truly than the twenty per cent in the cities. Educated India had hypnotised itself into the belief that twenty per cent of the people in the cities must be taken more seriously and looked after accordingly than the eighty per cent in the villages. It took many years for Mahatma Gandhi to educate the educated people in the country to understand this simple arithmetic. The result has been nothing less than



explosive. For the first time in many centuries, we now not only know, but we wish to plan on the knowledge, that what matters most in national reconstruction is rural reconstruction. It is this knowledge that must point the way today to the establishment of a network of Rural Institutes in every part of India. Rural Institutes, if and when established and keeping enshrined in themselves the ten fundamental characteristics elucidated above, can transform the entire face and character of our country. If that is true, what greater task can there be in educational reconstruction than the establishment of such Institutes, quickly and without delay?

But the Central and State Governments are as yet only on the threshold of such a programme. The Government of India through its Ministry of Education has recently sponsored the establishment of ten Institutes of Rural Higher Education. But it has set about this work very hesitantly. What should, however, hearten those concerned is that a step in the right direction has been taken. These Institutes of Rural Higher Education may well pave the way for the Rural Universities of the future. Even as it is, some non-governmental educational bodies have already stolen the show in this regard and in two or three places at least Rural Universities have already appeared on the scene. These are in Sevagram and Anand in Gujrat. There is, however, neither clear agreement nor

understanding yet concerning the concept of a Rural University and how it should be built up and developed. It would be a good thing for educationists interested in this matter to meet together, study the whole question carefully and arrive at certain basic conclusions to guide the growth of Rural Higher education in India.

Gandhigram which has been given one of the new Institutes of Rural Higher Education has started the work under all the present limitations and hesitations. Gandhigram was greatly blessed in that the Rashtrapati, Dr. Rajendra Prasad himself very graciously inaugurated its Rural Institute of Higher Education on the 17th of August, 1956. It is our hope that after a few years this experiment will lead Gandhigram to the establishment of a full-fledged Rural University. A small band of dedicated workers has taken upon itself this difficult task, but they have the faith that the undying spirit of Mahatma Gandhi will guide them as they go forward on the great quest. There can be no failure in such an undertaking. The objective conditions in India call out for such a consummation. We need clear vision, sustained efforts, and the readiness to admit and correct every mistake. May these be granted to all those in different parts of India who will from now on labour hard to build up the structure and content of Rural Higher education.

## Integration of Theory and Practice in Rural Welfare Training

**H**UMAN knowledge is the result of practical experience direct and indirect. It cannot be

**Importance of integration of theory and practice and integrity of workers**

separated from practice. An old saying in Malayalam goes like this that if we

want to catch fish, we should be prepared to get our hands wet. To train fishers of men is a more intricate job. Theory divorced from practice has no place in the modern world of science. It is imperative, particularly in the field of social welfare that the theoretical aspect should be a guide to social action. To learn to administer rural services without practical training will be equal to a struggle of learning swimming in the drawing room by a correspondence course. In fact, a person having practical experience, even though no academic qualification, is likely to be a more suitable rural worker than a bookish intellectual. The right man to do this job is, of course, one who has a professional training plus genuine aptitude to work for the welfare of rural people.

Education for rural services undertaken by Rural Institutes is basically

a liberal-cum-professional education. It is based on the fact that there is in this field a growing body of scientific knowledge which could be imparted through a regular course of instruction, both theoretical and practical. While stating the "aims and objectives" of Rural Institutes, the SHRI-MALI COMMITTEE REPORT emphasizes the need of integration of theory and practice. In this connection, it is important to note the following words: "The objective should be the enriching of the life of the individual and of the community and not necessarily or only giving a professor a chance to lecture in his own pet subject...". It continues: "Though the students in these Institutes will be engaged continuously in some form of practical activity, it should be fatal for them to neglect serious and thorough academic study. Theoretical study may tend to arise from practical situations and from facing the problems of real life but unless the students devote sufficient time to studies of the fundamentals of science in Rural Institutes, they will not be able to compete with students who have attended fully equipped and staffed universities and

might thus be permanently handicapped. We should, however, expect that the students from Rural Institutes, from their practical touch with life and its problems, will have achieved an adaptability to all kinds of conditions and will prove to be both competent and practical in the facing and handling of rural problems”.

In addition to the possession of a store of factual knowledge and scientific techniques, rural welfare duties call for certain constructive attitudes of personality. Rural welfare workers should have a belief that it is possible to help and educate individuals and groups to change themselves and to modify their environment so that their physical, mental and social health may grow from strength to strength. Shri V. T. Krishnamachari, speaking about training of workers for National Extension Movement pointed out: “As stated earlier Extension is a continuous process designed to make the rural people aware of their problems and indicating to them ways and means by which they can solve them. . . . It is therefore of the highest importance that for this task personnel of the right type are obtained who will take to their work with zeal and enthusiasm. The qualities required are not only ability to acquire knowledge but also dedication to the task of serving the rural people and the development of a will to find solution for their problems.” Rural Institutes have come into

existence mainly to meet this need of preparing personnel of the right type and it is the responsibility of the faculty of the Rural Institutes and field work agencies.

The American institutions of social work education assign students specifically to a social service agency as a general rule. Need for extreme specialisation and the advantages of having well-developed social welfare agencies and adequately qualified agency supervisors to help in supervision, seem to be the guiding factor. On the other hand a number of schools of social work in Europe and Latin America as well as some of the University schools in China have found it necessary to organise and administer their own social service agencies or centres in order to give the students profitable training experience.

Under our present Indian conditions, particularly in rural areas where Rural Institutes are opened, there may not be any dearth of rural welfare agencies. Speaking from our experience of Jamia Millia Rural Institute, welfare work is carried on in the surrounding villages by N.E.S. Block, Social Welfare Board, Jamia Rural Centre, Adult Education Committee, the Indian Cooperative Union etc. Of course, it will be, in the long run, only beneficial for all of us to cooperate and

**Field Instruction --a joint responsibility of Rural Institutes and Field Work agencies**

coordinate these welfare programmes and make it meaningful to the students under training. But this should be done very carefully, even though this may take time. It is not wise or desirable to expose the young and fresh students to all sorts of practices. It will do well to help in improving the working standard of agencies and later work out some criteria for selection of proper field work agencies and qualified supervisors. It seems that the best arrangement to ensure a high quality of supervision is by assigning teachers to direct supervision of students and enlisting the wholehearted cooperation of agency personnel to share responsibility for students' supervision. Wherever essential and permissible, by giving a training allowance or honorarium, regular and specific services could be expected from agency staff.

It is very necessary that the teaching institution should retain control of the work performed by, and the supervision provided for the students. The objectives of practical training and criteria for evaluation no doubt should be determined primarily by the teaching centre. Beyond this, practical training in rural services should be a joint responsibility of the Rural Institute and the rural welfare agencies. The coordination and the correlation of classroom teaching and field practice are ultimately based on the strength of cooperation and understanding achieved by the agency-school relationships. In other countries, where the

schools use the members of their teaching staff for student supervision or otherwise maintain a close relationship with agency personnel, attain a high degree of correlation between theory classes and field practices, since the school and agency alike benefit from the continuous interchange of thinking, experience and study.

Some internal factors that will affect the quality of field work and hence the integration process are the following:

1. The standard of practice and policy of the field work agencies.
2. The qualification, practical experience and genuine interest of the teaching staff and agency supervisors.
3. The content and method of field instruction.
4. The duration of placement and the stages of development of students in the various agencies.

These points need special consideration, planning and selection.

Though the teaching institute and the field work agencies recognise that preparing rural welfare workers is a joint responsibility, it would be difficult in many instances to define the exact responsibility and the contribution of either towards effective practical training. In all such instances if the teaching staff of the Rural Institute maintain a close relationship with the workers of the agencies, to which the students are assigned for their practical

work, the problems and needs that arise from time to time can be discussed co-operatively and working arrangements can be arrived at that are mutually satisfactory; otherwise, this extremely important aspect of rural welfare education is left largely to chance and haphazard development. This is bound to produce unhappy effects on the quality of the finished products turned out by the Institute.

Practical work should be supervised so that the student **Field Work Supervision** may learn under the guidance of experienced personnel. Orientation talks before commencing practical work has been proved very helpful. In several schools of social work in the U.S.A., the students are given continuous preparation throughout his first semester as well as in several final orientation sessions on the campus immediately preceding the students' appearance at the agency. This is done in order to ease the shock of the sudden shift from protected campus classes to agency set-up. During the early weeks of field work, the agency also plans and provides orientation periods. The school, the agency and the student should know somewhat clearly as to what is expected of them separately and collectively.

