

CRISP MAASAM

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Monthly Account of Achievements,
Successes and Memories

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CULTIVATING CHANGE: HOW 'APCNF' IS REVITALIZING NATURAL FARMING IN ANDHRA PRADESH



Sri. T Vijay Kumar, IAS (Retd.)

Vice President, CRISP

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"APCNF - focusing on farmers' livelihoods, the health of citizens, planetary health, and securing our common future."

"The APCNF is a program specially designed to promote natural farming among farmers. **We call it the "People's Movement"** because we believe in engaging the community to make conscious decisions in adopting natural farming as the sole method of farming. Natural farming mimics nature, allowing nature to coexist, and this approach is what natural farming comprises."

Lecture summarised by
Niharika Baishya Yadav,
Fellow CRISP, Meghalaya

Andhra Pradesh Community Managed Natural Farming (APCNF) is an initiative spearheaded by "Rythu Sadhikara Samstha" (RySS), a not-for-profit organization dedicated to the agricultural sector in Andhra Pradesh. The name "Rythu Sadhikara Samstha" translates to "Farmer Empowerment Organization" in English, reflecting the organization's mission to empower farmers. APCNF, implemented by RySS, aims to transform agriculture into a more sustainable and people-friendly industry.

APCNF was previously known as APZBNF; Andhra Pradesh Zero Budget Natural Farming, a program by the Govt of Andhra Pradesh, that was launched in 2016 to promote natural farming in the state for a more sustainable and healthy approach. This programme is a build-up on a previous programme of the State Govt's Rural Development Department called A.P Community Managed Sustainable Agriculture which was functional from 2004-2014. The sole owners of implementing this program were the women through the SHGs.

Initially, the program focused on non-chemical pest management, in the later years it focused on Soil Health Improvement and Water conservation. APZBNF was renamed as APCNF in the year 2020 to create a more community-based approach to the program. The program was renamed to make it more inclusive in nature so that the Farmers can relate to the need for the Agricultural



transformation in the state. Farming in today's world has been exploited in a way that has harmed the water, the soil and the nature with the use of chemicals in the food we intake. Farming has also lost the essence of livelihood due to the poor farming techniques that are being used in the old way of farming which are also very expensive and leave a farmer distressed. This has led to many young people leaving behind the farming occupation and migrating to the urban areas for jobs with minimal pay and this is because they cannot see a future in farming anymore.



In the modern world, farming has contributed to the loss of soil health, biodiversity, and severe water stress, thereby exacerbating global warming. In response to these challenges, the Andhra Pradesh government has adopted natural farming as the primary agricultural technique in the state to address these issues. The Andhra Pradesh government aimed to improve environmental and climate consciousness and enhance the lives of farmers. The main objective was to empower farmers and provide them with a sustainable way of living. The government wants to enhance farmers' net incomes by reducing their cultivation costs, improving their yields, minimizing risks, and enabling them to get better prices for their produce.

The government aims to increase farmers' net incomes by offering them a more cost-effective approach to farming. The government is deeply concerned about the environmental and health risks posed by traditional farming methods, as well as their impact on farmers' incomes. The concept of natural farming entails working in harmony with nature and avoiding the use of synthetic and chemical fertilizers and pesticides. The government has embraced natural farming due to its environmentally and human-friendly nature. The APCNF is a program specially designed to promote natural farming among farmers. They call it the "People's Movement" because they believe in engaging the community to make conscious decisions in adopting natural farming as the sole method of farming. Natural farming mimics nature, allowing nature to coexist, and this approach is what natural farming comprises.

Natural Farming is described as a "holistic land management practice that leverages the power of photosynthesis in plants to close the carbon cycle, build soil health, enhance crop resilience, and increase nutrient density." This approach emphasizes nurturing living organisms in their natural habitat, thereby contributing to a balanced natural food web. This web includes organic matter, plants, fungi, nematodes, bacteria, protozoa, arthropods, birds, and animals, all working together to maintain ecological balance.

One of the key benefits of Natural Farming is the development of soil reservoirs. It transforms non-porous soil into porous soil, which can retain water for longer periods. This water retention capability reduces water consumption in farming practices.



The Universal Principles of Natural Farming include:

- Soil to be covered with crops 365 days, (Living root principle).
- Diverse crops, 15 – 20 crops, include trees.
- Keep soil covered with crop residues, whenever living plants are not there.
- Minimal disturbance of soils – minimise tillage.
- Farmers own seeds to be used. Indigenous seeds are preferred.
- Integrate animals into farming.
- Biostimulants as catalysts to trigger soil biology.
- Pest management through better agronomical practices and botanical pesticides.
- No synthetic fertilisers, pesticides, herbicides, weedicides.



Natural Farming revolves around four main components

- **Photosynthesis-Maximisation:** 365 days of green cover, Crop diversity – diverse plant families and Incorporating trees in the landscape.
- **Soil:** Covered for 365 days – living crops or crop residue mulch, Soil structure to be maintained – no tilling or minimal tillage.
- **Seed (core microbiome, endophytes, Rhizophagy cycle):** Own seed and Indigenous seed.
- **Biostimulants for biological activation at every stage of the plant growth:** Seed treatment, Soil amendment/ Sowing of the seed, Plant growth, Flowering and fruiting and Pest Management.

