In the preceding five chapters (Chapters 2-6), we have delineated various discourses on the idea of the village within wider historical, intellectual, nationalist, sociological/social anthropological and rural development policy related contexts. Based on a critical survey and review of the existing secondary literature on the subject, these chapters have attempted to discern the changing historical representations of the village from the colonial era to the contemporary post-colonial milieu. Beginning with this chapter we turn to the empirical part of our investigation. Our aim is to spotlight on those institutions which have historically been devoted to the theory and practice of rural development, namely, the National Institute of Rural Development (NIRD), Hyderabad and the Institute of Rural Management, Anand (see Chapter 8).

We are not interested in the study of these two institutions simply because they occupy privileged positions in the field of rural development, and have, over the years, carved out a niche for themselves. Our interest in them emanates from their being mediatory institutions between the two poles (both conceptual and empirical) of the state and the village. We believe that they can provide us with an understanding of how their institutional discourses on the village/rural inform the statist construction of the village in the context of rural development. Conversely, we can also find out if the statist agenda informs their discourses which they faithfully communicate and disseminate to a wider audience. In other words, being institutions engaged in policy sciences, they have access to the state by virtue of
their personnel who perform various interrelated roles as academics, experts, scholars, social scientists, and consultants. At the same time, their distinctive self-image as rural development knowledge institutions heavily relies on their ostensible applied research orientation. Unlike universities and other research institutes, the generation and refinement of knowledge at these institutes has obvious policy implications. Also, being the champions of applied empirical/field research, these institutions are expected to aid the state in various ways such as evaluative and diagnostic studies, framing of alternative policies, etc. As a consequence, they have to continually renew their claims as storehouses of academic experts/social scientists by highlighting and marketing the professional training and academic/research backgrounds of their personnel. Expectedly, they serve as bridges between the state and professional academic disciplines/social sciences.

For our purposes, what is important is that these institutes provide a context where their personnel frequently draw upon the various discourses concerning the village in their routine professional activities. Since the personnel working in these institutes invariably come from scholarly backgrounds, the mediation of their academic training and institutional expectations is quite likely. This means that an examination of the activities of the NIRD and the IRMA, is replete with insights relating to the mechanisms through which discourses on the village crystallise at the level of these institutions.

On another plane, we can find out if these institutes merely impart a rational and scientific legitimacy to the statist agenda: Are they concerned with
rendering political as apparently non-political couched in the technical language of policy sciences? It is probable that these institutes endow specific political interests with universal legitimacy through the deployment of rational categories and technical language. Indeed, their privileged positions within the state/society processes as reputed institutes of policy sciences have the potential to make the politics of rural development appear inescapably natural, objective, scientific technical, and routinised. In any case, these institutes embody an institutional structure where politicians, bureaucrats, social scientists, academics, field level development functionaries, and workers in voluntary organisations and the NGOs interact with one another. In particular, the NIRD was created with the specific mandate of bridging the gulf between the world of the villagers and the world of the officials, and also to break the traditional norms of bureaucracy and replace them with new values through the mediation of social sciences (see Dube 1964: 225).

This chapter presents the genesis, history and the current activities of NIRD. Based primarily on the published literature such as annual reports, research highlights, review committee reports, and other in-house brochures and booklets, it attempts to understand the structure and functioning of NIRD in the context of rural development. We do not intend merely to chronicle the host of activities that the NIRD has historically undertaken or is presently engaged in. Rather, our focus is on the role of NIRD as a mediating agency between the state and its rural development policies, programmes and projects that have been introduced since Independence.
By examining the evolution of NIRD as a premier rural development institute, we seek to understand the changing parameters of rural development policies and programmes as well. We believe that an exploration of the empirical setting of NIRD as a rural development institute affords us insights into the conceptualisation of the policies and programmes of rural development. This should also tell us the extent to which the NIRD has been responsive to the demands placed on it by the state. Conversely, we can find out the degree of influence that it has exerted on the state in the context of planning and policy formulation in the area of rural development.