The field work instructor's minimum responsibility should be to provide time for at least one weekly conference with each student, in addition to the time devoted for general planning and guidance, concurrent evaluation of field

work records and for field work staff meeting.

The supervisor's job is not simply "to get things done", but to give the student the proper amount of support and direction as he develops his own capacities. There may be a few students who present active resistance to supervision. There may be others who expect the supervisors to lead them by the hand. It is here that the supervisors have to be very careful to avoid over-protection and dependency. At the same time the student needs to feel accepted and sustained and requires to be given a chance every day to do his best. He can do this only if he is treated as an adult individual. The importance of the supervisor's position in our students' field work education is unequalled, for it is he who consciously or half consciously imparts the work experience and learning situation which the student absorbs and makes his own. By and by, he should learn and feel confident to shoulder more and more responsibility. The American Association of Psychiatric Social Workers believe: "Field Work is an educational process, placing its emphasis upon understanding of the dynamics of human behaviour and its conscious use of relationship between the teacher and learner, particularly in the supervisory experience."

Wherever there is provision for special agency supervisors, the faculty representative does not act as an additional supervisor at the agency. He

focuses his supervisory function on co-ordinating for the individual student the knowledge gained in the classroom and that collected from the field. Louis Sentaman, a former Field Work Director of a school in West Virginia says: "Creating a solid integration between the ideas of the theoretical student and the practical supervisor is a difficult and tactful job of the faculty supervisor because much of the content of the classroom teaching has no immediate expression in the field work learning of the student or the student and supervisor may appear totally unable to apply theory to the current field work situation." At this point, it is usual that the student sticks to his solid books and the administrative supervisor to his elastic pages of files. They may start defending and arguing from their own impressions, prejudices and misleading experiences.

Monthly group meetings and field work seminar should be used as a technique to help the groups of students placed in various villages to coordinate the content and method of field work. The school supervisor acting as the discussion leader can utilise the group process as an additional medium through which the student can be helped to regain his knowledge, attitude, relationships and values.

Students of each group may elect their own chairman and secretaries to conduct the meeting and record the

minutes respectively. In these group meetings, they review the past work and plan for the coming month: by free discussion chisel their differences and come to common agreements. The Institute supervisor should attend these meetings in order to correct, guide and direct the group proceedings and decisions. The reports of the various groups should be read in the field work seminar held for the whole student body. Junior students who might not have started village work may attend as observers. In this field work seminar, students and teachers will find an opportunity to offer suggestions, make amendments and submit constructive criticisms. A friendly helping tone should prevail to pacify heated controversy that will crop up now and then.

The formation of a Field Work Council consisting of the field work coordination, field work teachers and executive secretaries of village groups will be advantageous to discuss and shape policies, finalise programmes, and sanction financial commitments and approve change in field work arrangements. In the early stages of organisation, it may be tried as an advisory body. Only by such close working relationship between the Head of the Field Work Department, the Field Work Faculty and student body of the Rural Institute efficiency, effectiveness and training in democratic living and leadership creation in day to day functioning is possible.

## The Idea of Rural Institutes

THE birth of Rural Institutes in India is an expression of our belated consciousness of the educational needs of our rural population. It is an attempt to provide facilities for Higher education to the great mass of our rural population which has been so far neglected in the matter of education. Our University education has been primarily meant for urban areas with its ideal of academic detachment from the realities of life. The fragmentation of studies in our universities resulted in a lack of realistic knowledge and understanding of real situations of life. This generally led to the maladjustment of our educated youth in urban areas. Moreover the cream of the villages migrated to the urban centres of learning without contributing anything in return to their reconstruction. The establishment of Rural Institutes embodies the principle that the development of personal qualities suited to rural situations cannot be left to some courses or scattered extra-curricular activities; it must become a part of every phase of college life. With this consideration in view the Rural Institutes visualize a co-ordinated scheme of teaching, research and extension for establishing a two-way traffic of knowledge and experience

between the educational institutions and the community at large. There cannot be two opinions on the question of the worthwhileness of the idea of Rural Institutes, but there are some controversial issues facing them which must be considered for a realization of their objectives.

Some of the questions generally asked are about the nature and objectives of the courses started in the Rural Institutes. Do the courses in the Rural Institutes intend to impart professional or semi-professional training, requiring their students to go back to the villages to establish themselves independently? Are these courses intended to prepare our village youth for some service-career in the rural areas? How can the courses in Rural Services or Civil Engineering be of much help? What should be the relative position of vocational training in Rural Higher education? Should we emphasize vocation-biased education for rural areas and liberal education for urban areas? Will educational opportunity, both quantitative and qualitative, always remain inadequate in rural areas on account of the geographical and economic factors? Should the programme of Higher education in rural areas be different from or identical to the programme of Higher education in

the urban areas? If the nature and kind of education in both rural and urban areas were not the same, would the children of rural areas remain in any way handicapped as compared to the urban children? Will there be discrimination on the basis of birth in rural areas? Should the programme of Rural Higher education be oriented to encourage a two-way migration of people from rural to urban areas and *vice versa*, in keeping with the right of the individual to social and economic equality? These are some of the pertinent questions that must be answered in order to make the new venture of Rural Institutes successful. It is difficult to discuss all such questions in detail in a short article like this, but an attempt will be made here to bring out some salient problems facing the Rural Institutes.

When the Vidya Bhawan Rural Institute was started in August, 1956 little publicity could be given to attract a large number of students from the rural areas. We, therefore, planned late in the session to visit the rural areas to search for deserving candidates for admission during the current session. We contacted rural High schools and examined the records of suitable individual candidates for admission. Contacts were also made with students and their parents. Meetings were held with the Collectors and Block Development Officers of the area with a view to publicizing the facilities for Rural Higher education provided in the area. At several

places meetings of village panchayats were called to invite suggestions regarding suitable cases for consideration. A few organisations were also approached with the same purpose. In all such meetings and gatherings a battery of questions mentioned above was put to us. Such methods have proved very helpful to us in two ways. These have attracted a larger number of deserving students from the agriculturist class to the Rural Institute. These contacts have also provided us with a deeper insight into the nature and objectives of the Rural Institutes. We are becoming increasingly convinced of the need that the Rural Institutes should aim at preparing students for rural work, drawing their candidates from both the rural and urban areas on the basis of their aptitudes and learnings. This is based on the faith that the products of the Rural Institutes should be increasingly used in rural work and services. There should, however, be no bar to their mobility from rural to urban areas or *vice versa*. Horizontal and vertical mobility in one's choice of a career should be duly recognized in a democratic set-up. There should also be no discrimination in the selection of candidates for competitive services whether they were from the Rural Institutes or the traditional colleges and universities. This presupposes the establishment of equivalence of the Diplomas of the Rural Institutes with those given by the universities. The Rural Institutes should also start as early as possi-



ble post-graduate studies in relevant areas, specially in the Departments of Rural Services. Such a step will go a long way in improving academic standards even at the Diploma level. This view is substantiated by the history of the growth and development of Higher education in India and abroad. We even visualize at some later stage the establishment of faculties in the Institutes of Rural Higher Education to encourage research of a higher order. The question of transfer of students between the Rural Institutes and universities is also worth considering with a view to establishing parity of status between them. There has been a pressing demand in recent times all over the world for such parity among all the educational institutions catering at a particular level in the educational system.

There is sufficient justification in the belief that in any new experiment of Higher education in India stress should not be laid on designing courses and methods of teaching them, on producing service classes which have largely contributed to unemployment and frustration among the educated youth. This applies much more to the experiment of Rural Higher education. In saying this one should not minimize the role of general education, especially for those who can benefit from it for various jobs of administration. Unfortunately, the courses started in the Rural Institutes at the present moment have a strong direction towards employ-

ment opportunities. What is needed in the designing of such courses is to enable one to establish oneself independently. This will require further diversification of courses at this level to suit the expanding industrial character of Indian society. A growing democracy like India should see that opportunities for Higher education are provided to all who deserve it, irrespective of the occupation they engage in. Much can be done to this end. The son of a washerman or a farmer or of any other person who may have a liking for the profession should have the opportunity to go for Higher education, if he so desires, at his own cost or by his own effort of earning. Such higher training, rightly conceived, should contribute to a vocational competence by providing the breadth of vision and perspective that make the individual a more effective worker and a more intelligent member of society. We should aim at raising vocational and professional education to a position of equal dignity and importance with general education. A programme can be developed in which the two kinds of education may be reconciled in suitable proportions. An attempt should be made to provide diversified courses which can help one to stand on his own legs, may be, sometimes, with the subsidy of the Government or the community. Such extended provision of courses in the Rural Institutes will further enhance the scope of coordination of teaching, research and extension because of the wholeness of the educa-

tional programme that it tends to develop. The report of the Committee on Rural Higher Education which gave birth to the Rural Institutes has this scope and possibility in view in a general way, but fails to make concrete recommendations. The reorientation of Higher education in America from this angle of vision has been responsible to a large extent in raising the standards of living in that country.