Natural Farming encourages Poly cropping. Poly Cropping is the type of cropping where many different types of crops can be grown together in the same farming field along with each other. Diversity of crops helps the farmer also enhance

his or her net income as they can harvest more different types of crops at the same time rather than just a single crop. The Poly Cropping helps in making the field more fertile for cropping. It also helps nature coexist and feed on each other maintaining the food web. Poly cropping also helps in conserving water. Poly Cropping helps in Resilience from vagaries of weather, Reduces risks, and surplus income, Provides nutrition diversity and Strengthens soil structure. The different types of natural fertilisers Natural Farming uses are Beejamrutham which is a Microbial seed coating, Ghanajeevamrutham which is a Soil Microbial Enhancement (A Biostimulant) and Dravajeevamrutham which is also a soil microbial enhancement. Pest management is done through the preparation of Kashayams and yellow and Blue sticky traps. Natural Farming does Seed pelletization as an important part of summer sowing.

Women play a crucial role in natural farming. This approach promotes women's empowerment as the majority of support comes from women-led self-help groups (SHGs) in the state. Currently, there are 7,550 village SHG federations and 202,000 women SHGs, with a total membership of 1,880,000 women who are in charge. SHGs provide crucial support in the agricultural sector by offering program management, transparency, collective action, peer learning, farming and consumption plans, and inclusivity for the poorest.



The primary method of transferring knowledge about natural farming within APCNF is from one farmer to another. APCNF has 10,000 Community Resource Persons at the village level who offer assistance to farmers and guide them through knowledge transfer as needed. This knowledge is then shared by these farmers with others. Currently, there are 850,000 farmers practicing natural farming in the state, with the number steadily increasing over the past 8 years.

This program has been the most successful program in the country, with Natural Farming spreading across the country. Natural Farming has greatly improved the environment over the past 8 years. The program is supported by the Government of India and has received appreciation and support from all over the world, with 45 international delegates visiting Andhra Pradesh to learn about Natural Farming. It has helped to improve the livelihoods of underprivileged sections by increasing their net incomes. APCNF is built on two important grassroots-level factors: the women's Self Help Group platform, created 24 years ago in Andhra Pradesh, and the unique farmer-to-farmer extension system.

This program is being funded by the Government of India, which will reimburse 50% of the saved fertilizer subsidy, and the State Government has agreed to reimburse 50% of the saved power subsidy. The APCNF has also received funding and support from various philanthropic organizations. APCNF has conducted research studies with international organizations such as CIFOR-ICRAF, Cambridge University, and UNFAO. In addition, APCNF is focused on developing 10,000 Farmer Scientists and 2000 mentors by 2031, in collaboration with the Indo-German Global Academy for Agroecology Research and Learning (IGGAARL) and the Government of Germany.

ExpertSpeak

SKILL INTEGRATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION – SCOPE AND CHALLENGES



Sri. VLVSS Subba Rao, IES Retd.
Senior Advisor, CRISP

"Education and skill development are the most powerful tools we have to reduce poverty and drive sustainable economic growth."

— Melinda French Gates

Equipping graduates with relevant skills significantly increases their employability, making them more attractive to potential employers and better prepared for the job market. Skill-based education **fosters personal growth and confidence, empowering individuals to pursue upward mobility and economic advancement.** It also encourages creative problem-solving and critical thinking, essential skills for adapting to various challenges in the workplace. By promoting innovation, skill-based education helps individuals and organizations stay competitive in a rapidly changing economy.

India faces a critical challenge: a growing number of graduates remain unemployed despite their educational qualifications. This disconnect between education and industry needs is fuelled by a lack of skill development. A staggering 97 lakh graduates passed out in 2022 (PIB report), yet more than 50% struggle to find jobs. Employers report difficulty filling positions due to a skills shortage. The current scenario highlights a crucial need for reform. Only 2.3% of the Indian workforce undergoes formal skill training, compared to significantly higher rates in developed nations. This translates to graduates settling for low-paying jobs or remaining unemployable altogether.

Government Initiatives and Shortcomings -

The government has implemented separate vocational education channels like B.Vocs, ITIs, and Polytechnics. Additionally, the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MoSDE) was established in 2015 and the skilling was centralized through the National Skill Development Corporation. However, the flagship schemes like Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY) and Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Grameen Kaushalya Yojana (DDUGKY) face issues like poor trainer quality, low employability rates for graduates (around 15%), and a lack of industry connection.

Lecture summarised by

Abhishek Saini

Fellow CRISP, Madhya Pradesh



The Need for Integration -

The existing siloed approach to education and skill development has failed to meet the needs of students and employers. A complete overhaul of vocational education may be impractical. The solution lies in integrating skills development directly into mainstream education. This could involve:

- Introducing skill-embedded degree courses and diplomas in universities and colleges.
- Developing industry-driven content that is aspirational and relevant to current job market demands.
- Integrating apprenticeships and internships to provide practical work experience.

Efforts Towards Integration -

Positive steps have been taken to mitigate these challenges. A 2019 pilot program by the Ministry of Education (MoE) partnered with MoSDE to offer skill-embedded degree courses in sectors like Logistics, Retail, Healthcare, etc. The National Education Policy (NEP 2020) further mandates the universal integration of vocational education, with targets for student exposure to skill development. Vocational education to be integrated into secondary schools from Class 6 onwards. Secondary schools to collaborate with ITIs & Polytechnics to provide the necessary skill training.