The NIRD also invites us to look into the role of social scientists in relation to rural development. Most of the in-house experts of NIRD happen to be scientists trained in conventional social science disciplines. Although they come from universities or other social science research institutes, having become part of the NIRD, they are expected to perform roles other than conventional teaching and research. They are expected to do what is generally regarded as 'applied research' or 'policy research'. In addition to this type of research, they are expected to assist various types of rural development agencies, including the state, by way of consultancy. They also undertake various other types of activities such as action research, monitoring and evaluation of different types of rural development programmes, diagnostic studies, etc. Seen thus, the NIRD provides us a congenial setting to look into the relationship between the social scientists and the enterprise of rural development.
The Origin: CISRCD

The NIRD has its genesis in the Central Institute of Study and Research in Community Development (CISRCD), Mussoorie, which was established under the auspices of the Department of Rural Development, Ministry of Community Development and Co-operation, Government of India. The CISRCD started functioning from 9 June 1958 at Radha Bhavan, Mussoorie. As the nomenclature makes it clear, the CISRCD had two wings - Study and Research. The Study wing of the Institute had the following five-fold objectives:

1. To stimulate thinking in the key personnel - administrative, technical and non-official - engaged in the community development programmes (CDP) through orientation courses of four to five weeks, with a view to creating in them a better understanding of the objectives of the programme and of the approaches, techniques etc. These courses were not meant to be the courses of organised training of the normal administrative pattern. They primarily aimed at stimulating thinking and giving an opportunity to those who come to it to study good literature on subjects relating to the CDP and allied matters. It was hoped that maximum advantage would flow from exchange of views, knowledge and opinion among the members through free and frank discussions. Academicians and field workers of various categories were brought together in these courses in order to ensure a free play of one mind on another.
2. To take up intensive study of various literature relating to the CDP and publish periodically material that can be easily understood and used by field workers.

3. To guide the training programmes, methods, etc. followed in various other training centres throughout India, for Block Development Officers (BDOs), Social Education Organisers, Village Level Workers, etc.

4. To organise and run a Diploma Course in Community Development for selected field officers.

5. To run a clearing house that will collect literature on community development from all over the world, keep in touch with developments in other countries, disseminate useful information to field workers in India and act as an agency to send out information from India to other countries in the world, who may be interested in our work.

Clearly, the establishment of CISRCD was a response to the burgeoning needs of the CDP then being implemented in the country. It was premised on the belief that 'it is not only machinery that becomes obsolete; one has to guard against obsolescence of the mind'¹. The Community Development Programme, in a vast country like India, necessitated a tremendous organisation of men and materials as well as a systematic and continuous policy of resources and experiences. Its expanding nature and its impact on rural life demanded constant orientation of the functionaries engaged in implementing it on the field. The idea was to keep the field-level functionaries aware of the growing needs of the society as defined by
the CDP, and train them in those methods and techniques which were deemed appropriate for achieving its desired objectives.

It was felt that the executive role of the very large number of administrators and other functionaries had changed in the context of CDP. Their role was seen more in terms of a social servant or an extension worker. For the smooth running of CDP, it was asserted, an administrator had to understand not only administration but also the science of human relations and human behaviour. This was in addition to his knowledge of the technical know-how of personnel administration and the physical knowledge and appreciation of the processes of social and cultural change. An administrator, in that era of national euphoria and optimism, was expected to cultivate social skills conducive to the growth and strengthening of democratic ideals. In other words, the changing pattern of administration had to be tuned to the changed concept of national development for the cultivation of new values. For this, a sustained programme of training personnel at different levels was mandated absolutely essential.

There was a widespread perception that the programme of training so far followed did not embrace aspects related to the demands of CDP. Also, the then prevailing patterns and mode of administrative training did not involve all the key personnel engaged in, or otherwise directly or indirectly connected with, the CDP. For the orientation of the administrative and technical officers above the Block level, reliance had so far been placed exclusively on the organisation of periodic seminars. This kind of training was obviously inadequate. The need for setting up a Central Institute, which could apply itself to the task of giving a higher level
training to the key personnel - administrative as well as technical - of the state and central governments as well as non-officials in the philosophy and objectives of community development, was, therefore, keenly felt. The training organised by this Institute was proposed to be wider in scope so as to cover the economic, social and political goals that were set in relation to the CDP. It was supposed to inculcate in the administrators/officials the ethos of group methods of work and to expose them to ‘the sociological aspects of the programme’. It was against this backdrop of thinking that the central committee overseeing the CDP, under the chairmanship of the then Prime Minister, the late Shri Jawaharlal Nehru, approved the idea of establishing a Central Institute of Study and Research in Community Development (see NIRD 1958-59: 1-19). 2

