The Department at a Glance

Introduction:

Rabindranath Tagore started Sriniketan experiment on Rural Reconstruction in 1922. Since then Rural Extension Centre is considered to be one of the oldest departments in Sriniketan under Visva-Bharati. The main ideology behind initiating Rural Reconstruction work was ***"to bring back life in its completeness into the villages making them self-reliant and self-respectful, acquainted with the cultural tradition of their own country and competent to make an efficient use of modern resources for the improvement of their physical, intellectual and economic conditions".***

The Rural Extension Centre has adopted an integrated approach to work in three vital areas viz. Teaching, Research, and Extension Programmes.

A. Teaching & Research Programmes:

1. M.A. in Rural Management
2. Offering regular Ph.D programme
3. Sponsored research programmes funded by institute like UGC, MHRD, Govt. of India

B. Extension Programmes:

Intervention Area:

The area of operation of the department is extended over 50 villages under 8 Gram Panchayats in 2 Blocks namely Bolpur-Sriniketan and Illambazar in Birbhum district.

Among the manifold and multifaced activities of REC the following are the important:-

I) Development of Village Societies:

40 Village Development Societies (VDS), 12 Mohila Samities and 1 Health Society are motivated to organise the reconstruction activities through VDS in the villages. Regular capacity building programme has been organised in the area of;

- Registration of the society including audit and renewal.
- Income –expenditure and maintenance of accounts.
- Managerial orientation to the members for community engagement.

II. Development of Mahila Samities (Women's Organisation):

12 *Mahila Samities* are formed in twelve villages for effective implementation of different types of awareness and training programmes on issues related to empowerment. *Mahila Samities* in different villages are used to observe *Barsha Mangal, Briksharopan* & *Rakhi Bandhan* programmes in their respective villages and participated different programmes of Visva-Bharati..

III. Brati Organisation:

Rural Boys and Girls between 6 and 14 years of age are mobilised into groups and motivated for rural reconstruction activities. The objectives of the programme are: -

- To develop the sprit of community services.
- To undertake physical exercise to make a sound body with a sound mind.
- To develop an awareness on protection of environment.
- To develop leadership qualities through group dynamism.

Activities performed:
a) *Shramdan* (Offering voluntary Labour) b) Drawing c)Cultural Programme d)Craft Making e)Leaf collection (Throughout the year) f) Excursion & Picnic. Every year each *Brati Dal* participates in the ground show of the annual *'Brati O Yubo Utsav'* on 6th February in every year on the occasion of Sriniketan anniversary.

IV. Self Help Groups (SHGs):

As a part of women empowerment and entrepreneurship development special programme of Self-Help Group (SHG) has been taken up by the department. The objectives of the programme are-

- To improve the socio-economic condition of the rural people with special emphasis on women.
- To develop the sprit of self- reliance and self-sustenance along with the spirit of co-operation within the community.
- To grow the habits of savings among women & to enable them to pool their own resources and use it judiciously.

Special drives to promote income generation;

- To conduct various handicrafts training programmes.
- Campus cleaning activities in the University area by involving Tribal SHG members.
- Organising Food Park on different occasions.
- Offering voluntary labour in the community and participating in different awareness generation programme.
- To conduct training for skill development.

V. Rural Library Services:

Rural Library services constitute one of the important sectors of Rural Extension Centre through which literacy movement are carried out in the villages. Apart from literacy activities another objective of this programme is to develop it as information & cultural centers in the villages. The programme is carried out through the network of 39 rural libraries with partial financial support from Raja Rammohan Roy Library Foundation (RRRLF), Kolkata. Librarians and Assistant Librarians are working voluntarily for noble cause.

Objectives of the programme are:

- To develop reading habits among the villagers & to secure retention of acquired literacy skill for the neo-literates.
- To use library as a cultural communication and continuing education centre.
- To function as information centre.

Children Library:
Presently Rural Extension Centre has twelve children library situated in 12 villages under its command area. These libraries are equipped with children's books, joyful learning materials, playing materials etc.

New addition for library service:-
1. *RRRLF Children's Corner.*
2. *Computer devices to Rural Library.*
3. *Internet facilities to Rural Libraries*
4. *Senior Citizen Corner*

VI. Health Extension & Education:

The department organised health awareness & sensitization programmes in the villages. Two free health check-up clinics are running at Benuiria & Raipur villages

with the assistance of Santiniketan Trust. Andrews Hospital, Santiniketan also provides health services to the surroundings villages. Besides, Yoga and health education programmes is also organised by the Department.