CRISP and AEDPs -

The Centre for Research in Schemes and Policies (CRISP) offers a successful model for skill integration. The Apprenticeship Embedded Degree Programs (AEDPs) provide skill-based degrees like B.Com (Logistics), B.Com (Retail Operations), etc. with apprenticeship in the industries, equipping graduates with practical skills desired by employers. These apprenticeships are offered in two modes: the Linear Mode, where the apprenticeship occurs in the final year, and the Simultaneous Mode, where the apprenticeship starts in the first year and runs concurrently with regular classes. CRISP has successfully launched these programs in Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, and Himachal Pradesh, and is in the process of expanding them to other states.

Challenges -

Despite these efforts, challenges remain. A lack of awareness and motivation among colleges and universities about skill development programs hinders progress. The State Government and colleges have not adequately publicized the benefits of AEDPs. Additionally, inadequate funding for skill development initiatives (currently less than 2.3% of the education budget) and a shortage of qualified trainers pose significant roadblocks.



Recommendations:

- **Utilizing Existing Educational Infrastructure for Vocational Training and Mapping Skill Hubs** - Integrating vocational training into existing educational infrastructure maximizes resource utilization and promotes continuous learning. Designating skill training institutes as "Skill Hubs" creates a seamless network for specialized training tailored to local job markets. This approach reduces redundancy and broadens student access to skill development opportunities.
- **Building a Robust Trainer Base and Continuous Faculty Development** - A robust trainer base, including industry experts and experienced educators, is crucial for effective skill-based education. Continuous faculty development programs, such as workshops, seminars, and certification courses, ensure trainers stay updated

with industry trends and advancements. Encouraging trainer participation in internships and collaborative projects bridges the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application, providing students with a holistic education.

- **Establishing a Single Regulatory Body for General and Skill-Based Education**- The fragmented regulatory oversight in the current education system causes inconsistencies and inefficiencies. Establishing a single regulatory body for both general and skill-based education can streamline processes, create uniform standards, and simplify compliance for institutions. This body should offer clear guidelines, ensure quality through assessments and accreditations, and promote collaboration between academic and vocational institutions, leading to a more cohesive and adaptable education system.
- **Developing a Dynamic, Industry-Driven, and Interdisciplinary Curriculum** - To prepare students for the 21st-century job market, a dynamic, industry-responsive curriculum is essential, incorporating critical thinking, problem-solving, digital literacy, creativity, adaptability, and initiative. Collaboration with industry stakeholders, regular consultations, feedback from employers, and partnerships for internships ensure relevance. Encouraging interdisciplinary learning and incorporating project-based activities and real-world problem-solving help students apply knowledge practically and develop essential soft skills valued in the modern workforce.
- **A Significant Increase in the Budget Allocated for Skill Development** - Investing in skill development is crucial for a nation's economic growth and competitiveness. Increasing the budget for skill development can enhance vocational training programs, upgrade facilities, procure advanced equipment, and create comprehensive training materials. This funding can also support scholarships, financial aid, research, and the development of innovative training methodologies and digital platforms, ensuring a steady supply of skilled professionals to drive innovation and economic prosperity.

Benefits of Skill-Based Education -

Equipping graduates with relevant skills significantly increases their employability, making them more attractive to potential employers and better prepared for the job market. Skill-based education fosters personal growth and confidence, empowering individuals to pursue upward mobility and economic advancement. It also encourages creative problem-solving and critical thinking, essential skills for adapting to various challenges in the workplace. By promoting innovation, skill-based education helps individuals and organizations stay competitive in a rapidly changing economy. Overall, it contributes to a more skilled and capable workforce, driving economic prosperity and societal progress. Experts emphasize the value of skill-based education.



According to Robert Reich, Former United States Secretary of Labor **"The key to economic prosperity is a workforce with the skills and capacities to innovate, adapt, and compete in a globalized economy."**

Conclusion -

Integrating skills development into mainstream education is crucial for bridging the gap between academic qualifications and job market requirements. By addressing challenges such as outdated curricula and lack of practical training, India can align education with industry needs, ensuring graduates are well-prepared for the workforce. Implementing effective strategies, such as incorporating vocational training and industry partnerships, will equip students with relevant skills. This alignment will enhance employability, drive economic growth, and foster a more dynamic and competitive workforce. Ultimately, a skilled workforce will contribute to a brighter and more prosperous future for India.



FellowSpeak



Pooja Kapoor

Fellow CRISP, Madhya Pradesh

"EMPATHY, VISION, AND ACTION: LESSONS FROM A TRANSFORMATIVE FELLOWSHIP AT CRISP"

"Education and skill development are the most powerful tools we have to reduce poverty and drive sustainable economic growth."

— Melinda French Gates

At the crossroads of policy and people: a fellow's reflection

My journey through this fellowship has been nothing short of transformative. Over the past four months, from the initial orientation in Hyderabad to my work in Madhya Pradesh, I've gained invaluable insights into the intricate workings of government at various levels. The experience has reshaped my understanding of public service and highlighted the crucial role of empathy and vision in addressing societal challenges.