Simultaneously, the Research wing of CISRCD was supposed to sponsor, guide and co-ordinate research on community development. For this purpose, and for implementing research projects under its guidance and control, the CISRCD was mandated to utilise the services of state governments and other agencies, such as universities, regional research institutes, etc. It was thought that, if research was to be useful, the problem selected should address the difficulties that were being encountered in the implementation of CDP. Many such problems were also expected to emerge from the discussions in the orientation courses and the training programmes conducted by CISRCD (Ibid.: 1-2). 3

By 1960, the CISRCD had established a Research wing, set up a clearing house of information on community development and started academic supervision of centres imparting training to community development personnel. In other words,
it assumed direct responsibility for the training of instructors of different centres responsible for training the intermediate level CDP functionaries. In the CISRCD's thinking, study and research were complementary to each other. Study, as visualised through orientation courses, was to inevitably feed and flow into research, and research was to invigorate and sustain study. The ultimate end was the same: to promote a common understanding of the CDP in a real situation, to exchange and profit by its successful experiences and to throw light on its weaknesses. Without committing itself to any pre-conceived ideology, the CISRCD endeavoured to develop both applied and fundamental research into problems related to community development, and thereby 'improve programme operation, determine its direction and at the same time build up a body of knowledge for giving a practical slant to training at all levels' (NIRD 1960-61: 2).

To impart a clear focus to the mandate of CISRCD, the Advisory Board, at its meeting held in October 1959, made a distinction between 'studies' (which related to the operational problems of community development) and 'fundamental research' (which was concerned with basic questions relating to the programme).

In the first year itself, the CISRCD ran seven orientation courses. A close scrutiny of the annual reports reveals that a sense of something different, novel and unique permeated the initial activities of this Institute. It devoted considerable care to the selection and recruitment of academic (Study and Research) staff: 'while it was easy to get the clerical and administrative staff for looking after the day-to-day administration, the selection of staff for the study and research wings naturally meant considerable search' (Ibid.: 2).
Interestingly, all the directing staff of CISRCD - the Principal, the Vice-Principal, the Dean were IAS/ICS officers. The first non-IAS senior staff was D C Dubey, M. A. (Sociology), who joined as the Assistant Director of Research on 4 September 1959. He was, incidentally, the first member of CISRCD’s Research wing. Dr. Willis A. Sutton, Associate Professor of Sociology, University of Kentucky, joined in the same month as Ford Foundation Professor and Director of Studies of the Institute. Lack of suitable candidates accounts for the vacancy of three posts of Directors of Studies and one post of Deputy Director of Research in the early years of CISRCD.

The first Indian Director of Research to have been appointed was Dr. V. Nath, followed by Prof. S. C. Dube. Much of the organisational spadework for initiating the research programme of CISRCD is generally credited to these two scholars, particularly the latter, who was with the CISRCD from 1961 to 1964. After Prof. Dube left in July 1964, it was Dr. Pradipto Roy’s turn to look after the duties of the Director of Research.

Under the leadership of Prof. Dube, the CISRCD acquired a distinctive research profile. Research projects, apart from being conducted by the members of the faculty of CISRCD and the staff of the 24 training centres attached to the Ministry of Community Development and Co-operation, were sanctioned to different universities and academic institutions. The involvement of the universities and other research institutes was meant to show the artificiality of the separation between applied research being done by the CISRCD and fundamental research being done at the universities. Nearly all research projects undertaken were
supposed to have an applied ring; most studies undertaken were related to planned social change in rural areas and were interdisciplinary in nature. Initially, a few reputed scholars at the universities were personally solicited, and certain projects relating to Panchayati Raj and social change were entrusted to them. However, in course of time, the demand for research projects far exceeded the CISRCD’s financial resources. The programme of research through universities and other research institutes soon gained momentum. Inspired by this response, and in order to draw on the expertise of the widest academic circle, the CISRCD facilitated the creation of a joint fund by the Ministry of Community Development and Co-operation and the University Grants Commission (UGC) of Rs. 10 lakhs per year exclusively devoted to research (see NIRD 1965-66: 16).

