

FINDINGS OF IMPACT ASSESSMENT OF NIRD TRAINING PROGRAMS REPORT BY ASCI

Introduction:

The Administrative Staff College of India, Hyderabad has undertaken the “Impact Assessment of the NIRD Training Programs” which covers the period from 2002-03 to 2004 – 05.

The main Objectives of the Study were to-

- a. Understand the impact of training programs conducted by the NIRD on the participants knowledge, skills and attitudes;
- b. Whether the training programs had affected participants’ performance in their back to work environment;
- c. The extent of post-training job retention among participants; and
- d. Linkages, if any, between NIRD’s capacity building services and qualitative or quantitative improvements in the design and implementation of rural development programs on the field.

Methodology

The study used a detailed mailed questionnaire for conducting survey on the population of participants who attended the training programs in the year 2002 - 03 to 2004 - 05. The study received 1259 valid responses. 16% of the respondents of the survey were randomly selected for personal interviews to understand perceptible change in knowledge, skills and attitudes after the training. There were also interviews with the officials of Departments of Rural Development and Panchayat Raj of the various states to understand their needs of training and the satisfaction of the outcomes.

Four workshops were also held to cover the five regions of the country – North, South, West, East and North East to discuss the survey results which were attended by SIRD faculty, local NGOs participants, and others who were invited by the local SIRDs.

To further understand the scope for enhancing the relevance of training programs in terms of program design, content pedagogy / andragogy delivery and alignment with target groups, the faculty and the Centre Heads were also met with a checklist.

The main findings of the study are presented in three sections. **Section-I** focuses on the observations made with regard to different aspects of the training programs by the respondents. **Section – II** focuses on the feedback received from the faculty members of NIRD & SIRD. **Section – III** focuses on the center wise recommendations for improvement made by the respondents and the NIRD faculty.

Section-I

(Feed back received from the participants)

Training Programs

- Programs are largely supply driven, which needed to be changed to a more demand driven topics. For this, training need analysis (TNA) may be taken up.
- There is also a need to do a competency mapping of the various centres to set priorities and design programs more fruitfully.

- The focus should be on the ‘development of new skills’, along with development of attitude and knowledge.
- Hindi should also be used apart from English, and should also provide course material in Hindi to the required participants.
- Women participants should be encouraged since they are working in a more pro-active role in the development of rural areas.
- The trainers need to coordinate among themselves so that the program as a whole gives a holistic picture to the trainees. Most times the sessions are disjointed and do not link into one another.
- TOT programs should be given more prominence to help in improvement of training skills locally.
- The content of the training program should be made relevant to the particular problems of the states to which the participants belong.
- Topics like low cost/local resource-based technologies should be included in the training programs.
- Expert resource persons from different states representing the entire country should be engaged during the training programs.
- The duration of the programs can be designed such that where the training program is for awareness or knowledge sharing, it could be for a shorter period of 6 days. In case of capacity building sessions, it should be of a longer duration of 15 days.
- NIRD could be declared as a staff college for RD functionaries making it compulsory to attend the training program. There could be an in-service program for all IAS officers before their ‘on the job training’ in NIRD.
- Accreditation of voluntary organizations needed, so that genuine ‘grassroots level organisations’ could be trained as master trainers.

About Nominations:

- Most participants were unaware of the gamut of training programs conducted by NIRD. It was suggested that it would be useful if the various training programs are communicated to the concerned Department a year in advance so that the participants could choose those training programs which would be most relevant to them.
- Grass root level functionaries in rural development should be given priority and trained exclusively as a separate group.
- After selection, the participants should be informed of the schedule of training programs in advance for effective preparation before arriving at Hyderabad.
- Lower level government officials and higher-level officials should not be included in the same group.
- Elected representatives and voluntary organizations should be clubbed together for training programs.

Training methods & No.of Training programs:

- The program design left much to be desired. There is no project work or group discussion during the course. There is no time for the trainer to discuss at the end of the session. 75 minutes session is not sufficient to cover case studies and use of

participatory methods. Number of sessions per day could be reduced so that a better program design could be made to improvise training plan.

- Trainings should use more participatory methods like role plays, brainstorming, group discussions, panel discussion etc.
- NIRD should give small assignments to all the participants.
- Case studies of smaller states/ Northeastern states should be built up.

About Reading Material:

Reading material is not being upgraded in recent times. One of the reasons for this was that Research was not very serious and hence very few cases were being prepared for training from the research outputs.

About Field visits:

- NIRD should include more field visits and relevant case studies.
- The survey results showed that the participants were interested in field study trips. But it was seen that in the Institute, it was difficult to manage logistics of field trips, more so within a 6-day program.

About Evaluation:

- NIRD should constitute a separate cell for evaluation of training programs to regularly monitor and interact with the trainees so that the trainees can take corrective steps to improve the quality and content of the training programs. This could also be done via video conferencing to share experiences and success stories in rural areas. Infact further training can be given through tele-networking.

About Dissemination:

- E-Library: There is a great demand of dissemination of library services of NIRD. The Central unit may be further developed. A small fee could be charged from NGOs and smaller stakeholders to avail the facilities. There was need to build up a video library. The Library could also put up E-journal abstracts on a shared basis and also help in accessing data from across the country.

About Infrastructure

- The conference rooms at NIRD would have to be redesigned as classrooms with flexible seating facilities, so that they could be changed for participatory exercises.

