



Speech of
Hon'ble Governor of Andhra Pradesh
Sri Biswa Bhusan Harichandan
at

**The AP State Level Consultation Programme on Promoting
Rural Community Engagement of Students of Higher
Education Institutions, organized by the Mahatma Gandhi
National Council of Rural Education (MGNCRE) at the
Acharya Nagarjuna University, Guntur on October 23, 2019**

Respected Chairman of AP State Council of Higher Education, Respected Vice-Chancellors, distinguished Heads of Central and State Govt. Department and guests seated on the dais, off the dais, all the faculty members and students. ANDARIKI NAMASKARAM.

I am happy to be with you all on the occasion of “AP State Level Consultation Programme on Promoting Rural Community Engagement of Students of Higher Education Institutions” organized by the Mahatma Gandhi National Council of Rural Education.

I congratulate the Dr. Prasanna Kumar, Chairman of the Mahatma Gandhi National Council of Rural Education, for taking up this bold initiative to promote Rural Community Engagement of Students of Higher Education Institutions coinciding with the celebrations of 150th Birth Anniversary Mahatma Gandhi.

I appreciate the efforts of the Council to reach out to every State and Central University, to make an impact on their curriculum as it is expected to make a huge impact.

It is essential to make both Centre and state governments as partners in promoting Rural Community Engagement of Students of higher education.

It is heartening to note that the efforts of Mahatma Gandhi National Council of Rural Education are complemented by the Government of India’s initiatives on skilling and re-skilling of the students across the country at various levels.

The role of education, both urban and rural, is huge in growth of the country’s economy. Higher education institutions in the country have an important role in formulating and building curriculum for promoting continuous student and institutional engagement in study, research and improvement of the resilience of rural livelihoods and rural critical infrastructure. I am happy to learn that the Mahatma Gandhi National Council of Rural Education, established in 1995

by the Government of India under the Union Ministry of Human Resource Development, seeks to usher in rural change and inclusive growth as a catalyst organization and is functioning with the objective of 'Sab Ka Sath Sab Ka Vikas' as its guiding principle.

Education is indispensable for the development and prosperity of both the society and nation. It provides skills and development for effective employment in the future.

As the aim of today's programme is to re-orient the curriculum of Higher education institutions with rural community engagement as its main theme, my suggestion in this regard, would be that they should encourage students to visit rural areas to have a first-hand understanding of the problems faced by people living in villages through immersion programmes and make them understand the rural India. This will enable the students to come out with innovative solutions to the problems faced by people in rural areas.

HEIs can play an important role through active community engagement for the socio and economic development of the country. This approach will contribute towards improvement in quality of teaching and research in HEIs.

HEIs should work on reforms in curriculum at the Undergraduate and Post Graduate level to instill the concept of Rural Community Engagement and Social Responsibility amongst students. It should be ensured that community engagement is not a stand alone activity but is an integrated part of the regular curriculum of the university and development of the society is centred around the university. HEIs need to foster social responsibility and community engagement in their vision and mission itself. They should develop and adopt holistic and functional approach to community engagement encompassing all three functions of HEIs – teaching, research and service.

Undertaking research in partnership with local communities can access local knowledge and further contribute to new knowledge solutions. In addition, undertaking research in partnership with local community helps in documenting and systematizing local knowledge generated through years of practice and experience. HEIs can undertake research in partnership with local communities to reduce energy and carbon consumption. Such partnership research can also help recycle water and waste that are locally useful to communities around them. That kind of research undertaken in partnership with local communities and other institutions, will be beneficial to all stakeholders and students gain a sense of satisfaction about their research making a useful contribution to the society through community engagement.

Mahatma Gandhi looked upon education as an instrument of socio-economic progress, material advancement, political evolution and moral development for an individual in the society. Gandhiji wanted education to be free from narrow limitations of the formal classrooms.

Mahatma Gandhi said "My mind is living in the villages. They are calling me to bury myself in them" In spite of his most busy political schedules he found time to immerse himself in villages to experience their life and to feel being one of them. Village reconstruction for him meant leading them to a healthy and hygienic life.

Finally, in the words of Mahatma Gandhi "The problem is whether the basic scheme of education fulfills the genuine needs of the people living in villages. I do not hope that India will never be industrialized so fully as leave no village. The village therefore will always be the most important unit of India."

Jai Hind