The association with the universities, and the presence of academically-trained directors at the Research wing, resulted in the re-fashioning of the self-image of the CISRCD as a centre of research on community development and in behavioural sciences. In the initial years, the CISRCD used to have ‘Directors’ in conventional social sciences, such as economics, political science (and public administration), sociology, anthropology and psychology. It was its sincere endeavour to have the expertise in the complete spectrum of behavioural sciences. All the same, it was aware that developing CISRCD as a centre of behavioural science research was beset with difficulties: ‘the development of the behavioural sciences in the world has been more recent and in India they have had a chequered and uneven pattern of growth. Each of the social science disciplines is experiencing its own peculiar growing pains particularly in its interactions with world trends’ (NIRD 1965-66: 22). It was believed that ‘the objective investigation of any aspect
of planned social change adds to the store of scientific facts and theoretical knowledge’ *(Ibid.)*. However, the expansion of research activities under the auspices of CISRCD did not necessarily assure high quality research or the completion of each and every research project. In fact, some of the research projects could not reach the stage of completion. The CISRCD diagnosed the problems of research projects as variously related to their improper design, insufficient supervision, premature transfer of instructors, etc.

There was a 26-member Advisory Board, chaired by the Minister of Community Development and Co-operation, to frame general guidelines about the structure and functioning of CISRCD. The Principal/Vice-Principal of the Institute was its ex-officio Secretary. The first Advisory Board had 12 IAS/ICS officers, seven Members of Parliament, four social scientists, namely, S. C. Dube, A. K. Wadia, M. N. Srinivas, and N. K. Bose, one representative each from the Indian Institute of Public Administration (Delhi) and the Delhi School of Economics respectively, and Dr. Douglas Ensminger, the Chief of Ford Foundation in India.

**The Metamorphosis: NICD**

In April 1962, the Central Institute of Study and Research in Community Development metamorphosed into the National Institute of Community Development (NICD). This coincided with the incorporation of the Institute for Instruction on Community Development, Rajpur (Dehradun), which was earlier known as the Trainers’s Training Institute. In 1964, the NICD moved to the city of Hyderabad, the capital of Andhra Pradesh. For a while, the Instruction wing of NICD, however, continued to function from Rajpur (NIRD 1961-62: 1-2). On 1
November 1965, NICD shed its formal governmental character and became a registered autonomous registered body, though continuing to work in close association with the central and state governments. The Instruction wing too shifted to Hyderabad in September 1965 (NIRD 1965-66: 1).4

In the first few years of its establishment, even though the NICD operated as part of the Ministry of Community Development and Co-operation, there were vigorous discussions concerning its autonomy: 'The Central Institute is growing, it is fundamental to its growth that it must grow in freedom. It must breathe the spirit of freedom, freedom to think, freedom to search and investigate, freedom to argue and expound, freedom to doubt and even to deny' (NIRD 1960-61: 2). True, it never viewed autonomy as the panacea for all the ills of research. Nonetheless, it argued that the experience from other parts of the world suggested that autonomy was a necessary, though not a sufficient, condition for the growth of creative research.

In the early 1960s, the issue of autonomy in relation to research seemed to occupy an important place in the NICD's thinking. An introspective mood was evident as the NICD took stock of its functioning and chronicled its research experience. This critical fervour can be seen in a set of questions that the Institute posed to itself:

But what are the ingredients of creative research? Attracting outstanding research scholars? Productive academic atmosphere? Freedom and co-operation between researchers of different disciplines? What is the sine qua non of nucleating size before an institution can sustain self-generating growth? What flexibilities in structure, in financing and in recruitment are conducive to accomplishment? How much 'outside' assistance can one absorb without losing its character or integrity? (NIRD 1965-66: 24).
These questions seemed to have been resolved for the time being, as the NICD was made autonomous, from 1 November 1965, in pursuance of the decision of the Government of India. In formal terms, it was registered as an autonomous society under the Public Societies Registration Act No. I of 1350 Fasli, and its management was to be transferred to an Executive Committee (EC), constituted by the General Council of the Institute, with the Dean as the chief executive officer (see NIRD 1966-67: 1). Once the much talked about formal autonomy was achieved, NICD re-positioned itself in terms of its future pattern of growth. It felt that its autonomous status had enabled it to pursue its original mandate with a greater sense of freedom and purpose. The new objectives set were as follows:

1. Functioning as an apex institute for providing orientation and training in the philosophy and methods of community development and Panchayati Raj to senior officers as well as elected personnel functioning at the policy making levels.

