

XAVIER SCHOOL OF RURAL MANAGEMENT(XSRM) XAVIER UNIVERSITY BHUBANESWAR

“International Conference on Rural Management, 2017”

November 23 - 24, 2017, Bhubaneswar



In the global context, in the last few decades the social and economic environment has evolved immensely, giving rise to an enhanced understanding of the role of the Rural Management profession in bringing about sustainable development. Keeping cognizance of the same, Xavier School of Rural Management (XSRM), Xavier University, Bhubaneswar, whose MBA in Rural Management is one of the highest ranked courses in the domain, organized successfully the first **International Conference on Rural Management (ICRM)** with the theme “Rural Management for Sustainable Development”, over November 23 & 24, 2017.

ICRM was based on the ambitious seventeen Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), charted by the United Nations, in its effort to achieve 169 targets by 2030 in the fields of poverty, inequality, food security, clean energy, peace, justice and the environmental protection of our planet.

The first ICRM was designed to explore how the field of Rural Management and its thematic areas, intersect with and underpin the efforts towards sustainable developments. As organizational landscape for rural developments transforms, established ways are increasingly giving way to innovative and emergent strategies and practices. To systematically and critically consider these evolutions, the conference presented an avenue to luminaries to present their papers and cases on innovative initiatives and practices in all functional areas of development management.

The conference was inaugurated by an insightful address by the chief guest, **Shri Amarjeet Sinha**, IAS; Secretary, Department of Rural Development, Government of India. “The *challenge of poverty is multi-dimensional. We lose sight of our objective when we focus only on our specialized sector*”, were his wise words. He was joined in this august gathering by **Shri Saurabh Garg** (IAS; Principal Secretary, Department of Agriculture & Farmers’ Empowerment, Government of Odisha). Shree Garg further emphasized on the challenges faced within the spectrum.

“*There is a high degree of variability in rural sector; coping against which is a major challenge for rural managers*”. He substantiated this by highlighting the four major roadblocks in the rural sector, viz “*insufficient penetration of formal financial system*”, “*need for high capital investment in agriculture and*



allied sectors”, “need for more focus on supply aspect of farmer produce”, and “more penetration of technology for development and business purpose”.

Father Dr. Paul Fernandes, SJ (Vice Chancellor, XUB), **Father E.A. Augustine, SJ** (Registrar, XUB), **Professor Kajri Misra** (Dean, XSRM, XUB), **Professor T. Kumar** (Coordinator, ICRM), and **Professor Kushankur Dey** (Co-Coordinator, ICRM) also graced the podium in the inauguration function.



The conference was attended by eminent industry stalwarts and respected government office-holders, who led various research presentation sessions. ICRM got a total of 95 research submissions including two from international participants. There were 63 research presentations by academicians, doctoral research scholars and practitioners from the development sector spread across 9 themes. There was a total of 85 participants in ICRM from outside XSRM. This included 10 theme speakers and other important speakers.

On Day 1, there was a panel discussion on “**Rural Management Education and Professions**”, chaired by **Shri Durgaprasad Duvvuri** (OD&C, Chairman, GREX Governing Council). The panel consisted of luminaries like **Shri Sanjay Panigrahi** (President – Rurban & Special Projects, Pidilite Industries), **Shri Sankar Dutta** (Development Consultant), **Mr. Ajit Choudhuri** (GM – Community Services, Tata Sustainability Group), **Professor Debiprasad Mishra** (IRMA & Gram Vikas), **Professor Kajri Misra** (Dean, XSRM, XUB), and **Mr. G. Murlidhar** (Mentor, Akshara for Development). The panel discussion was followed by the presentation of papers on the various themes of Rural Management. In the theme of “**Social & Economic Perspectives in Development**”, the theme speaker was Prof. Debiprasad Mishra from IRMA. There were a total of 17 research presentations in this theme spread over three parallel sessions. In the theme of “**Capabilities and HR for Development**”, there were a total of 5 research presentations. **Mr.G. Muralidhar**, Mentor, Akshara and **Mr.Liby Johnson**, CEO, Gram Vikas were the main speakers in this theme.

In the theme of “**Development Policy and Strategy**”, the theme speaker was **Mr.Avinash Kishore Shahi** from IFPRI, Delhi. Apart from him, there were a total of 4 research presentations in this theme. In the theme of “**Rural Marketing & Market Development**”, the theme speaker was **Professor Sridhar Guda** of IIMK and there were 5 research presentations in this theme. In the theme of “**Agribusiness Management**”, there were 3 research presentations. The Second Day of the conference started with a special address on “**Veritable Rural Transformation**” by **Shri Tripathy** (IFS; Commissioner, Rural Development, Government of Jharkhand), followed by a memorable address by **Shri Jugal Kishore Mohapatra** (IAS; former Secretary, Ministry of Rural Development) on “**HR support to the Panchayats for effective program delivery**”.





On day 2 also there were research presentation on different themes. In the theme of “**Organizational Forms for Development**”, there were 5 research presentations. In the theme of “**Rural and Development Finance**”, the theme speaker was **Mr. Ramana**, former CEO of the Basix group and there were 6 research presentations in this theme. In the theme of “**Livelihoods Promotion for Development**”, the theme speaker was **Shri Sankar Dutta**, Development Consultant and there were 9 research presentations in this theme. In the theme of “**ICT and e-Governance for Development**”, the theme speaker was

Mr. K C Mishra, Founder eKutir and there were 4 research presentations in this theme. Apart from all these 9 themes, there was a student colloquium in which 5 doctoral and post graduate students presented their research. These presentation sessions on different themes and the student colloquium were coordinated by professors of Xavier School of Rural Management. Best research presentation awards were given for the best presentations in the 9 different themes and in the student colloquium.

The pioneering first International Conference on Rural Management brought down its grand curtains by a Valedictory Session, wherein the report of the conference was given by Professor T. Kumar. Prof. Kajri Misra, Dean, XSRM gave the valedictory address and distributed the best research presentation award certificates to the distinguished participants of the conference. Professor Kushankur Dey brought the event to a close with a vote of thanks.