As a corollary to this, there arises another question as to the suitability of candidates for admission to the Rural institutes. The top priority should be given to the students from the rural areas, because they have greater chance of staying in the villages after their training in the Rural Institutes. The students from the urban areas should have equal access to these Institutes of higher learning if they want to work in rural areas. This is all the more necessary in the present context when little opportunities for Secondary education are available in rural areas. For some years to come the Rural Institutes will have to rely mainly, if not exclusively, on the urban and semi-urban areas. It is a reality that the training provided in our rural High schools urbanized students' mode of behaviour, dress and outlook. There are, however, now greater chances of getting a reasonable number of suitable students for the Diploma Course in Rural Services as a majority of rural Secondary schools provide corresponding courses. Few students, however,

offer Science and Agriculture in the rural High schools. The Diploma Courses in Civil Engineering and Agriculture may have to draw their students from the urban High schools. It is, therefore, imperative that courses in Science and Agriculture, corresponding to the admission requirements of the Rural Institutes, should be immediately started in rural High schools in the areas where facilities for Rural Higher education are provided.

The question of financial help to really deserving students at the Rural Institute from rural areas is another problem deserving our attention. The Scholarship Scheme of the Ministry of Education, Government of India has gone a long way in solving the difficulty of the 20 per cent of the total enrolment. But the more the attempts made to have a larger proportion of students from the truly representative rural areas, the greater is the difficulty of subsidizing their education. Generally speaking, the poorest students at our Institute are those who come from the agriculturist class. The enrolment of village students at the Rural Institutes will, therefore, depend upon how far the Institutes are able to provide remunerative work to the students. In our Institute we explored the possibilities of providing some part-time work to them under the "Self-Help Scheme". There were some difficulties in the beginning on account of traditional prejudice. But as new traditions began to take root, increasing number of re-

quests started coming from the students. Our students worked two hours a day in the evenings in our gardens, offices, hostels, and the Institute buildings, etc. etc. They earned on an average Rs. 10 per head per month by working two hours a day for seven days in the week. The well-to-do students looked upon the self-help scheme with dismay and doubted the utility of the time spent in physical labour. We undertook some other schemes of self-help also such as collecting the annual subscriptions for magazines and journals and helping the Small Savings Drive which brought them some commission. These schemes have been of some help, but the problem remains largely unsolved. How can Rural Institutes in India provide adequate opportunities to the students in order to make them partially or wholly self-supporting? Our experience in Vidya Bhawan shows that one can earn about Rs. 10 per month by working two hours every day without loss to their studies. This applies to all types of productive and creative activities. We are, therefore, inclined to believe that opportunities for earning can support one up to the extent of only 20 per cent of one's total expenses. This is also true that under the present circumstances work cannot be provided for all. To increase the possibilities of work we are planning to introduce *Amber Charkha* in the near future. But in this case also earnings for two hours' daily work would not go beyond Rs. 10 per head per month.

We sometimes compare the working of American educational institutions, from this point of view, with that of our Rural Institutes. A higher percentage of earning is possible in America because of a variety of opportunities for work and the credit hours system under which a student can plan his timings by spreading his course over a longer period of time. It is easier in that context to double the time of study by taking one half of the full-time load without loss in studies. Our misfortune is that we persist in maintaining the *status quo* in the design of the Rural Institutes as far as the load of studies per year is concerned. To resolve this difficulty we should break the shackles of tradition in the Rural Institutes and permit the students to cover a full-time three-year course in four or five years, so that they could be financially self-supporting. We have had a few cases of brilliant students who came to the Institute but were unable to pay even the admission fee of Rs. 5.

There is much justification in the view that Rural Institutes as they exist today have, relatively speaking, little attraction for students because of several weaknesses. It is hoped that with the pooling of experience and cooperative effort Rural Institutes will be able to build up sound traditions to further the cause of Higher education for rural communities. It is desirable for this new venture to have no dogmatic traditions in order to promote independent thinking and planning.

## Three-Year Diploma Course in Rural Services-Its Significance

**T**HE object of this article is to acquaint the public at large with the essential features of the Three-Year Diploma Course: what it stands for and how it marks a departure in approach and content from the courses offered at the universities and how this course would serve the purpose it is meant for.

India has to choose between a decentralised economy by maintaining a widely distributed population in more than five lakhs of villages, or a centralised industrial economy. A strong and sure decentralised economy can be achieved only by turning villages into prosperous and culturally rich places to live in. On the other hand, undiluted centralisation would mean turning villages into a vast camp of migrating masses of labourers. Industrialisation of the country is, of course, an obvious necessity, if India has to live an honourable life in the comity of advanced nations. Nevertheless, a vast country like India will certainly preserve its essential rural character, which forms the backbone of the country's

economy. Perhaps a balance could be struck between total centralisation and total ruralisation which means selection of particular areas for centralisation, and developing the rest of the country on the basis of decentralised economy. In order to achieve this full opportunities for pioneering and adventure shall have to be created in the villages. The people have to be made conscious of the role that they can play in revitalising the community by preserving their intellectual resources, developing them through creative and specially designed education, and by preserving some of the old essential ethical and spiritual values which have stood the test of time, and also creating new attitudes for material advancement. Education, therefore, has to play an important role in such reconstruction of the rural society.

We start from the point that rural India needs Higher education as much as people living in the cities and towns do and it is the constitutional obligation on the National Government to place such education at their dis-

posal. Such a problem is not peculiar to India alone, even the most advanced countries like America, England and Denmark had to face it. These countries have been able to solve this problem to a certain extent, but in India the realisation came very late, and a constructive examination of the problem started only after Independence. As a result it was decided to start institutes with the Three-Year Diploma Course as a core programme. The next problem was evolving a suitable pattern. Education, if it is to be creative, should take into account the felt needs of the people, and bear a relation to their lives. The Three-Year Diploma Course was the result of a prolonged careful consideration of the Government of India, Rural educators and other eminent educationists.

*The Aim of the Course:* The aim of this Course is generally (a) to offer facilities for liberal education of university standard to the rural people, (b) build up competence in the students for a wide field of rural services, (c) to produce persons of broad vision and culture who should possess ability to see the relationship between events and the way they work on the lives of the community, and face life situations with integrity and resourcefulness, and (d) to help the student keep his rural background, have sympathy for rural ideas and ideals, and take pride in its age-long culture and simplicity. Although the Course is not intended

exclusively for job training, yet the specialisation in a particular channel would accure out of the nature of its content and its organisation in the curriculum.

*Mode of Departure from Traditional Approach of Universities:* The Three-Year Diploma marks a welcome departure from the old system of University education in approach as well as in organisation, but it is neither a revolt against nor a repudiation of every thing that university offers. Rather, it is an attempt to draw the best from the university and to eliminate all that militates against sound education. Mr. Margen in his memorandum prepared for the work of the University Commission in April, 1949, has vividly brought out what a reformed university can do, and what it cannot do by the force of its history:—

“Whatever the Indian University does in the near future, however new in its details, it will be chiefly a refinement and improvement of what has been done in the past. Except for a few cases, there does not exist within the University that overall objectivity which would create an educational system strikingly new and different from its own pattern. In our opinion the work of creating a new India with the Indian village as its core and controlling element, must be the work of a new separate independent institution, which is

free to develop its own pattern in its own way. That does not mean that the new institution shall not draw heavily upon the University. To a large degree the European University with its offspring institutions in America and India, is the custodian of world science and humanities. Its services are indispensable, but they should be the service of consultation, friendship and advice, and not those of authority and direction”.

Somehow or other, the Indian universities have failed to do any real service to rural India, and are not in a position even now to help in the transitional period of community development. How many graduates from the inception of the universities to this day, have taken to serve the rural area? Unless an university completely transforms itself in outlook and approach, there is no possibility of it being serviceable to the rural people. So the Rural Institute and the Diploma Course have come into existence out of sheer necessity. The authors of the syllabus for the Diploma Course were keen that maximum benefit should be taken of the University curriculum, and the best out of it channelised into providing the best type of training for the Rural graduates for community service. The traditional approach of classroom lectures should be replaced by a more scientific approach in the classroom. Accordingly, research and extension activities were integrated with classroom instructions. The

student would work with the villagers, but his outdoor activities would be restricted to educative and creative purposes. The research activity is a means to develop an investigating spirit in the student. The curricula is designed to create among the students a faculty of thinking investigation and expression. The contents in University subjects may not differ markedly, but a difference in approach will make the Rural Institutes a place for experiments, practical work, planning and reconstruction. In organisation also the curriculum envisages the elimination of the evil system of free choice of unrelated elective subjects which unfortunately is admissible in the universities. At present, the universities provide a wide range of subjects and the student has to select whatever subjects he likes whether related or unrelated. In the Three-Year Diploma Course, the related or allied subjects have been placed in optional groups, the study of which specialises the students in a particular profession.