2. Promoting a programme of study and research in applied social sciences, with particular emphasis on planned change through community development.

3. Providing academic guidance to the training centres in different parts of the country, and imparting the necessary training to the instructors of these training courses in teaching techniques and methods.

4. Functioning as a centre of information on community development and Panchayati Raj.
The acquisition of autonomy by the Institute resulted in minor restructuring of its governance. In place of the earlier Advisory Board of the Institute, there were now two committees: (1) the General Council (GC), and (2) the Executive Committee (EC). The GC being a larger body (its membership strength was in the range of 30-40), was concerned with the general policy guidelines concerning the NICD. The EC looked after the execution of major policy decisions. For the smooth functioning of NICD, the EC facilitated a certain division of responsibilities by appointing various Standing Committees on finance, appointments, research and evaluations. These committee were meant to assist the Dean, who was the chief executive officer of the Institute (see Memorandum of Association and Rules and Bylaws of the Institute, NIRD, Hyderabad). While the EC was to be constituted by the GC, the latter’s constitution was spelt out as follows:

1. The President of the Institute: Cabinet Minister of Rural Development.

2. Two vice-presidents of the Institute: Minister of State of Rural Development and a Member of Parliament.

3. Four persons from non-official institutions in India working in community development and allied fields (to be appointed by the President of the Institute).

4. Nine eminent persons who have made noteworthy contributions to the field of community development and allied subjects.
5. One person each from All India Panchayat Parishad and National Co-operative Union of India.

6. Chairperson of the University Grants Commission and the President of the Association of Indian Universities.

7. Secretaries and Additional/joint Secretaries, Department of Agriculture and Rural Development in the Ministry concerned and Financial Advisor to the Ministry (Joint Secretary, Finance) representing Ministries of Agriculture and Finance respectively.

8. Secretaries in the Ministries of Education and Social Welfare, Department of Personnel and Administrative Reforms and of the Planning Commission or their nominees.

9. Five Secretaries of community development or development commissioners, by rotation from amongst the State governments/union territories.

10. Four Members of Parliament (three from the Lok Sabha and one from the Rajya Sabha), and eight members of the State/Union Territories legislatures, and four States/Union Territories’s nominees to represent four zonal councils, by rotation.

11. Three of the Directors of the Institute by rotation fixed by the Dean, each one holding office for one year.

12. The Dean of the Institute
13. Three Vice-chancellors of Universities

Similarly, the EC’s constitution was spelt out as follows:

1. Minister of State for Rural Development, that is, the Vice President of the Institute as the Chairman

2. The Dean/Director General of the Institute

3. Three Secretaries from the Ministry including the Financial Advisor

4. Five eminent persons who have made noteworthy contributions in the field of community development and allied fields to be nominated by the President of the Institute among the members of the GC.

5. Two members to be nominated by the President from among the non-official members of the GC.

6. Secretary, department of Personnel and Training, Government of India or his/her nominee not below the rank of Joint Secretary.

However, the academic organisation of the Institute continued to follow the old pattern of division into various faculties. Now and then, some new faculty would be added while some old ones would be renamed, merged, or reorganised either to include new areas or to change their focus and orientation. For illustration, in 1968, the Institute was divided into following faculties: (a) agriculture, planning and economics, (b) public administration, political science and Panchayati Raj, (c) sociology-anthropology and community development, (d) psychology and communications, and (e) family planning and applied nutrition.
Another significant aspect of the growth of the Institute, after the attainment of autonomy, was the publication of journals. In 1966, the Institute started the publication of a half-yearly journal - Behavioural Sciences and Community Development. This journal was expected to disseminate technical research publications on the theme of community development. After few years, in July 1969, the Institute started a new journal entitled Community Development and Panchayati Raj Digest. This was intended to cover non-technical articles and field notes on the issues included in its title. It was also designed to acquaint both officials and non-officials engaged in the task of 'rural development' with the current thinking on various problems of community development and Panchayati Raj (NIRD 1969-70: 21). This new journal replaced the earlier rota-printed quarterly of the Institute entitled Community Development and Panchayati Raj Abstracts.

