

EXTENSION CENTRES & GROWTH CENTRES.

Building the capacity of the people involved in the entire rural development, process is one of the main inputs required for smooth and systematic development of rural areas. Training is the major instrument for developing capacity of the people involved in the development process. Role of training centres have increasingly become crucial in this regard. Their activities will have to be multifarious due to the multidimensional nature of the interventions of the rural development.

Human element is central in the entire rural development process. Training centres particularly the Extension Training Centres will have to play a vital role in developing human resource in the rural areas. In the recent years, poverty and unemployment have been considered as the major problems in Assam. Out of the total population of 266 lakhs, more than 89% people live in rural areas. 20.28 lakhs families are living below the poverty line. Number of Extension Training Centres will have

to be increased to make them directly accessible to the rural people. Proper guidance to the rural people on different aspects relating to their life can facilitate their development to a large extent. The Extension Training Centres can play a very important role in this regard.

For the last decade the State Institute of Rural Development, Assam has been diversifying its training and research activities for rural development. The people oriented training and research activities of the institute have been able to build the capacity of the rural people in the villages. Feedback received from the field is very much encouraging. The institute has been trying to decentralise the approach through its Extension Training Centres. Extension Training Centres are helping the SIRD to take the approach nearer to the people.

Diverse approaches: Approaches and strategies for rural development are becoming more diverse and complex calling better training to help people to understand and assimilate the concepts. Role of training has also become all the more important

with the development in the technologies required for changing the socio-economic condition of the rural people. Within a decentralised framework for development, there decentralised approach in training also.

Increase in the number of target groups: Number of target groups for training has also increased and become diverse in the rural development process. Apart from officials involved in the delivery system of rural development, the capacity of the people at the receiving end also needs to be developed in the participatory approach of development. This has increased the importance of decentralisation in the training process to make it more accessible to the rural people. Exposure of these target groups to new technologies. Other components required for economic development is very much essential.

Large number of functionaries of Panchayati Raj Institutions: Strengthening of Panchayati Raj Institutions depends on orienting the elected representatives to their function. The large number of the elected representatives itself

calls for taking training programmes closer to them. These functionaries also need orientation to the new development in technologies.

Capacity building of peoples organisations: Involvement of peoples organisations like, NGOs, CBOs and other voluntary organisations have become important for participatory development. Building the capacity of the functionaries of these organisations in a decentralised way have also become important for realistic involvement of these institutions in the field. These organisations can also play a vital role in technology transfer and capacity building of the rural poor.

Enhancing awareness level: Lack of awareness has become a hurdle in the development of the rural areas and its people in the state. It has become an important responsibility of a training centre to sensitise the rural people to their present status and enhance their awareness about different approaches, strategies and programmes for their development. Exposure to scientific approaches is also very important.

Practical training through demonstration: Training becomes more realistic when it is made more practical oriented with demonstration. Extension Training Centres can develop demonstration units in their campuses to make their training programmes more practical oriented. SIRD has already developed demonstration units in the existing Extension Training Centres in the state. This has created a very good demonstration effect in the villages around the institutes. But, limited numbers of Extension Training Centres will not be able to cover large number of unemployed youth in the state.

Keeping in mind the above approaches, the institute has set up 11 Extension Centres and 2 (two) Growth Centres to cater to the training need of the officials, elected representatives of Panchayats, representatives of NGOs, CBOs in a decentralized way. The SIRD organizes regular training programmes for officials, elected representatives of panchayats and other stakeholders involved in the development process of the rural areas through Extension Centres and Growth Centres.

The institute has improved the training facilities in the Extension Centres and Growth Centres for organizing these courses in decentralized way making the training programmes for accessible to rural people in the field. Every Extension Centre has well equipped to organize courses on panchayati raj, ICT and self employment oriented training simultaneously.