*New Opportunities for Rural Youth:* The programme of community development has created tremendous opportunities for the rural youth for service to his community. It was not possible for the Government to cover even a portion of the rural India during the first Plan period. Slowly and steadily the entire rural India has to be brought within the field of this activity, and accordingly, an army of rural administrators, organisers of coopera-

tives, social welfare officers, social education officers and organisers of small scale industries will be needed. Simultaneously, the village women has also to live up to the new situation and prepare the family for a new life. This overall need of the country has been a guiding factor in designing the curriculum for the Three-Year Diploma Course.

*A New Indian Village:* The authors of the scheme envisage that the villages in new India will be economically prosperous, and a rich place to live in. The old wasteful primitive methods of production will be replaced by the modern scientific methods to accelerate production. The transport system will improve to bring in an outlet for village production to well organised markets. Electric power will be introduced in villages which in turn will help instal piped water-supply under pressure, the sewer system, telephone system, and refrigeration plants. The dusty and dirty environments of the villages will give way to clean surrounding. The village life will throb with cultural activities. If we have to see Indian villages of this type, we must have an army of engineers, health workers, social organisers and so on. The Diploma Course is designed to produce a highly qualified manpower for such services.

*Diploma Course—What it is:* After having described the aims and objects, it is necessary to explain the

organisation, content and the approach. It is a course of three years' duration after Higher Secondary examination. The content material has been divided into core subjects which are essential and compulsory, and two related University subjects besides English (core), that a student has to select. The compulsory core subjects are English, the regional language, a second modern Indian language, History of Civilisation and Introduction to Rural Problems. A few words of explanation may be necessary.

(a) *English:*—English as a core subject will be studied up to B.A. level with a view to enabling the student to attain proficiency in the comprehension of and expression in the language. The subject is introduced for its international value.

(b) *Regional Language:*—Since the students have to work in rural areas, they should know their language and attain proficiency in understanding, writing and conversing with village people in simple and flawless language.

(c) *Modern Indian Language:*—The knowledge of one more modern Indian language that may be an official language in non-Hindi speaking areas, and some other modern Indian language for Hindi speaking areas, has also been made a core subject for obvious reasons.

(d) *History of Civilisation:*—This is a cultural subject and the purpose, in

the words of the authors, is "to give the student an understanding of the major characteristics of a number of most important human cultures and their contribution to the moral, intellectual and material progress of mankind, and of some of the recurrent problems which man has faced in attempting to civilise his life and the different needs in different cultures in different times". The syllabus begins with the origin of the universe, and goes on to the study of evolution of life and socio-cultural aspects. The curriculum does not discuss events, but centres round universal movements in human evolution. The study of this subject on proper lines, will create a spirit of tolerance and appreciation for the views of others. Indirectly, it promotes ethical values and tends to make the student a man of understanding.

(c) *Introduction of Rural Problems:* This new subject covers all rural problems—agricultural, economic, social, engineering, health, educational and administrative. The aim of this subject is to give the students an insight into these problems, and create a sympathetic outlook and respect for rural life. Lessons are to be given through practical work, action, research, and lectures delivered by experts who had worked in the field and who could present the results of their survey and practices through illustrations from their practical experience. In order that the students may be able to understand the material world he is expected to have

some elementary knowledge about the fundamental principles of the various branches of science. Syllabuses have, therefore, been laid down in each branch of science, most of which is expected again to be covered in the field rather than in the classroom. This subject will also strengthen the rural background of the students, create in him a sympathy for rural ways of life, and enable him to appreciate rural problems with a view to solving them.

*Optional subjects:* For reasons stated earlier, various University subjects have been placed in groups. Each student has to select one optional group which comprises some related subjects out of which he has to select only two, which by virtue of their contents specialise the student in particular professions. The entire scheme of study is as follows.

*Scheme of Study in Optional Groups:* The following are the groups:—

(a) *Public Administration:* The aim is to produce intellectually competent persons with a rich background of general knowledge suitable for jobs as Block Development Officers, executive officers in local bodies, or Extension Officers. The subjects are:—

1. Political Science, and
2. Any one of the following subjects:
  - (i) History,
  - (ii) Economics,
  - (iii) Sociology.



(b) *Cooperation*: The aim is to produce competent cooperative organisers, inspectors, Extension Officers and so on. The subjects of study are:—

1. Economics
2. Cooperation

(c) *Social Work*: The object is to produce a body of welfare officers for community uplift programme. The subjects of study are:—

1. Sociology
2. Social Work

(d) *Social Education*: The aim is to produce highly qualified Social Education Officers, who have a rural background and are specialists in group and community organisation. The subjects of study are:—

1. Sociology
2. Social Education

(e) *General Education*: The group constitutes a college for arts and science subjects and prepares graduates with rural affinities and attitudes.

### 1. Humanities Section

Any two of the following:

1. Geography
2. Political Science
3. History
4. Psychology
5. Mathematics
6. English
7. Economics

8. Hindi Literature
9. A classical language

OR

### II. Science Section

1. Chemistry
2. Physics
3. Mathematics
4. Zoology
5. Botany

(f) *Fine Arts*: The aim is to produce refined artists from rural areas.

Subjects:—

1. History of Art, and
2. One of the following:—
  - (i) Music,
  - (ii) Dance,
  - (iii) Painting,
  - (iv) Dramatics,
  - (v) Sculpture,
  - (vi) Pottery and clay-modelling.

(g) *Home Science*: It is mainly for girls and deals with food and nutrition, clothing and textiles, housing and home management, psychology and human relationship, mother craft and child welfare, and handicrafts. All these subjects are applied to rural problems.

(h) *Village Industries*:

1. Economics
2. Village Industries

*Peculiarities in the Syllabus*: In grading syllabuses for the various subjects, care was taken that the applied portion

of the subject received its due share. A few instances are:

(a) In Political Science—Paper I, there is a theory portion; Paper II is a comparative study of Constitutions of various countries, while Paper III covers Indian Constitution and Administration with particular reference to Panchayats, District Boards and administration of various Departments. This syllabus also covers the process of internal and external coordination, working with conferences, staff meetings and special committees and the methods of supervision, and social research in administration.

(b) Economics—Paper I covers theory; Paper II, money, banking, international trade, and public finance etc., while Paper III embraces Indian agricultural economics which deals with special Indian rural problems. The standard everywhere has been kept very high.

(c) In the subject of Cooperation, Paper I covers history and types of cooperative organisations, cooperative societies, cooperative movements, credit societies, rural cooperatives, procedure in cooperation as also administration in cooperation; Paper II covers general sociology so that a person may attain proficiency in the method of dealing with people; Paper III covers human psychology and dynamics of human behaviour. The aim of the syllabus is to acquaint the student generally with the field of Indian

rural society at large, and specifically with its spheres of disorganisation. The approach lay emphasis on the applied part of sociology. It has been suggested that lectures in the classroom should be continuously linked to the problems in the field. At the suggestion of the Ministry of Agriculture, cooperative audit, state control audit, and the audit of different types of societies, checking up receipts and vouchers have also been introduced with a study of departmental set-up and supervision.

(d) In Social Education group, where the aim is to produce a well-trained Social Education Officer, with a rich background and practical experience, a student has to study sociology to be able to understand and deal with society, and also to undergo the training for full three years in the method of arranging programmes for Social education. In fact, the committee on Planning appointed by the Ministry of Community Development, which visited these Rural Institutes, expressed the opinion that this group would serve as the main source from which trained personnel for community development could be drawn.

(e) Besides these specialisation groups, there will be one General Education group which in other words will be a replica of the ordinary Arts and Science college with the simple difference that the students of this group will not undergo a change of mind and a change in attitude, which usually

happens in city colleges. He will still love his rural society and rural way of life, because he too, shall have to take the core subjects compulsorily.

(f) For the women candidates, the Rural Institutes offer Home Science and Fine Arts groups. The Home Science group will produce graduates in Home Science competent for working in High and Higher Secondary schools as Home Science teachers.