VII. Agricultural Extension:

Agriculture Extension work is one of our activities which the department carried out with the close collaboration with the Dept. of Agriculture and Rathindra Krishi Vigyan Kendra, Sriniketan. This Department is promoting awareness among farmers relating to agricultural problems.

VIII. Continuing Education Programme:

Self-employment oriented training programme, awareness and sensitisation programmes are conducted as per the need of the community for skill development. The training programmes are organised by involving the village youth leaders, members of *Mahila Samities* and Village Development Societies, Self-Help Groups.

Training Programmes:

- Capacity Development for members of Village Development Societies (V.D.S)
- Cutting-Tailoring Training
- Batik Training Programme
- Training on Craft Making using Paper & Jute
- Training on preparation of Vermi-Compost
- Management of SHG
- Legal Aid Awareness Camp
- Capacity Building of *Mahila Samity*.
- Training on Copper-Wire Craft
- Training on Appliqué.

IX. Sensitization & Awareness programmes:

The department organised different programmes on issues of heath, environment, economical, social, legal and population education.

X. Sports & Games:

As a part of promotion of games and sports the Village Development Societies of the command area are facilitated with minimum financial assistance to purchase different sports materials and different sports competition.

XI. Folk Cultural Activities:

To revive the traditional folk culture in general and to encourage the creative potentialities through this traditional folk culture in the rural areas different types of folk cultural programmes are organised by the members of the village development societies.

Programme conducted:

1) Different folk songs programmes
2) Instrumental presentation.
3) Special folk cultural programmes in the villages and during *Santiniketan Pous Mela & Sriniketan Magh Mela,*

XII. Crafts Promotion Programme:

Craft promotion and revival of traditional crafts is the important area. Santiniketan–Sriniketan Craft Society is a registered society which gives the platform to the distressed craftsmen of our command area villages and organized number of exhibitions-cum-sale counter of the rural artisan during important occasions such as *Poush Mela, Vasanta Utsav, Magh Utsav, Rathindra Mela* etc.

XIII Audio-visual:

The department has separate unit for audio-visual and documentation.

XIV. Celebration of Important Days:

- Library Day on 20th December.
- International Literacy Day on 8th September.
- Children's day on 14th November.

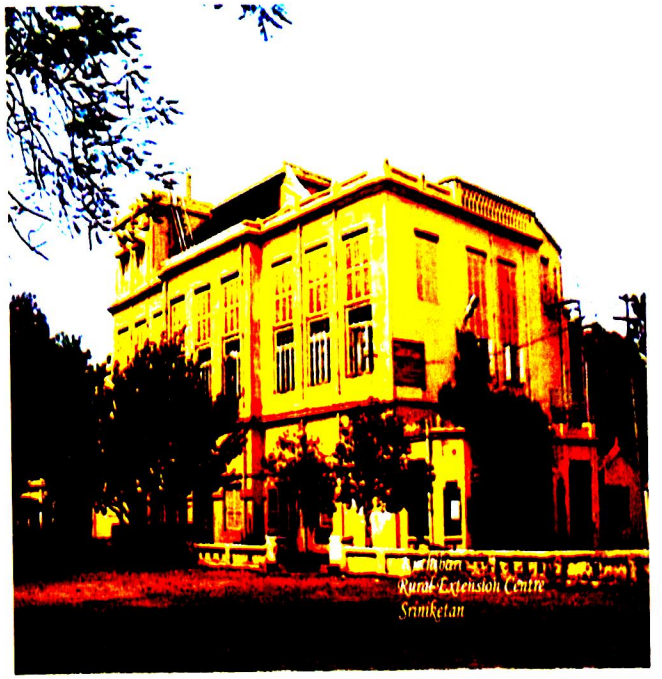
XV. Linkage Development:

Linkages have been developed with State, Central Govt. and National & International NGOs.

XVI. Workshop/Seminar/Conference:

The department organise workshop, seminar and conference in National & International level on different issues from time to time.

Department of Lifelong Learning & Extension (Rural Extension Centre), Visva- Bharati (A Central University of National Importance), Sriniketan, Birbhum, W.Bengal, India, Pin-731236
web-site: www.visva-bharati.ac.in
e-mail: hod.rec@visva-bharati.ac.in



Department of Lifelong Learning & Extension

(Rural Extension Centre)

Institute of Rural Reconstruction Sriniketan Visva-Bharati

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