Gradually, the NICD got recognition from various quarters for the purposes of higher education as well. For example, the Osmania University (Hyderabad) accorded recognition to the NICD as a centre for guiding research leading to doctoral degree (see NIRD 1971-72: 27). The Andhra University (Waltair) also accorded similar recognition to the Institute.

However, the issue of autonomy of the NICD, which seemed to have been resolved in 1965, opened up again. Although the NICD was made an autonomous body in 1965, it was felt that even on matters of minor nature it was required to seek the approval of the Government of India. This undue interference by the Government was held responsible for the delay in administrative matters and the
resultant uncertainty which adversely affected the effective functioning of the Institute. Almost after a decade of its having become formally autonomous, the Institute approached the then Minister of Rural Development, Shri Jagjivan Ram, on 11 January 1975, for the grant of institutional freedom along the lines of the Indian Institute of Public Administration (IIPA), Delhi. The demand for freedom was linked to the expected improvement in the functioning of the Institute. It was argued that, if the Institute acquires substantive administrative freedom, it could function with ease and confidence. In fact, even in 1975, the Institute was dependent on monthly grants from the Ministry of Rural Development. Not surprisingly, one of the demands placed before the Minister was the approval of long-term grants and the discontinuance of the practice of monthly grants. On 31 March 1975, the Institute constituted a subcommittee on the issue of autonomy and this committee submitted its report on 24 September 1975. The GC approved and forwarded this report to the Ministry on 25 September 1975 for consideration and approval. However, nothing much came out of it, and the Institute continued to function as usual.

In between, minor changes were effected here and there. For example, earlier the training courses run by the Institute used to be of a month’s duration. The duration of such courses was reduced, in 1975-76, to 10 days, to attract officers of higher level in greater number. It was assumed that the longer duration discouraged senior officers from joining the training courses (see NIRD 1975-76: 4). Also, the internal academic organisation of the Institute underwent some changes. Now, in addition to faculties, some departments were also established. In 1975-76, there were 10 faculties, namely, agricultural economics, agricultural
extension, communication, community and rural development and Panchayati Raj, cultural anthropology, regional planning and integrated rural development, political science and public administration, psychology, sociology, training; and six departments, namely, cartography, Dean’s, documentation, information and publication, statistics and studies (see NIRD 1976-77: 3-4).

The Culmination: NIRD

In 1977, the National Institute of Community Development (NICD) became the National Institute of Rural Development (NIRD). As the Annual Report (NIRD 1977-78: 2) puts it,

The General Council of the Institute at its meeting held on 20 September 1977 observed that in view of the fact that the Institute’s activities were expected to have a much wider range concerning the whole field of rural development, it was proper that its name also should be indicative of its objectives, and therefore, decided that it be changed to NIRD. The change has been effected accordingly.

If we go by the substance of the Annual Report, the change in the name of the Institute was, apparently, a consequence of the abrupt decision of the GC mentioned above. Interestingly, the Annual Report is silent on the other possible reasons, apart from the one mentioned above, for the re-christening of NICD as NIRD. We can, however, conjecture some of the driving forces behind this change in nomenclature. By the mid-1960s, the CDP had lost much of its sheen throughout the country. The central funding for this had also stopped by the end of the Third Five-Year Plan, that is, 31 March 1967. Moreover, all over the world, the lustre of CDP as a viable strategy of rural development was on decline. The CDP had been found deficient in addressing the issues of equity in development. It was allegedly reinforcing and perpetuating the already existing disparities in the countryside.
Now, the focus of the multilateral donor agencies was more on specifically addressing the constituency of the rural poor (see World Bank 1975). In India too, in the early 1970s, this new thinking was reflected in the changed focus of rural development programmes – from CDP to target-group programmes, such as, Small Farmers Development Agency, Marginal Farmers and Agricultural Labourers Programme – in the wake of the famous slogan of ‘Garibi Hatao’.