The program's emphasis on field visits and hands-on learning has been particularly enlightening. These experiences have exposed me to the raw realities of healthcare delivery, revealing both innovative best practices and persistent challenges. I've witnessed firsthand the struggles of understaffed facilities and the impact of technical shortcomings on patient care. These unfiltered observations have provided me with a nuanced understanding that no textbook could offer.

Interactions with stakeholders at all levels, from high-ranking bureaucrats to patients, have been a cornerstone of my learning. The support and mentorship I've received have been exceptional, encouraging me to explore, question, and seek solutions. This has not only enhanced my research and presentation skills but also allowing me to contribute meaningfully to the development of the state's health system.

Perhaps most importantly, the fellowship has taught me the value of perspective. By engaging with challenges from multiple angles, I've learned to develop more comprehensive and effective solutions. This holistic approach has enabled me to bridge the gap between policy and implementation, presenting real-time challenges to decision-makers and suggesting practical improvements.

As I reflect on this journey, I'm struck by how it has deepened my commitment to public service and equipped me with the tools to effect real change. The fellowship has not just been an educational experience; it has been a catalyst for personal and professional growth, preparing me to tackle the complex challenges of building sustainable communities.

Major Developments in CRISP

CRISP's Second Advisory Board Meeting: A Milestone of Progress and Planning



The second meeting of the CRISP Advisory Board was held on 10th July 2024 at the Central Office of CRISP in the Financial District of Hyderabad. The session commenced with the President of CRISP addressing the members and celebrating the organization's rapid expansion across various regions and themes. Highlighting key achievements, the President mentioned significant projects such as the Project for Enhancing Administrative Cohesion and Efficiency (PEACE) in Bodoland and the Gram Panchayat/SHG convergence, which are poised to make a considerable impact.

During the meeting, the Advisory Board conducted a thorough review of the ongoing projects and evaluated the Score Card system developed by the CRISP central office. This system plays a critical role in monitoring and assessing the performance and impact of CRISP's initiatives.

The discussion then shifted to future endeavors, with board members providing valuable insights and suggestions for upcoming projects. These include initiatives in Higher Education, the Poorest of the Poor project, Natural Farming, Early Childhood Education, and Women Empowerment. The collective expertise of the board members promises to drive these projects toward successful outcomes.

Following the discussion, the members had the honor of releasing several significant publications by CRISP. These include:

- Evaluation of Mukhya Mantri Chiranjeevi Swasthya Bima Yojana, Rajasthan
- Study of the Committees headed by the Dy Commissioner
- Readings for Higher Education Quality Assurance and Excellence
- Towards the Goal of PEHLE-UP
- Study of School Dropouts in Meghalaya

The meeting was attended by a distinguished panel of Advisory Board members, including:

- 1. Dr. Jugal Mohapatra IAS Retd, former Secretary to the Government of India (via VC)**
- 2. Sri Ashish Dhawan, Founder of The Convergence Foundation and CSF**
- 3. Ms. Vrinda Sarup IAS Retd., former Secretary of School Education, Government of India**
- 4. Dr. Santosh Mathew IAS Retd., Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF)**
- 5. Prof. Partha Pratim Chakraborty, Professor of Computer Science, IIT Kharagpur**
- 6. Sri Ved Arya, Founder of SRIJAN**
- 7. Prof. M Sriram, IIM Bangalore**

Representatives from The Convergence Foundation (TCF), including Sri K R Subramanian and Sri Praveen Khanghta, also participated in the meeting. Founding members of CRISP, such as Shri S M Vijayanand, Shri R Subrahmanyam, Shri Radhey Shyam Julania (via VC), Sri Sitaram Kunte, and Sri B K Agarwal, were present to contribute their insights and experiences.

The second Advisory Board meeting of CRISP demonstrated the organization's strong commitment to growth and excellence. The collaborative efforts and expert guidance from the board members will undoubtedly propel CRISP towards achieving its ambitious goals and making a lasting impact on society.

Honorable Deputy Chief Minister of Telangana Lauds CRISP's Efforts in Education

The Honorable Deputy Chief Minister of Telangana, Shri Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka, expressed his support for the innovative projects spearheaded by CRISP aimed at advancing education across the state. Addressing a distinguished gathering organized by CRISP, which included esteemed civil servants and diplomats from various sectors such as education, administration, and health, the Deputy Chief Minister praised the impactful activities and projects implemented by CRISP nationwide.



In his speech, Shri Vikramarka emphasized the urgent need for educational development in Telangana, particularly in rural areas. He highlighted the importance of an industry-oriented education system to better equip students with the skills required for the modern workforce. The Deputy Chief Minister extended an open invitation to CRISP and other organizations to introduce and implement any projects aimed at enhancing the education sector, offering Telangana as a laboratory for such innovative initiatives.

Shri Vikramarka's commendation and proactive stance underscore the commitment of Telangana's leadership to foster educational growth and create opportunities for its youth. The support from such high-level officials further empowers CRISP to continue its mission of driving positive change through education.

CRISP Vice President Sri Vijay Kumar Thallam Honored with 2024 Gulbenkian Prize for Humanity

CRISP is proud to announce that its Vice President, Sri Vijay Kumar Thallam, IAS (Retd), has been awarded the prestigious 2024 Gulbenkian Prize for Humanity. This esteemed accolade, instituted by the Portugal-based Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation (CGF), is presented annually to individuals and organizations making substantial contributions to global food security, climate resilience, and ecosystem protection.