*Small Scale Industries:* The Rural Institutes would have neglected a most important phase of rural development, if the group of Small Scale and Village Industries had not been introduced. The aim of this Course is to give the students training in some major and minor industries in rural areas side by side with liberal education. The poverty of rural India can be wiped off by creating opportunities for creative activities for them. If the standard of the people is to be raised, it can be done by raising their income through local production of essential necessities of life. The cost of labour will be generally nil as the village people during their non-harvest days are generally idle. They will utilise this spare time in starting some useful industries where the capital required will be the minimum. The Rural Institute will train students who are experts not only in the process and mechanism of these industries, but also in organising them and arranging markets for the products. Apart from the

core subjects they will study three papers of Economics up to the B.A. level and offer another paper in theory part of the industry which comprises growth and development of villages in India. *Swadeshi* and industrial movement, industrial cooperation, organising industrial cooperatives, its problems and solution and financing of the industrial cooperatives and federations and co-ordination of activities at State and voluntary level. The major industries out of which a person can select one are as follows:—

1. Khadi, Spinning, Weaving, Hand-printing—that mean from cotton to cloth.
2. Carpentry, Wood-work and Blacksmithy.
3. Food Processing like drying, pickling, salting, fruit preservation and bakery.
4. Tailoring, Knitting and Embroidery.
5. Cardboard, Book Binding and Hand-made Paper.
6. Ceramics, Poultry and Clay-modelling.
7. Flaying, Tanning and manufacture of leather goods.
8. Crushing of oil seeds and Soap-making.

Apart from these major industries, there is a number of small industries out of which a person has to select two. For instance, Village Match Industry, *Batik*, *Ghani*, Hand-made

paper, Poultry, Brick-making, Rope-making, *Gur-making* and so on.

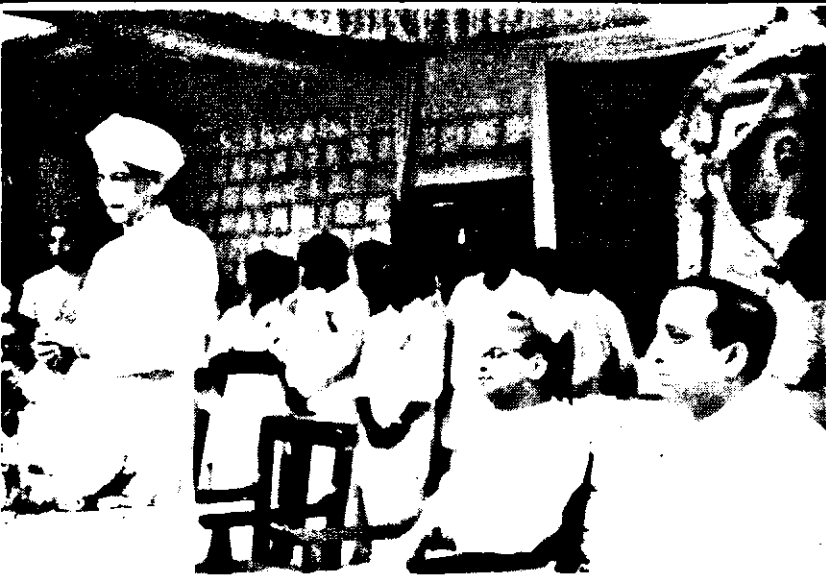
A person trained in a Rural Institute in the development of small scale industries will prove an efficient Extension Officer or organiser for industries in the villages. The Three-Year Diploma Course can, therefore, be interpreted as a combination of various

colleges, such as, a college for administration, a college for cooperatives, a college for social welfare, a college for fine arts, a college for home science or a college for small scale industries. The common link between them is the core subjects which everybody must read to become an enthusiastic rural worker.

# Rural Institutes in Pictures

Rashtrapati lighting the sacred lamp at the inauguration of Gandhigram Rural Institute on 17th August, 1956





*Left : Upa-Rashtrapati inaugurating College of Rural Higher Education. Sri Ramakrishna Mission Rural Institute, Coimbatore in July, 1957*

*Below : Shri M. Bhaktavatsalam, Minister of Agriculture, Madras inaugurating Sri Ramakrishna Mission Rural Institute*



*Left : Shri U. N. Dhebar at the opening ceremony of Engineering Laboratory of Sri Ramakrishna Mission Rural Institute in September, 1957*

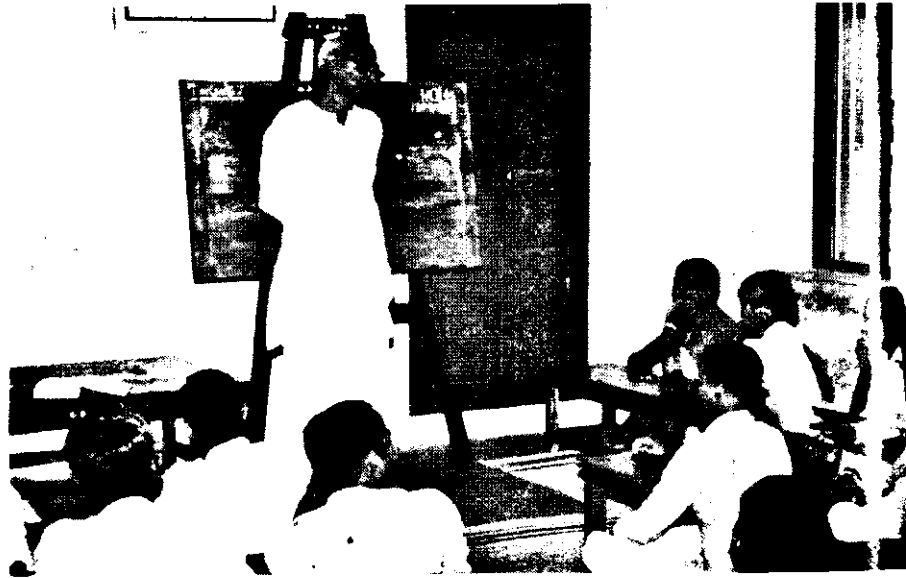


*Right : Dr. K. I. Shrimali and Rajyapal Shri Gurmukh Nihal Singh at the Foundation Stone Laying Ceremony of the Administrative Building of Vidya Bhawan Rural Institute. Udaipur*





A music class is on in Gandhigram Rural Institute

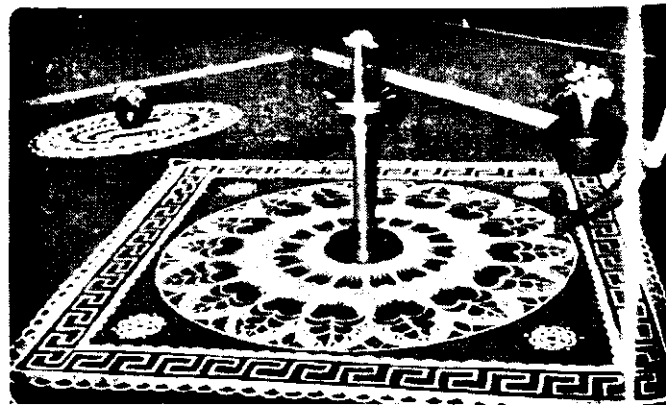


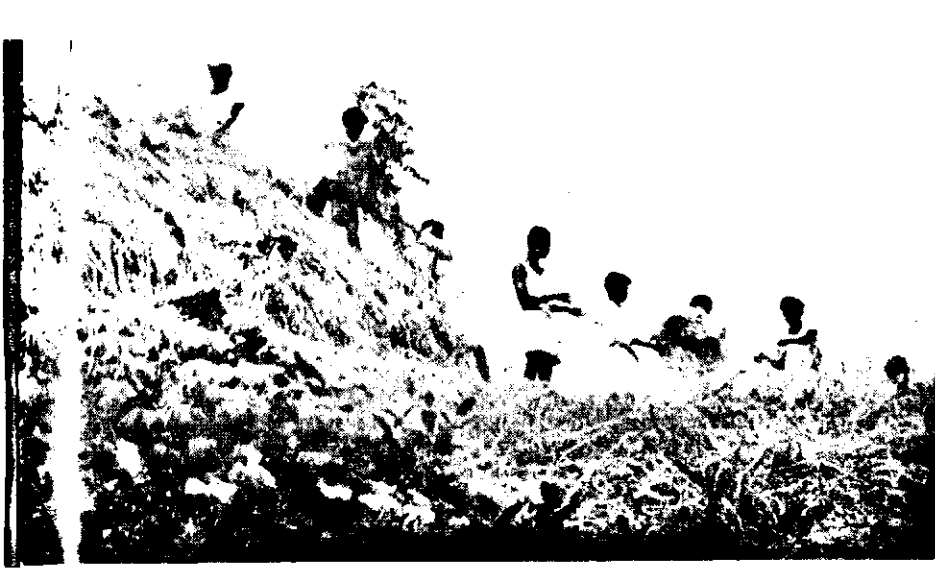
A classroom in Gandhigram Rural Institute