Thrust areas in which NIRD could continue to work :

- Project planning, monitoring and evaluation for rural development
- Participatory planning
- Self employment and rural enterprises
- Natural resource management
- HRD
- IT in rural development
- Social sectors

Topics to be covered in the future training programs:

- Fund raising, preparation of project proposal and report writing, especially for NGOs
- Sustainability in agriculture and livelihoods
- Waste land development and management, social forestry
- Social audit and accountability
- Awareness of biodiversity, biotechnology, genebank, seed banks, food security
- Develop low cost rural technology
- Vocational training program for unemployed people.
- Ethics, value based development
- Negotiation skills
- Team building exercises
- Tribal studies

SECTION –II

About Training methods & No. of Training programs (Feed back received from the NIRD faculty through interview method)

- Many faculties though trained, did not use participatory training methods. The reasons given were that
 - Trainers shied away from using the practice,
 - Session plans were not prepared in a participatory fashion, and
 - Many times participants were not willing to have a participatory session, which required more participation from them.
- The faculty felt having four training programs per faculty was a heavy burden. Each center had to keep 3-4 core programs that it would concentrate on and have repeat programs. There was a need to look at new programs every 2 to 3 years. As of now the workload was such that faculty found it difficult to allocate time for research, training and consultancy.
- The faculty felt that 80% of the time of the faculty was being spent on non-academic work. They were responsible for getting nominations, sending invitations, letters and arranging vehicles and hence the faculty felt that there was an urgent need to have a Programs Office headed by an Officer of Under Secretary rank, aided by 3 to 4 program officers. Each Program Officer needed to look after 2-3 centres. Administration staff needed to be made more aware of training programs and trained on special skills. The centers also felt the need for Course Secretaries or training assistants who would work with the program officer to avoid unnecessary work for the faculty.

About SIRDs and SLO's: (Feed back received from the SIRD & NIRD faculty)

- SLOs were supposed to visit the SIRDs & ETCs atleast twice in a year so that they could directly assess local needs. Though the concept of SLO itself was very good, there was no incentive and hence most times the SLOs had never visited the SIRDs to which they were attached.

- Due to lack of trained faculty at SIRDs, the burden of training is being shifted to NIRD. SIRDs need to be strengthened.
- It was suggested that for better training programs to be designed, Basic courses could be conducted at SIRDs with a more homogenous group, and NIRD could supplement with rigorous updated senior level courses at Hyderabad.
- NIRD could also link up through state NICs to all other NIC centers of the states. A meeting could be called with the Secretary, Department of Rural Development, SIRDs and NIRD together with a link to ETCs at a particular day for greater coordination of programs.

Suggestions for improvement – (Feedback emerging from Faculty)

- The faculty felt they needed help to maintain positional prominence with the working of the Institute. Many expressed their view that the administration felt that the “institute could run even without the faculty”. This would have to change.
- The faculty also suggested having exchange programs internationally for faculty development.

SECTION –III

CENTRE WISE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT:

The following section identifies the indicators, where there is scope for improving performance of individual centers

Centre for Agrarian Studies and Disaster Management (CAS & DM)

- Trainers knowledge of field situation (Guest faculty)
- Relevance of field visits
- Trainers’ availability for participant interaction
- Patience in delivering lectures
- Information technology tools to be used
- New concepts and ideas to be introduced

Center for Equity and Social Development (CESD)

- Guest faculty level of knowledge
- Guest Faculty knowledge of field situation (understanding of field realities)
- Program relevance to be increased
- Develop more concern for RD

Centre for Gender Studies (CGS)

- Program should focus on ways to increase efficiency in implementation
- Program relevance to be increased

Centre for Human Resource Development (CHRD)

- Program content to be improved
- Guest faculty level of knowledge
- Guest Faculty knowledge of field situation
- Field visit to be more relevant
- Enhancement of Organizational performance

- NIRD faculty knowledge of field situation

Centre for Information Technology and Quantitative Techniques (CIT& QT)

- Program relevance to be increased
- Programs to be more Practically applicable
- Guest faculty level of knowledge
- Guest Faculty knowledge of field situation
- Field visit to be more relevant
- New concepts and ideas could be developed

Centre for Media and Rural Documentation (CMRD)

- Efficiency in implementation
- Program content to be more relevant
- Field visit to be more relevant

Centre for Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation (CPME)

- IT to be used
- Course Material used and distributed to be more relevant and practical
- Program design to be more suitable
- Field visit to be more relevant
- Guest faculty level of knowledge
- Guest Faculty knowledge of field situation
- Program content to be more relevant and innovative
- Appropriate IT to be used
- Increase scope of interaction between faculty and trainees
- Field visit to be more relevant

Centre for Self-Employment and Rural Enterprises

- Material used and distributed to be innovative
- Training programs to be more practically applicable
- Guest faculty level of knowledge
- Appropriate IT tools to be used
- Field visit to be more relevant

Centre for Water and Land Management (CWLM)

- Guest Faculty knowledge of field situation
- Program to be more relevant
- Material used and distributed to be innovative
- Practical aspects to be incorporated
- New concepts and ideas to be introduced
- Guest faculty level of knowledge
- Field visit to be more relevant

Research and Training Division (RTD)

- Program relevance to be increased
- Material used and distributed to be innovative
- Practical aspects to be incorporated
- New concepts and ideas to be introduced

- Guest faculty level of knowledge
- Field visit to be more relevant