Sri Vijay Kumar Thallam led the groundbreaking initiative Andhra Pradesh Community Managed Natural Farming (APCNF), which has now been recognized for its significant impact on sustainable agriculture and environmental conservation. The APCNF initiative has set a benchmark in community-driven natural farming practices, demonstrating a successful model for promoting food security and climate resilience.

The Gulbenkian Prize for Humanity is a testament to Sri Thallam's visionary leadership and dedication to fostering sustainable agricultural practices. This award not only honors his contributions but also highlights the global importance of innovative solutions in addressing the pressing challenges of our time.

CRISP's Higher Education Transformation Project Receives Grant from Michael and Susan Dell Foundation



CRISP's innovative project aimed at transforming higher education by professionalizing general education to enhance employability has been awarded grant funding by the Michael and Susan Dell Foundation. This project is set to significantly increase employability for over 100,000 BA/BSc/BCom students across 1,500 colleges in 10 states.

Working in collaboration with industry associations and Sector Skill Councils (SSCs), the project covers diverse sectors such as Logistics, Retail Management, BFSI, Healthcare, Pharma, Media & Entertainment, Gaming, and Electronics. CRISP and the SSCs will develop curricula for 20 Advanced

Employability Development Programmes (AEDP), integrating skill education, general education, soft skills, and a one-year apprenticeship into a comprehensive three-year course.

This funding and collaboration mark a major step forward in bridging the gap between general education and industry requirements, fostering a more skilled and employable workforce.

CRISP in Action

CRISP Fellow, Akho Phira attends UNESCO Young Professionals Forum 2024

As an integral part of the 46th session of the World Heritage Committee and in the framework of the UNESCO World Heritage Education Programme, hosted by the Ministry of Culture, GoI, through the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI), Akho Phira, CRISP Fellow - Meghalaya, was among the 50 participants from 31 countries to attend the UNESCO World Heritage Young Professionals Forum held between 14th - 23rd July 2024 at New Delhi. Under the theme, "World Heritage in the 21st Century: Building Capacities and Exploring Opportunities for Youth", the Forum engaged the participants to enhance the expertise and capacities of the young professionals in protecting, preserving and promoting our natural and cultural World Heritage. The event was coupled with interactions with eminent speakers and visits to World Heritage sites in Delhi - Red Fort, Taj Mahal, Agra Fort, Humayun's Tomb and other monuments. The Forum culminated with the presentation of the Young Professionals' Declaration to the 46th session of the World Heritage Committee at Bharat Mandapam.



► RURAL DEVELOPMENT



CRISP Tamil Nadu Team Drives Rural Collaboration: SHG-Panchayat Convergence Guidelines Develop

The Centre for Research in Schemes & Policies (CRISP) Tamil Nadu Team, in collaboration with the TN Corporation for Development of Women (TNCDW), facilitated an impactful two-day Write-shop on July 8th and 9th, 2024. The event had more than a hundred participants from the lengths and breadths of Tamil Nadu and was anchored by Shri S.M. Vijayanand, IAS (Retd), President CRISP, the initiative addressed a critical aspect of rural development: Strengthening collaboration between Self-Help Groups (SHGs) and Village Panchayats. Through intensive discussions on five key topics - SHGs' contributions to Panchayats, Panchayat support for SHGs, partnership frameworks, capacity building, and realizing VPRP demands - the Write-shop resulted in practical Guidelines for SHG-Panchayat Convergence. These guidelines pave the way for a more empowered rural ecosystem, where SHGs and Panchayats work together to achieve shared goals, ultimately benefiting communities across the state.



Field Visit to Kovalam Gram Panchayat: LSDG Implementation

On July 25th, the Tamil Nadu team and interns from SIRD (State Institute of Rural Development) visited the coastal village of Kovalam Gram Panchayat in the Chengalpattu district for the LSDG component. Kovalam Gram Panchayat is a Uttamar Gandhi Award recipient for good governance and a beacon village for implementing Local Sustainable Development Goals (LSDG). The primary objective of the visit was to gain a deeper understanding of the challenges faced by the panchayat and to assess the status of LSDG implementation. This assessment aims to provide targeted support and ensure the program's effectiveness in empowering local communities. During the visit, the Tamil Nadu team engaged with the Panchayat President, Panchayat Secretary, and SHG members to discuss the hurdles and successes encountered in implementing LSDG. This interaction provided valuable insights into the practical aspects of governance and community involvement, crucial for the success of sustainable development initiatives.



Meghalaya

Stree Nidhi Team visit to Meghalaya

In light of establishing a specialised bank for the SHGs in Meghalaya under the banner - Kong Pla Tangka Cooperative Society (KPTCS), a 3-day workshop was organised by Meghalaya State Rural Livelihoods Society (MSRLS) in collaboration with CRISP from 24th - 26th June 2024 facilitated by Stree Nidhi officials. Commencing with a field visit to Laskein Block, WJH, interactions were held with SHG & CLF members, Block, District & State officials from MSRLS. Taking stock of insights from the field, two days of extensive in-house workshop was organised for MSRLS officials viz. Block Program Managers (BPMs), Cluster Coordinators (CCs), Young Professionals, District Mission Managers (DMMs), District Functional Specialist (DFS) - Institutional Building & Capacity Building and Financial Inclusion, State Mission Managers (SMMs) of different verticals in the presence of Chief Operating Officer (COO) and Chief Executive Officer (CEO). The workshops concluded with the development of key action plans for the future. During this, the CEO of MSRLS emphasized the importance of capacity building for MSRLS and stakeholders from the communities to establish a strong foundation for the state.



