

REPORT
OF THE
FOURTH INTER-STATE SEMINAR
ON RURAL HIGHER EDUCATION

HELD AT BHOPAL
4TH TO 10TH JULY, 1960

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INTRODUCTION

It is a truism that educational facilities for Higher education in India hardly touch the life of the people in our rural areas. This was taken into account when the University Education Commission under the Chairmanship of Dr. S. Radhakrishnan recommended the establishment of Rural Universities to meet the demands and special needs of our people in the villages. In the wake of the recommendations of the University Education Commission, was appointed a Committee known as the Rural Higher Education Committee, or more popularly known as the Shrimali Committee. The Shrimali Committee made a comprehensive study of the existing educational institutions in rural areas and worked out a well-designed pattern of education to suit the needs of our village communities. This resulted in the establishment of Rural Institutes, a pioneering experiment in education, whose impact on the reconstruction of our rural society may well be far-reaching.

The success of such an experiment, as in the case of every other field of human endeavour, depends on the kind of approach that is brought to bear on it and the ability and imagination of the men responsible for implementation. In India, as is well known, there is a paucity of organised training centres to provide training experience of the kind required to run new types of educational institutions like the Rural Institutes. The teacher is, of course, the key factor and accordingly the Union Ministry of Education has placed the greatest emphasis on giving him the required training and equipment. In 1958, 20 teachers were sent to Berea College, Kentucky (U.S.A.), in a type of moving seminar. They visited institutions of higher learning in the rural areas of various countries, both developed and under-developed, under the leadership of Dr. Louis Smith. Besides, they obtained a first hand insight into the community development programmes in some of the countries they visited and participated in the extension activities of the Berea College. The experience thus gained by the visiting teachers in extension and research should be rewarding and of considerable use in their work in India. In the context of the current economic stress, however, it was not possible to extend such opportunities of visits abroad to all the teachers in the country and, therefore, an alternative method adopted by the Government was to arrange for In-Service Training of Teachers through seminars and workshops. The Ministry of Education had held three Inter-State and five Regional Seminars to enable the members of the teaching profession to discuss their problems and pool their experiences through exchange of ideas on the techniques of teaching and on the questions of extension and research.

One important landmark in our efforts in the field of reconstruction of education in our rural areas was the fourth Inter-State Seminar organised at Bhopal in July. Even before the teachers of our Rural Institutes met to discuss their problems at Bhopal, a comprehensive questionnaire posing specific problems had been sent to them with the request that they should study the questions raised therein and give their replies. This proved valuable, for the replies showed that

quite a large number of teachers were thinking seriously about the problems of Rural Higher Education. In this Seminar at Bhopal. issues were squarely faced and practical solutions to intricate questions sought. The five-day Seminar was followed by a joint meeting of the delegates, special invitees and Directors of the Rural Institutes on the 9th and 10th July in which the recommendations of the various subject-teacher groups were closely scrutinised, analysed and discussed comprehensively. It was to discuss practical issues which permitted differences of opinion rather than to pass resolutions thereon that the Seminar was held. The report that follows, therefore, is confined to the highlighting of some of the salient features of the discussion and the major findings which are of interest not only to the teachers but all others interested in the Higher education of our rural communities.

Our thanks are due to Prof. S. Subramanayam Naydu of Andhra University, Dr. J. H. Heckman, Cooperative Education Adviser of the T.C.M. and Mr. Joshi of the Ministry of Community Development, for their illuminating and informative papers. Not less valuable and instructive, especially from the point of view of students of Cooperation and Small Scale Industries, were the papers read by Shri Shyam Bharosay, Joint Registrar, Cooperative Societies, Madhya Pradesh. Mr. M. D. Shingru and Shri V. R. Madhulkar, Principal, Khadi Gramodhyog Vidyalaya.

The Governor of Madhya Pradesh, Shri H. V. Pataskar graciously agreed to inaugurate the Seminar. The presence of the Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh, Dr. K. N. Katju at the Seminar and his address to the participants, were greatly appreciated. We are also indebted to Shri G. Ramachandran who acted as the Director-General of the Seminar. We also thank Dr. B. H. Metha for the interest he took in making the Seminar a success.

Our thanks are also due to the Government of Madhya Pradesh who made as satisfactory arrangements for the comfort of the participants of the Seminar as could be desired. Particular mention should be made of Shri G. V. Bernard, Deputy Secretary, Education Department, Bhopal and Shri S. N. Singh, Deputy D.P.I. but for whose kind cooperation such arrangements would not have been possible. Our thanks are also due to the Directors of the Subject Groups, who spared no pains to obtain the best results out of the Seminar under their guidance. The participants exerted their utmost to make the Seminar a success.

The participants of the Seminar had the benefit of the presence of Dr. Luther M. Ambrose of the Berea College, Kentucky who had 30 years of teaching experience in rural areas to his credit. He has been assigned by the T.C.M. as a Consultant to the Ministry of Education for two years to help in the organisation and development of our Rural Institutes. The Seminar at Bhopal provided him with good opportunities to meet all the teachers of our Rural Institutes who profited by discussions with him.