An open-air class is on in Sriniketan Rural Institute

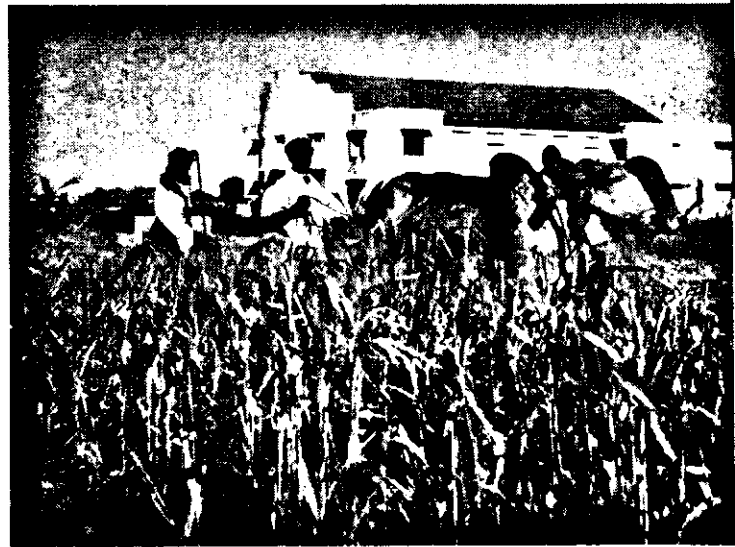


ALPANA—a lesson in art in Gandhigram





**Students are at hay-making in Gandhigram**

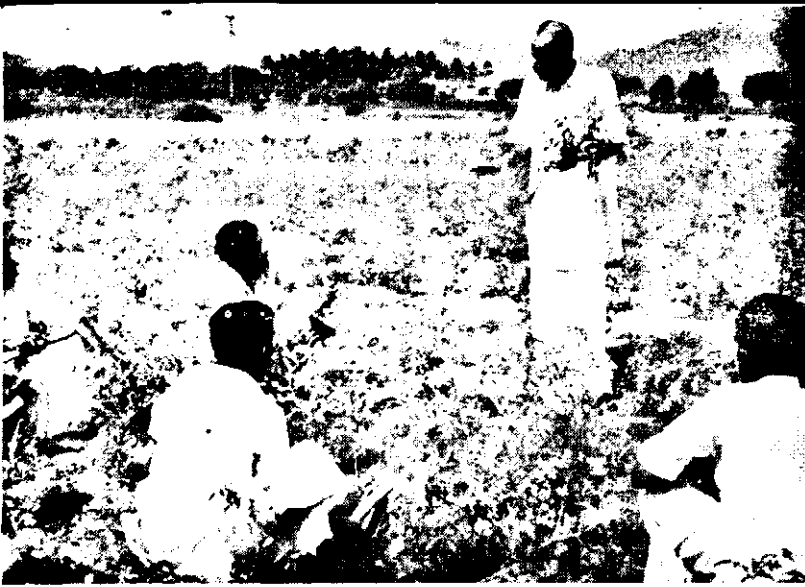


**Students cutting jwars for hay in Lok Bharati Rural Institute, Sanosara**



**Lok Bharati Rural Institute Sanosara : Students at work in their allotted plots with improved implements**





A class in the field—Gandhigram Rural Institute



An agriculture class—Sriniketan Rural Institute



Students emptying compost pit—Sanosara Rural Institute



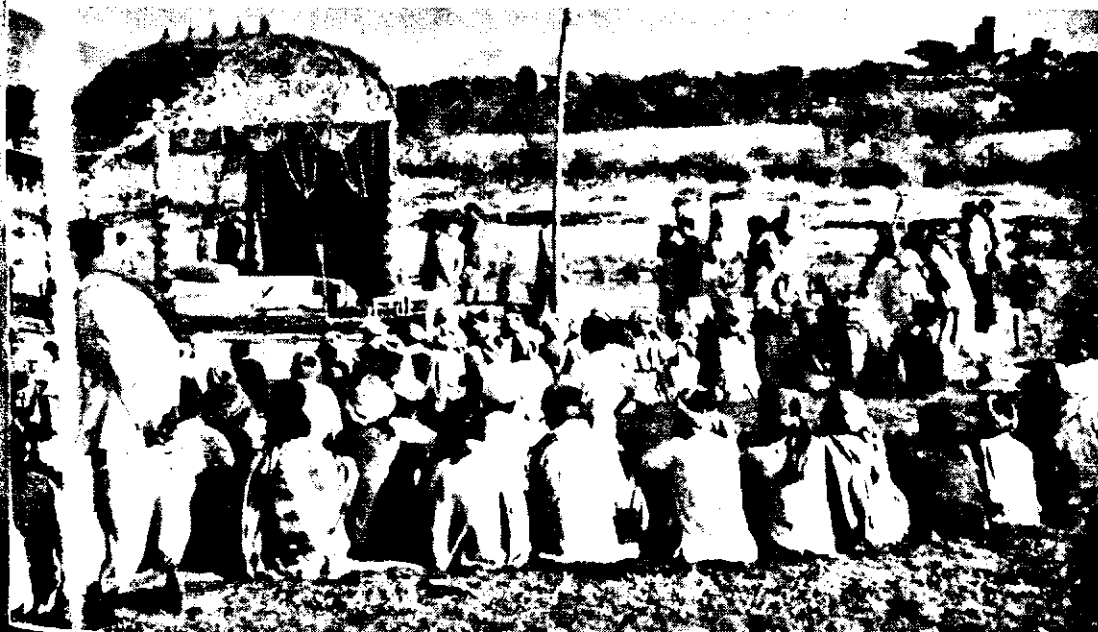
Students hauling refuse from goshala to compost pit—Sanosara



An apiary class in Gandhigram



Gandhigram students at ghani-oil pressing



Early arrivals for an important function at the Vidya Bhawan Rural Institute, Udaipur



Sriniketan : Chhatra Sammelanee election

Gandhigram: Child Welfare in a village camp



Village camp—a road project by Gandhigram students



Right and Left : Organising Children's Clubs by students of Jamia Rural Institute



## Rural Institutes at a Glance

**O**UT of ten Rural Institutes of Higher Education nine started functioning in 1956-57 under the aegis of the National Council for Rural Higher Education set up by the Ministry of Education in 1956. The tenth Institute, viz., Mouni Vidyapeeth, Gargoti started from November, 1957. The following pages give a bird's eye view of the activities of nine Institutes.

### **Shri Shivaji Lok Vidyapith Rural Institute, Amravati**

Situated in a predominantly rural area, the Institute started functioning in July, 1956, with three courses, namely, three-year Diploma Course in Rural Services, two-year Certificate Course in Agricultural Science and a Pre-diploma Course, with an intake of 125 students. Its object is to turn out students capable of enriching all aspects of rural life with a spirit of humility and service. A three-year Certificate Course in Civil and Rural Engineering was started from August, 1957, with an intake of 31 students. Recently an Extension Department with various sections, such as, Agricultural Extension, Rural Economics and Cooperation, Social and Cultural Activities has been started, in addition to the Department of Coopera-

tion that has instituted a Consumers' Cooperative Society.

The Institute's library that is an expanding organisation has 3500 books and a separate section for audio-visual aids. It subscribes to 36 magazines and 10 newspapers.

Janatawadi, about three furlongs from the Institute provides an agricultural farm for the practical work of the students. Two commodious buildings have been built in the Institute campus for a laboratory, a library, classrooms, a hostel and an open-air theatre.

Of the camps and seminars organised by the Institute since its inception, mention may be made of Farmers' Leaders' Training Camp held in December, 1956, extension camps of the students and lecturers of seven days' duration in an adjoining village named Rewasa and a Seminar on Community Development convened at the Institute by the Deputy Commissioner, Amravati.

### **Balwant Vidyapeeth Rural Institute, Bichpuri (Agra)**

The Institute forms part of a bigger organisation, the Balwant Rajput Educational Institute. Situated in the Bich-

puri farm of 433.38 acres near Agra, the Institute was started in July, 1956 with a three-year Diploma Course in Rural Services and a preparatory course. An Engineering Course was introduced later in October, 1956.

Against the set-up of the predominantly urban education in India which produces educated persons with a distaste for village life, the Institute was started with the object of imparting agricultural education in a rural environment and giving a rural bias to education.

Since its establishment, new buildings for a hostel, two workshops, several classrooms and staff quarters have been constructed. The Institute started with 110 students, while its present roll strength is 209.