Immersive experience from the field - Niharika



Twisting a leg and breaking ligaments is not the usual way to commence field visits, but that's the story of Niharika Baishya Yadav - CRISP Fellow, Meghalaya, who undertook an immersive field program between 10th - 14th June 2024 in a remote village - Madan Bitaw, East Khasi Hills District. Determined to get first-hand experience with the objective of comprehending the daily routines, lifestyles, access to education & health facilities, economic activities, challenges and opportunities in a village setting, Yadav lessons reflect on the simple nature of living which thrives on basic

necessities and amenities. Adapting to bare essentials viz. Light, food, water, internet connectivity among other aspects, Yadav beams with contentment for the crucial learnings by living in a small village with close-knit families and is fueled to work for the upliftment of rural communities through her capacities in the CRISP Fellowship.

► HIGHER EDUCATION



Telangana

Curriculum Review Expert Committee

The CRISP Telangana team conducted a preliminary discussion with Prof. Bala Bhaskar, Academic Guidance Officer, Commissionerate of Collegiate Education (CCE) on 17 June 2024. The team introduced the idea of the Curriculum Expert Review Committee to the AGO, CCE. The preliminary conversation was fruitful as the AGO expressed the desire and keenness to develop such a committee for curriculum assessment and revision. It was decided that CRISP would conduct consecutive meetings with the state stakeholders to materialise the formulation of the committee. This meeting is pivotal as it aims to provide granular clarity in a relevant curriculum that benefits the students of Higher Education Institutions in Telangana.



Quality Enhancement and Promoting Excellence



The Centre for Research in Schemes and Policies (CRISP) conducted a workshop on 'Facilitating Quality and Excellence in Higher Education Institutions of Telangana' in collaboration with the IQAC, Osmania University (OU), on 26 June 2024. The workshop was attended by principals and IQAC coordinators of around 62 general degree colleges. The primary aim was to introduce the attendee institutions to the transforming landscape of the Indian higher education ecosystem in view of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 and the urgent need for ensuring minimum teaching-learning standards, as measured via

processes of the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) framework and the National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF). The workshop urged higher education institutions (HEIs) to consider the relevance and methods of pragmatic institutional academic planning, effective pedagogical tools and practices, online & blended teaching-learning practices, curriculum upgradation and revision as per dynamic industry standards, research productivity, and student empowerment through community engagement practices. The opening remarks were given by R. Subrahmanyam IAS (rtd), CEO, CRISP, followed by a keynote address by Prof. Anil Sahasrabudhe, Chairman NAAC, NETF, and NBA. Well-known academicians were also involved as resource persons for various sessions.



The workshop presented a great opportunity for the attendee colleges to connect, learn from peer experiences, and collectively address various academic and administrative challenges. Delightfully, all respondents expressed their motivation to enhance the quality of their institution, with many indicating a desire to attend more such workshops. A significant number of respondents expressed their desire to pursue NAAC accreditation, prepare Institutional Development Plans (IDPs), and engage with the National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF). The sessions emphasized that a student-centric approach to higher education will yield necessary results and lead to transformation within the system.

NAAC Workshop for TSWR Degree Colleges



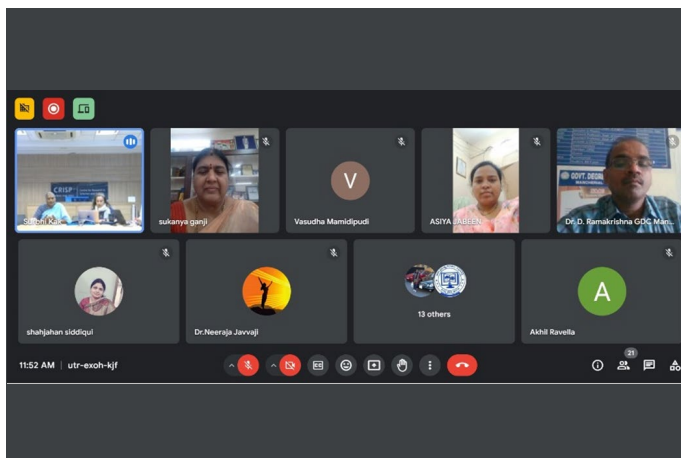
A one-day workshop on 'NAAC' was conducted by CRISP in collaboration with the Internal Quality Assurance Cell (IQAC), Osmania University (OU), at TSWR Law College, Dilsukhnagar, on 22nd June 2024. The workshop was conducted to provide knowledge and awareness about the processes involved in the application of NAAC. It was attended by 26 Telangana Social Welfare Residential Degree Colleges (TSWRDC) located in different districts of Telangana.

The attendees were educated on different criteria involved in their NAAC application, along with their approach towards filling up the points in detail. The sessions also emphasized the significance of involving students in projects, internships, alumni management, research, data management, Ed-Tech, and CDPs. The importance of data capture and management was explained for HEIs. Further, doubts during the process of the Self-Study Report (SSR) and Data Validation and Verification (DVV) were clarified in detail by CRISP.

