

Seminar on
Nai Talim in Rural Reconstruction

Date:

29th April 2010

Venue:

**CREDA Rural Resource Centre
Vill. Sukhra (Rajpur), Halia, Mirzapur (U.P.)**

Seminar Report



Organized by:

**Centre for Rural Education and Development Action (CREDA)
Mirzapur (U.P.)**

Sponsored By:

**National Council of Rural Institutes (NCRI)
Hyderabad (A.P.)**

Report on One-Day Seminar on Nai Talim in Rural Reconstruction

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Inauguration:

- Garlanding the photograph of Mahatma Gandhi



- Lighting lamp



- Sarva Dharma Prarthana (all religion prayer)



Distribution of materials:

Every participant was provided a folder having pen, pad and a write up on Nai Talim. The write-up was taken from Ailaan of NCRI, Volume I, Issue III, March 2010.

**Main Speaker cum:
Resource Person**

Prof. B.N. Juyal
Eminent Gandhian and Ex-Professor of Sociology and Rural
Development, Gandhian Institute of Studies, Varanasi

NCRI Representative:

Dr. N.V. Peter, Coordinator, Nai Talim Centre

Other speakers:

1. Mr. Shamshad Khan, Secretary, CREDA and Gandhian Activist
2. Mr. Lalta Prasad, Secretary, Gramanchal Sansthan, Mirzapur
3. Ms. Shamim Bano, Project Associate, CREDA, Mirzapur

NGOs Represented:

1. Vivek Sadhna Mandir, Allahabad
2. Gramya Swarajya Sewa Sansthan, Allahabad
3. Sarvoday Gram Swarajya Samiti, Mirzapur
4. Gramanchal Sansthan, Mirzapur
5. Mahila Manch, Mirzapur
6. M.M.U. Shikshan Sansthan, Mirzapur
7. Manav Samajik Kalyan Evam Arthik Vikas Sanstha, Mirzapur

PRI Representatives:

Number of ex village pradhans, present pradhans and members of panchayat, member of Block Development Committees participated in the Seminar.

Other Participants:

Participation of SHG members, teachers, skill trainers, literacy instructors, *shiksha mitras*, *dalit* groups, private school teachers, former child workers, traditional village heads, street play group, women activists, MNREGA labourers, village farmers, women organizers, ASHA, Anganwadi Workers, local politician from various parties, staff and volunteers of CREDA.

Workshop Facilitation:

1. Mr. Noorul Islam
2. Mr. Raj Kumar
3. Mr. Irfan M. Khan
4. Mr. Ramroop Rao
5. Mrs. Chandrawati
6. Mrs. Vidyawati Devi

Total Number of participants invited: 100

Number of participants attended in both the sessions: 92

Objectives of the Seminar:

- To initiate a discussion among the participants to carry on the understanding about the Nai Talim for further discussion in the community.
- Nai Talim and Rural Self reliance
- To mobilize NGOs, CBOs, panchayats, schoolteachers, youths and women groups for popularizing the concept of Nai Talim in their respective areas.
- Nai Talim and harnessing human potential for reconstruction.

- Methodology:**
1. Presentation by experts
 2. Question and answer
 3. Group discussion
 4. Songs on Nai Talim

Seminar Proceedings:

Session-I

Presentation by Prof. B.N. Juyal

I should congratulate the NCRI and CREDA for rekindling interest in U.P. in the long-forgotten theme of Nai Talim by far the most radical programme given by Gandhiji for national 'reconstruction', that is, regeneration. But now it has become a 'lost cause' virtually.

Very much in line with Hind Swaraj, Gandhi launched a new scheme of education that came to be known as basic education for the corresponding age-group of 7th to 14th years in 1937. Later, the pre-basic and post-basic (*uttar buniyadi*) stages were added and the integrated scheme became Nai Talim or new education. The scheme was the outcome of detailed deliberation among concerned educationists, recall the Dr. Zakir Hussain Committee report, and Gandhi, alike other constructive programme, had created an independent institution, the Hindustani Nai Talimi Sangh for experimentation, training and propagation of Nai Talim, we may as well recall the services of the duo Asha Devi and E.W. Aryanayakam who had nurtured the institution with deep dedication.