### **The Gandhigram Rural Institute of Higher Education**

Gandhigram, extending over an area of 350 acres, is placed ideally in an enclave of the beautiful Sirumalai hills, washed by two mountain streams on the north and south and bounded by Sirumalai hills on the east and Kodai hills on the west. The Gandhigram Rural Institute of Higher Education is the sixteenth unit added to the federation of many-sided teaching and training institutions.

Having established pre-Basic, Basic, post-Basic and Basic Teachers' Training schools the idea of establishing a

Rural University at Gandhigram was first mooted in 1954. This idea and subsequent consultations with Shrimali Committee on Rural Higher Education led to the establishment of the Institute that was formally inaugurated on 17th August, 1956, by Rashtrapati, Dr. Rajendra Prasad.

To start with, two blocks of semi-pucca buildings for a hostel and a temporary dining hall-cum-kitchen block were built in addition to office, classroom and a big building with four halls that were rented by Gandhigram.

By now new buildings for a dining hall-cum-kitchen, two hostel blocks and classroom-cum-office have been constructed, while proposals for further construction during the remaining period of the Second Five-Year Plan are under consideration.

In all institutions of Gandhigram, admission is by selection. Methods of selection for admission into the Institute are most objective and aim at selecting the best type of students. The candidates under the direction of the selection committee, are to undergo the various tests lasting three days, practical enough to prove their academic ability, capacity to deal with village people, their attitude to physical and group work, general knowledge and comprehension in English and the regional language. The Institute started with 91 students while the present roll strength is 195 of whom 16 are girls.

The syllabuses approved by the National Council for Rural Higher Education are followed in the following courses of study offered by the Institute: (i) three-year Diploma Course, (ii) two-year Agriculture Course, and (iii) one-year Preparatory Course.

In the Diploma Course are offered five elective groups, namely, Public Administration, Cooperation, Village Industries, Fine Arts (Music) and Home Science. Art group in the preparatory class is considered as optional and the following three subjects are offered under Optional: (i) Elements of Civics and Economics, (ii) Elements of Sociology and Psychology, and (iii) Home Science.

The Institute's Agricultural Farm consists of 10 acres of land bought in 1956-57 that is under intensive cultivation in addition to 40 acres donated by Gandhigram where dry crops are raised. Steps are being taken to open an orchard. The present area of agricultural land being quite inadequate for the Institute, efforts are afoot to procure more land. The Institute's Dairy Farm at present consists of 31 animals of graded Sindhi and other breeds. Though these are considered as training-cum-production units, emphasis is laid on training, and production will naturally increase as training progresses.

Emphasis is also laid on training in the Village Industries Court that is considered as training-cum-production

unit and that consists of five industries, namely (i) Hand-pounding of Rice, (ii) Ghani-oil Pressing, (iii) Hand-made Paper, (iv) Soap-making, and (v), Allied Carpentry. All these sections are provided with model equipment. According to the revised syllabus for village and small scale industries drawn up by the National Council for Rural High Education, the following industries are offered in the Diploma Course to students who take Village Industries as their elective subject:—

1. Major Industries: (i) Handmade paper, cardboard-making and book-binding; (ii) oil-pressing and soap-making.
2. Minor Industries: (i) Poultry; (ii) Apiary.

Theoretical and practical teaching and work are carefully balanced in the courses offered at the Village Industries Court.

Extension service has been undertaken in earnest under the guidance of a strong staff committee. One of the items on the programme is a village camp every three months where a special project suitable to the village will be taken up. One such camp was organised in September, 1957, in Alasampatti, a village six miles from Gandhigram, where a road, one mile long, was constructed within a week, in addition to work in sanitation and Adult education. The Institute also

proposes to participate in the larger Extension Service Programme planned by Gandhigram as a whole. Every student of the Institute compulsorily participates in the Extension Service and the aim is to see that every student gets a god grounding in the techniques and methods of extension work before he passes out.

Community living has been the core principle of Gandhigram for the last decade. As in each institution of Gandhigram, here it is built on the twin foundations of self-reliance and self-government. Community life binds all students and teachers together and it comprises common discipline, various items of community work from sanitation to cultural programme and daily congregational, inter-religious worship. There are hardly any paid servants to do what is called menial work and every student is to take his or her share in such work. A Students' Parliament (*Aam Sabha*) functions and an elected Cabinet of Student Ministers is in charge of every aspect of community living. The *Aam Sabha* gives training in public speaking and discussions of a high standard in true parliamentary style. Every aspect of community living is brought into discussion when *Aam Sabha* is in session, where there is hardly any distinction between a teacher and a student. Thus discipline is evolved from within. Discipline here also banishes the virus of casteism, communalism or linguism.

A tutorial system known as "The Gurukula Group System" in the spirit of the old Gurukula has been evolved in the Institute. A teacher or *Guru* is given charge of one or two groups of ten students. Keeping in close touch with every individual student, he acts as a guide and friend and helps him in every aspect of his living in order to develop character.

### **Rural Institute, Jamianagar**

In pursuance of the decision of the Standing Committee of the National Council for Rural Higher Education at its meeting on 29th May, 1956, the course in Rural Services at this Institute was formally inaugurated on 5th August, 1956, by Dr. K. L. Shrimali, Minister for Education. The Institute functions under a competent Managing Committee consisting of seven members, while the Academic Council as well as the Governing Body of the Jamia Millia performs the general supervisory functions. The Institute is still housed in the Jamia College buildings, too small a place for its classrooms, workshops and teachers' quarters and the increasing number of students.

To start with, the Institute had two classes, the Preparatory class and the first year Diploma in Rural Services—with 27 students in each class. Now the total roll strength is 127, of which 30 are in the Engineering class started recently. At first a wide choice of optionals was allowed, but now the

optionals offered are Public Administration, Social Work, Cooperation and Fine Arts.

55 *bighas* of land were cultivated by the students during the first session at a cost of Rs. 7,593 which yielded a return of Rs. 4,278. Each student was paid 2 as. per hour and the amount thus earned is set aside for the welfare of the students. A record of observation and field work is maintained by the students and is regularly checked by the supervisor. Under the supervision of the teachers in charge of field work, the students of Diploma classes are taken out to neighbouring villages to study rural problems, and to do social work. Various groups meet weekly for coordination and advance planning. Occasionally all students of various groups meet in a conference to compare notes and discuss problems. Staff members and N.E.S. officers also meet to explore the possibility of planning the extension programme in the villages that are selected for field work.

### **Shri Mouni Vidyapeeth, Gargoti**

Shri Mouni Vidyapeeth (Rural Institute), Gargoti, was established on 1st November, 1957, following the intensive development of the original educational unit founded in 1945. Shri Mouni Vidyapeeth also signifies the public trust created by the joint endeavour of three organisations interested in rural educa-

tion. namely, Govindrao Korgaonkar Dharmadaya Sanstha, Kolhapur, Prince Shivaji Education Society, Kolhapur, and Indian Institute of Education, Bombay. By the time the Rural Institute started functioning as many as 46 schools comprising Multipurpose Rural High School, Teachers' Training Centre for Primary teachers, Primary schools, etc., were established in addition to students' hostels, a circulating library for Primary schools, Physical Sciences Laboratory, Child Welfare Centre etc. By that time the workers of the Vidyapeeth also carried on a good deal of selfless extension work in the neighbouring villages such as construction of about 40 miles of road, establishing cooperative societies and rural reconstruction work.

The Rural Institute started with a three-year Diploma Course in Rural Services with an intake of 17 students, with 'Social Education' as an optional course. It is now proposed to provide three optional groups in all in this course.

The main features of the development plans of the Institute are:

- (i) Research into all walks of rural life through adequate agencies for the investigation of educational, social and economic problems of rural life.
- (ii) Extension activities aiming at an all-round development of the



region of the Vidyapeeth comprising 93 villages through the organised efforts of the staff and students of the Vidyapeeth in collaboration with village people.

#### **Lok Bharati Rural Institute, Sanosara**

Situated on the bank of a rivulet in Sanosara, a village on the highway between Rajkot and Bhavnagar, Lok Bharati was already experimenting in Rural education until the Rural Institute started functioning with the courses prescribed by the National Council for Rural Higher Education. The courses introduced are: (a) three-year Diploma Course in Rural Services; (b) Preparatory Course; and (c) two-year Certificate Course in Agricultural Science. The Institute is essentially a residential one and 87 students of various courses reside in the four hostels, one of which is exclusively for girl students.