The institutions that have started their NAAC application shared their experiences, and best practices were discussed. The workshop was found enriching and useful by the attendees, who felt that their doubts during the application process were addressed. The Joint Secretary, of the Higher Education Dept., Dr. Nirupa, concluded the workshop by thanking CRISP and the team for their valuable support. The institutions/attendees were provided with participation certificates from IQAC, OU, and CRISP. In due course, the CRISP Telangana team will continue to assist TSWR Degree Colleges in the process of SSR and DVV.

Institutional Development Plans (IDPs)

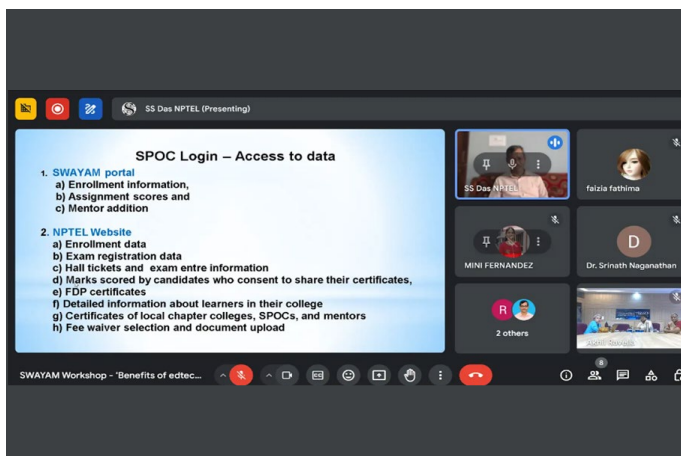
The Centre for Research in Schemes and Policies (CRISP) conducted a pre-workshop online programme on Institutional Development Plans (IDPs) on 5 July 2024 with the identified cluster mentor colleges of Telangana. The programme saw the attendance of 25 representatives from 14 cluster mentor colleges. The main aim was to orient the cluster mentor colleges in developing their IDPs and present the CRISP action plan for IDP preparation in 100+ colleges in Telangana. The team presented its goal to utilise the 'Training the trainer' model, by facilitating the representatives of cluster mentor colleges with 'Certification on Training and Development of IDPs', who would then act as trainers for their mentee colleges.



The colleges were introduced to the advantages of developing IDPs within institutions. The presentation highlighted potential challenges that colleges might face in developing such plans and stressed the importance of continually upgrading and revising vision, mission, and objective statements. CRISP outlined specific steps that the attendee colleges need to undertake within the next month, beginning with mapping their achievements against vision and mission statements, formalising willingness to develop IDPs, acting as mentors to other colleges, and initiating the formulation of an IDP strategic team.

SWAYAM

An online workshop on 'Benefits of the Edtech and online learning to educators, students, and institutions' was conducted by the CRISP Telangana team in collaboration with NPTEL to SWAYAM local chapters from general education degree colleges on 8th July 2024. A total of 45 general degree colleges which are SWAYAM local chapters were invited for the online workshop. The attendees were informed regarding the benefits of the SWAYAM portal to students, faculty, and working professionals. Detailed demonstrations on how to access the portal, register as a new local chapter, mapping of courses, and appointment of mentors were displayed. The features of the four-quadrant approach, translation of courses/material to vernacular languages, and course structure were explained. The criteria to keep SWAYAM local chapters active and their benefits were highlighted. The workshop emphasized the provision of internships provided by IITs/IISc through the SWAYAM portal. Further, the credit transfer policy was explained along with its benefits. Questions were raised on the Academic Bank of Credits, credit transfer mechanisms, and restrictions for affiliated colleges. Going forward, as part of the MoU with the Government of Telangana, CRISP intends to study the implementation of SWAYAM courses at local chapters, report and activate inactive local chapters, and support the registration of new local chapters.





Uttar Pradesh

Meetings with Government Officials

The CRISP-UP team had a productive meeting with Ms. Monica S. Garg, the Additional Chief Secretary of the Social Welfare Department & Minority Welfare & Muslim Welfare Department. As a former Additional Chief Secretary/Principal Secretary of the Higher Education Department, Ms. Garg shared valuable insights from her extensive experience. The team briefed her on the actions and achievements of the PEHLE-UP Project from the previous year and discussed the support needed moving forward. Ms. Garg expressed her full support for the project, particularly for the Apprenticeship Embedded Degree Programs (AEDPs), and agreed to hold periodical meetings to promote these initiatives.



University Collaborations and Approvals

The CRISP-UP team met with the Vice-Chancellor (VC) of Jaunpur University to discuss the implementation of AEDPs. This meeting led to the organization of an offline meeting with 28 government-aided affiliated colleges in the state, furthering collaboration on these programs. In another significant engagement, the team met with the Registrar of Ram Manohar Lohia Awadh University (RMLAU). The registrar praised the team's efforts in promoting AEDPs, and the university's Board of Studies (BoS) had already approved new courses such as BBA Retail, BBA Logistics, BBA Healthcare, and B.Sc Tourism. Additionally, an online session with Sector Skill Councils (SSCs) was planned to facilitate further discussions.