Nai Talim, signified Gandhiji's revolt against the prevailing system of education imposed on the country by the Britishers which he dismissed as false and irrelevant.

The different governments failed to implement a directive principle of state policy, i.e. the universal education to children for 60 years for lack of resources and some state governments are asking even now. Where the funds to implement the Right to Education. The Gandhiji's education had to be self-reliant, not to be dependent on governmental funding. The expenditure on Nai Talim had to be generated by Nai Talim itself.

The scheme of education through village industries contains the seeds of a great social revolution. It will change the character of the town and country relations, make them pure and ethical. In other words, Nai Talim would change the total terms of trade between the villages and cities, that were highly exploitative. The students by their collective labour and means of knowledge shall construct a new society based on truth and justice.

In terms of stages, for the age-group 3-7, there would be no burden of learning 3 R's, just create proper learning environment and give attention to children's health. The student should start cooperating in production work, emphasis on the economic aspect. Post-basic education in comparison with different industries, students will learn and earn. Thus, education has to be self-reliant nothing less.

The interim Congress ministries that came to power in different states in 1937, introduced basic education in primary schools, generally spinning, pottery and gardening were introduced as sort of extra-curricular activities but the pattern did not change much. After Independence, in 1953 the union government announced that basic education should be the pattern of primary and middle school level education. The Dr. Radhakrishnan Education Commission contained a separate chapter on rural university. Some rural institutes were also setup, but subsequently faded out as these did not fit "into the structure of higher education".

In fact, Uttar Pradesh was also one among the states that had adopted basic education. Even an *uttar buniyadi* school was setup at Sevapuri (Varanasi) to evolve a pattern of basic education upto higher secondary (class XII) level, specialized teacher training colleges awarding L.T. (equivalent to B.Ed.) degree in basic education also ran for many years but subsequently all these were thrown out for the sake of an uniform pattern.

In short, basic education became sort of an inferior type of school education specially for the rural and tribal and power sections. It was inferior even in the eyes of the parents of this class. Probably Nai Talim of Gandhiji's conception was too radical for the middle and upper classes. The stark reality is that the value system and economic order have turned even more antithetical for now taken in its original conception. Nai Talim will need to be reconstructed in the present context.

Then the child rights protection could throw up another question so also Right to Education. What's point in mainstreaming of the children who are enrolled in the informal schools, special schools for child labour etc. The Nai Talim system could be none relevant for them. But these are issues that were to be first addressed at the policy level.

All success to NCRI in its Nai Talim mission.

Presentation by Shamsad Khan

Mahatma Gandhi valued the importance of labour and Nai Talim was one of the mediums for practical involvement of children in constructive activities. Mahatma Gandhi was of the view that Nai Talim will enhance self-reliance and spirit of Swadeshi among the people which will empower them in nation building. Gandhiji emphasized in collective work for constructive activities and wanted children to be educated in a way that learning and earning could go together. Nai Talim was a medium of challenging the authority of British Rule and British system of education. Even if we see the present situation of villages, Nai Talim is able to bring positive changes in rural reconstruction. CREDA is working for skill development and literacy of adolescent girls in rural and urban areas. The concept of the Nai Talim has been introduced in the programme and there are many good example to quote that the concept has empowered adolescent girls for self-employment. CREDA would like to involve schools in U.P. first in understanding the concept of Nai Talim followed by intervention of Nai Talim in schools.



Presentation by Dr. N.V. Peter

The Co-ordinator of Nai Talim explained about the objectives of the seminar 'Nai Talim in Rural Reconstruction' stating that it is a timely event especially when radical reforms are being contemplated with a view to cope up with the changing global Trends. He emphasized the importance of education it should enrich the knowledge and also mould the students to face day to day challenges in life that is what Nai Talim is tailored for. So many great men of western origin like Thomas Edison, Henry Ford and Bill Gates and Dhiru Bhai Ambani of Reliance group and Jamshedji Tata of Indian Origin who are super achievers in their respective fields never finished their Grade school.