One important feature of the Institute is its training in corporate life. A *Mukhya Grihapati* (Chief Guide) who is essentially a teacher, assisted by three junior student guides looks after all activities, academic and non-academic. A Students' Union, an elected body with various departments, namely, Finance, General Health, Kitchen, Literary Activities, Cooperative Stores, community cleanliness etc., is responsible for all essential services to the students. All students are required to devote two and a half hours in useful

and productive work where they "earn while they learn". The Extension Wing of the Institute in cooperation with agencies like National Extension Service Block, Government Subsidised Farm, Intensive Area Scheme of All India Khadi Board and State Education Department is carrying out activities like propagation of Khadi and village industries, subsidised farming, farmers' courses, fairs and educational tours, Adult education, 'gardening' in Primary education etc.

#### **Sri Ramakrishna Mission Rural Institute, Coimbatore**

Sri Ramakrishna Mission Vidyalaya which is the leading institution in Basic education in the State is situated in a beautiful rural area of one hundred and forty acres about eleven miles from Coimbatore on the Coimbatore—Ootacamund road. The Vidyalaya's foundation stone was laid by Mahatma Gandhi in 1934 when it was also affiliated to the Ramakrishna Mission. Its Silver Jubilee was celebrated in 1955 when Dr. Rajendra Prasad delivered the Silver Jubilee address. The Vidyalaya has many educational institutions, a High school on public school lines, a Senior Basic school, a college of Physical education, a centre for training Social Education Organisers, a Teachers' College etc., in addition to its Rural Institute. Manifold activities in Extension Services in the surrounding rural areas were already being carried out by the Vidyalaya for

many years before the establishment of the Rural Institute.

The universities in India do not provide the right type of education suited to the needs of rural young men. Basic education trains children to appreciate, love and respect work, and since Basic education has been accepted as the national system of education, it is necessary to apply the ideals of Basic education to Higher education. These considerations led to the starting of the Vidyalyaya's Rural Institute in 1955 which was subsequently selected by the Government of India as one of the ten Rural Institutes under the *aegis* of the National Council for Rural Higher Education. The Institute offers three courses, (i) a four-year Course in Rural Services equal to the Bachelor's degree of a university, (ii) a two-year Course in Agriculture, and (iii) a three-year Course in Civil Engineering. The School of Agriculture and the National Certificate Course in Civil Engineering were started in 1956 and the College of Rural Higher Education offering a Diploma Course in Rural Services was inaugurated by Dr. S. Radhakrishnan on 24th July, 1957.

The outstanding features of the courses at the Institute are that Hindi is included with English and the regional language so as to develop a national outlook in the students and the core subjects include a study of rural problems with reference to all aspects of life, namely, agriculture, economics,

health, education and engineering. The College of Rural Higher Education offers subjects such as Cooperation, Social education and Public Administration. The basic approach to education in the Institute is through work, extension and research.

It is the constant endeavour of the authorities of the Institute to put before the country ideals of selfless service, self-help and pride in work.

### Sriniketan Rural Institute

*Kaviguru* Rabindranath Tagore founded the Department of Rural Reconstruction at Sriniketan as early as 1922, with the two-fold objective of experimenting with the basic principles of Rural Reconstruction and to pass on the knowledge thus gained to the doors of the villagers. To realize this objective Rabindranath not only built up a well-knit programme of Extension Services, but also a nucleus of Rural education at Sriniketan. He started the *Lok Siksha Samsad* and the *Siksha Satra* known as the poet's schools so as to carry knowledge to the doors of the villagers and to bring villagers to the seat of learning. This education endeavoured to give students full opportunities to enter into intimate relationship with the natural and social environment and to prepare them to undertake more responsibility in meeting their individual and community needs through creative occupation.

It was, therefore, natural that Visva-Bharati started in 1956 at Sriniketan the Rural Institute under the aegis of the National Council for Rural Higher Education. The following three courses are offered at the Institute: (i) one-year Preparatory Course, (ii) two-year Agricultural Sciences, (iii) three-year Rural Service Course. The present roll-strength is 69. Theoretical classes are held in the existing buildings at Sriniketan, while for practical work, advantage of the facilities in the Dairy Farm, the Agricultural Farm, the Cottage Industries Training Institute, Health and other sections of Sriniketan is taken. New buildings are proposed to be constructed and for the time being a rented house in an adjoining village provides hostel accommodation for 29 students. A jeep with a trailer has been purchased for village field work.

Each student is to follow the daily routine of the Institute which starts with the rising bell at 5-30 a.m. and ends with the silence bell at 10 p.m. Hours are fixed for morning ablutions, prayers in the morning and evening, training programme, study etc. The training programme comprises both theoreticals and practicals, while practicals are conducted through multifarious activities both at the Institute and in villages. Teaching in early stages is problemcentric and joboriented, while later it develops into analytical discussion.

The Institute's library has a collection of over 1,000 books and subscribes to about fifty journals and five daily newspapers.

While a Students' Counselling Bureau is proposed to be set up, at present members of the staff hold conferences individually and in groups with the students of the Institute to help them in adjusting themselves to the work and life of the Institute. A *Chhatra Sammelanee* works under the leadership of an elected body of the students. Cultural, recreational and literary activities, games, sports, medical care etc. are conducted through the *partinidhis* of the *Sammelanee* guided by staff associates.

To help poor and needy students part-time employment is offered at the Dairy and Agricultural Farm and a Students' Labour Cooperative has been organised. The earnings go to the Students' Aid Fund. The students have also organised a Cooperative Stores and a Cooperative Canteen—to meet their basic needs and the profit goes to the Students' Aid Fund.

Another feature of the Institute is its Planning Forum which holds discussions to provide opportunities for the students to come in close contact with Development Plans under operation in the country. This Forum also organises a few work camps in the villages.

A Research Department is proposed to be started, where specific research studies on the multifarious problems of rural areas will be undertaken by the teachers and students. The farmers and inhabitants of neighbouring areas will be encouraged to present specific problems for solution through the Research Department.

### **Vidya Bhawan Rural Institute, Udaipur**

Vidya Bhawan Rural Institute is the culmination of a long-planned and comprehensive educational effort aimed at the growth of a new social order, of Vidya Bhawan Society, Udaipur, that was established as a small progressive school in 1931 and celebrated its Silver Jubilee in 1956. From the beginning the Society believed that social revolution in this country meant a revolution in the life of the rural masses. By 15th August, 1956, when the Rural Institute was started the Society had established a Basic school, a Teachers' college and a Training Centre for Social Education Organisers.

The Rural Institute started work in the new buildings of the Vidya Bhawan Handicrafts Institute with a roll-strength of 62 in three courses of study, namely, Rural Services Diploma, one-year Preparatory course leading to the Diploma Course and National Certificate in Civil Engineering. Coordination of academic studies, research and extension, which should be the characteristic feature of a Rural Institute has been aimed at from the beginning.

Field work comprising technique of survey and social investigation in subjects like Sociology, Economics, Geography etc. were planned in order to vitalise academic subjects. To mention a few, the Institute helped in the establishment of youth groups in preparing a playing field and running a Community Centre, planned to work on a coordinated project on the problem of water logging for four to six months in an adjoining village, and decided to establish at the Institute a Craft Centre to demonstrate better methods of oil-crushing, weaving with *Amber Char-khas* and soap-making.

Besides being an extension service activity, the Craft Centre is meant for the realisation of the objective, "earning while learning." Further, self-help scheme that provided opportunities for work in office, farm and construction department of the Society and type-writing, sweeping, cleaning rooms and lavatories, was introduced. A sales agency of books and magazines of eight Publishers was set up. Students were also appointed as library assistants. In addition to these, avenues of part employment in book-binding, white-washing, painting and varnishing of furniture are being explored. The Institute works under a tutorial system in which each class is placed under the charge of a tutor assisted by another teacher and larger classes are divided into two tutorial groups. All-round guidance to the students, help in their difficulties, cooperation with parents and guardians

and maintenance of cumulative individual records of the students by tutors are effected through this system. The various groups which are family units in the larger community of the Institute organise camps, excursions, socials, literary and cultural activities.

To free the students from the slavery of books the Institute has developed its library that has 3,700 books and subscribes to 53 journals and magazines.

The Institute through its insistence on developing love for rural life, simple living and manual labour strives to impart education of the heart so that the

students may be morally upright and alive to their social responsibilities. The Institute's daily routine begins with a non-denominational prayer followed by reading from the teachings of great prophets, writers and poets. Special programmes are also organised on the occasion of festivals like Janmashitami, Holi, Muharrum, Christmas, Republic Day, Guru Nanak's birthday, Gandhi Jayanti and the like.

Like other Institutes Vidya Bhawan Rural Institute has also its peculiar as well as common problems which the Institute is striving hard to tackle and solve.

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