The CRISP-UP team also engaged with the Vice Chancellor and Deputy Registrar of Bundelkhand University. The VC expressed strong support for the AEDPs and facilitated a meeting with affiliated colleges scheduled for the first week of August. The team provided the new curriculum for B Com AEDPs and established a point of contact for addressing any examination-related issues. In a similar vein, the team met with the Registrar of Mahatma Gandhi Kashi Vidyapeeth (MGKV) in Varanasi, where detailed discussions on affiliation issues took place. The registrar was informed about the newly amended AEDP programs, including B. Com. Retail, Logistics, and BFSI, with the curriculum shared for Board of Studies (BoS) approval.

College Engagements and Seminars

To better understand and implement the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, the CRISP-UP team visited several colleges in Kanpur, including Acharya Narendra Dev Nagar Nigam Mahila Mahavidyalaya, Guru Nanak Girls P.G. College, Dayanand Women's Training College, and Dayanand Girls P G College. These visits aimed to gather grassroots insights and validate quantitative data obtained from surveys. Additionally, a seminar on AEDPs and NAAC accreditation was held at Meerut College, Meerut, with participation from 30 colleges affiliated with Meerut and Saharanpur Universities. During this seminar, three colleges expressed interest in starting AEDP programs, contingent on receiving approvals from the university and the UP Higher Education Department (UPHED).





Lastly, the team met with the principal of DLW Rajkiya Mahila PG College in Varanasi. The discussion focused on the college's readiness to start running AEDP programs in the current academic year. The team collected feedback and reviewed the college's progress, ensuring that the implementation of these programs would proceed smoothly. This comprehensive outreach and engagement with various stakeholders underscore the CRISP-UP team's commitment to advancing education and skill development in the region.

The CRISP-UP team visited T.S. Mishra University and met with Vice Chancellor Dr. Prashant Trivedi (IAS, Retd.). Detailed discussions regarding the AEDP programs were held with

Madhya Pradesh

Promoting Apprenticeship Embedded Degree Programs: CRISP Madhya Pradesh Team's Engagement with Bhopal Colleges

The CRISP Madhya Pradesh Team recently visited Government Hamidiya Arts & Commerce Degree College and Sarojini Naidu Government Girls PG Autonomous College in Bhopal to interact with first-year students from various regular degree programs. The primary goal of these visits was to inform students about the Apprenticeship Embedded Degree Programs (AEDPs) being introduced across 78 Higher Education Institutes (HEIs) in Madhya Pradesh. Supported by six Sector Skill Councils, these specialized AEDPs include courses in B.Com. Retail Operations, B.Com. in Banking, Financial Services & Insurance (BFSI), B.Sc. in Healthcare Management, B.Com. in Logistics, B.Sc. in Pharmaceutical Manufacturing & Quality, B.Sc. in Marketing & Sales (Pharma & MedTech), and B.Com. in Human Resource Operations. The team highlighted the benefits of these AEDPs, such as the opportunity for students to earn while gaining practical experience in their final year, thus bridging the skill gap and enhancing their employability. Students were also briefed on the curriculum, assessment methods, apprenticeship opportunities, and the overall scope of these programs. The interactions were well-received, with many students showing interest in switching to the AEDP courses, recognizing the value of integrating practical experience with academic learning to improve their career prospects. The visits successfully raised awareness about AEDPs, marking a significant step towards aligning education with industry needs and contributing to the development of a skilled and employable workforce in Madhya Pradesh.



► HEALTH CARE



Madhya Pradesh

Strengthening Emergency Care Services in Madhya Pradesh

In a significant move to enhance emergency care services, a collaborative meeting was held on May 27, 2024, at Madhya Pradesh Public Health Services Corporation Limited, Bhopal. The meeting included key stakeholders from the Centre for Research in Schemes and Policies (CRISP), the Forum for Health Systems Designs and Transformation (HSTP), and the Department of Public Health and Medical Education (DOPH&ME).

The focus was on presenting the action plan developed by CRISP and HSTP to strengthen emergency and trauma care services across Madhya Pradesh. Dr. Pankaj Jain, Director of Health Administration and Managing Director of DOPH&ME, introduced CRISP and emphasized its objectives in bolstering the state's emergency and trauma care infrastructure. Dr. Sonali Randhawa presented an assessment of the current emergency and trauma care situation in the state, recommending priority districts to focus on reducing emergency cases. A detailed facility assessment was also suggested to identify challenges at the grassroots level. The "Champions of Change" program was proposed to train hospital staff, ensuring readiness for emergency situations.



Ms. Ruchi Verma (HSTP) discussed the assessments conducted by CRISP and HSTP for the Hospital Management Integrated Systems (HMIS) at AIIMS Bhopal, Hamidia Hospital, and Jai Prakash Hospital in Bhopal. Sh. Radhey Shyam Julaniya, IAS (Retd.), State Mentor MP, praised CRISP's pro bono commitment to societal welfare and advised preparing a roadmap for enhancing emergency services. For HMIS, he recommended solutions such as speech-to-text technology, separate procurement for hardware and software, and user-friendly software.

Key implementation steps include preparing an action timeline for strengthening emergency and trauma care, introducing the "Champions of Change" program, selecting priority districts and facilities, and organizing an orientation workshop with WHO CCET and WHO officials to initiate the program. This collaborative effort aims to elevate emergency and trauma care in Madhya Pradesh by training designated champions and enhancing facility readiness.

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