Then Dr. Peter presented to the audience about origin of the of Nai Talim how it was introduced in India by father of the Nation Mahatma Gandhiji, reasons for remaining Nai Talim system of education peripheral, what measures to be taken to spread the Nai Talim education to other parts of the country, relevance of Nai Talim education in contemporary society and compared with the modern education with Nai Talim by saying both of them are two sides of the same coin and they do not combat but complement each other.

Later he briefly analysed about the geographical location of Mirzapur which is a major trade centre and agricultural belt of Uttar Pradesh cotton milling, sandstone dressing and brassware and carpet manufacture are the major industrial activities of the town and it is an excellent place for imparting Nai Talim education. With regard to rural reconstruction we should not target the Government alone should do there should be active involvement of reputed NGO's like CREDA, Mirzapur and many more like minded institutions should come forward to shape the destiny of villages. Before concluding his presentation Dr. Peter told the audience about the role of NCRI in extending its support to Nai Talim Institutions across the country since its inception and impact and outcome of all NCRI are quite encouraging.

Before concluding his address informed the august audience about Ailaan monthly newsletter of NCRI which celebrated third anniversary recently and invited articles on education, the evils that are plaguing our society and suggestions to overcome them.

Presentation by Ms. Shamim Bano

The rural women can play a vital role in propagation and conceptualization of Nai Talim There should be rethinking in establishing *Nai Talim Sangh* or *Nai Talim Samiti*. To start with for this, few blocks or villages could be adopted. Once the concept of Nai Talim reaches to the people which almost forgotten, people will certainly adopt the concept and will motivate the children. Nai Talim is a medium of developing the thought of importance of labour, peace, non-violence, social responsibilities, and personality development.



Lunch Break



Lunch Break

Session-II

Group Discussion:

In the afternoon session, the participants were divided into groups. The participants themselves identified following questions for discussion:

1. How Nai Talim is capable in building of good character?
2. What role can Nai Talim play in safeguarding the artisanship and cottage industry?
3. What type of changes Mahatma Gandhi wanted to bring through Nai Talim?
4. How Nai Talim is important in developing self-reliance?
5. In the present day economy, how Nai Talim can act in preserving the village culture?
6. How Nai Talim can strengthen the moral values in the society?
7. Why Nai Talim is not seen in practice in U.P.?
8. What role NCRI can play in promoting Nai Talim?

Participants in group discussion were very much anxious to understand in detail what Nai Talim is and how the concept and intervention of Nai Talim encouraged the people of the country to participate in freedom struggle. Three participants also sang song on Nai Talim.



Group Discussion in Progress



Group Discussion in Progress

Concluding Remarks and Vote of Thanks

Mr. Shamshad Khan, Secretary of CREDA, extended sincere thanks to Dr. S.V. Prabhath (IAS), Chairman, NCRI for considering and supporting CREDA to organize seminar on Nai Talim. Nai Talim is the need of hour. It needs to be propagated widely among all sections of the people specially in rural areas. The seminar was so interesting to the participants that they continue discussing various aspects of the Nai Talim upto evening hours. The concept of the Nai Talim was quite new to the most of the participants. They were keen to know how Nai Talim can bring changes in the life of the people. Mr. Shamshad Khan thanked Prof. B.N. Juyal for his deliberation with historical references and further suggestions. Dr. Peter's presence as NCRI representative encouraged all of us and role of NCRI was highly appreciated by all the participants. Dr. Peter helped in successful conducting of the seminar. He deserves special thanks. Probably this is first seminar on Nai Talim within few decades held in any part of the U.P. Special thank was also extended to participant NGOs, PRIs, SHGs, women groups, local politicians, teachers, instructors, skill development teachers, *dalit* groups, and staff of CREDA.