Also, in 1977, there was a Janata government in power which had successfully replaced the uninterrupted rule of the Congress since Independence on the basis of a massive mobilisation of the rural sector. The Janata government was singularly committed to the issue of rural development which was also reflected in the quantum jump in the grants made available to the NIRD. Given this context, the change in name, from NICD to NIRD, merely formalised the changes which had already become part of the political universe of rural development. Also, the CDP was too much identified with the rule of the Congress. It is probable that the then-reigning Janata government wanted to break with the Congress legacy in the field of rural development. Seen thus, the change in name can be construed as an outcome of a conjuncture of circumstances, both international and national. What surprises us, however, is the relative insignificance of the change in nomenclature in the self-image of NIRD.

Nonetheless, the titles of the two journals, too, changed - the half-yearly Behavioural Sciences and Community Development was renamed as Behavioural Sciences and Rural Development, and the quarterly journal Community Development and Panchayati Raj Digest was re-titled as Rural Development
Digest. Taking advantage of the change in the titles of the two journals, fresh volume series for both the journals were issued. Earlier these journals used to be published in March and September. After the change in their nomenclature, January and July became the months of publication. Thus, January 1978 saw the first volume of both the journals.

Grameen Vikas Sameeksha, the Hindi version of Behavioural Sciences and Community Development, was launched in June 1987 and its first biannual issue was brought out in December 1987. In 1982, the Journal of Rural Development was born by amalgamating the two journals - Behavioural Sciences and Rural Development and Rural Development Digest. The Editorial Board of the Institute reviewed the position regarding the publication of journals and thought that, instead of issuing two journals carrying the same type of articles, it would be better to have only one journal and issue it as a bimonthly. Also, the NIRD Newsletter was started as a bimonthly publication from April 1982. Research Highlights, Annual Rural Development Statistics are some other annual publications of the Institute. In 1996, the Institute started the publication of Panchayat Vani, a monthly newsletter, which was renamed as Panchayat Unnati in 1997 in Assamese, Bengali, English, Hindi, Kannada, Malyalam, Oriya, Punjabi, Tamil and Telugu, Panchayat Jeevan in Marathi, and Panchayat Dharam in Gujarati.

The late 1970s, in retrospect, seems to be the period of high growth for the NIRD. In 1978, a vigorous exchange programme between the NIRD and the UK Social Science Fellowship Programme, through Overseas Development Institute, England, came to be instituted. Under this programme, many British social
scientists came to spend two years at the Institute. Similarly, many faculty members of the Institute could go abroad for further professional training and development. It is noteworthy that many NIRD faculty members got an opportunity to go to prestigious centres for development studies in the UK and elsewhere.

Furthermore, the NIRD got enormous support and impetus from the central government to improve its infrastructure and humanpower. Substantial amount of money was pumped into it by way of provision of physical infrastructure and expertise. The idea was to make the NIRD fully competent to translate into action programmes of rural development that the Government of India had embarked upon. Buoyant with the unprecedented support, the Institute undertook a series of reviews of its training and research activities thus far conducted. It delineated the areas it wished to concentrate on and sharpened the focus of some of its activities. The new thinking of the Institute was expressed through a document called, the Perspective 1979-1984. The Perspective covered the following:

1. Improving the economic and social well-being of the rural areas with the family as the focus of attention; increasing employment opportunities, studying and bringing a practical approach to solving the problems of economic development and the social well-being of the target groups, such as small and marginal farmers, agricultural labourers, rural artisans, rural women, and above all, the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes as also other disadvantaged sections of the rural community; and studying different aspects of the organisation of the rural poor.
2. Studying and assisting in the improvement of the structure and functioning of Panchayati Raj, and other local institutions with a view to enhance their delivery capabilities of various rural development programmes.

3. Assisting in the formulation of area plans and micro-level plans; preparation and appraisal of rural development and agricultural projects; evolving a better rural-urban continuum; and monitoring and evaluating projects.

4. Promoting a co-ordinated approach in activating rural organisations, social systems, co-operative institutions, credit and financial institutions, and voluntary organisations.

5. Focusing attention on human resources development, participative process and improving the quality of life.

6. Assisting different agencies - government, public and private sector - and other organisations involved in rural development in better transmittal of technology, rural communication, and in the investment on the improvement and utilisation of rural manpower and economic resources.

7. Examining different aspects of environment conservation and recycling of waste in rural areas.

8. Acting as a storehouse of information on all aspects of rural development both within and from other developing countries and to disseminate knowledge in this area.
9. Gradually intensifying attention on the various facets of the evolution of an egalitarian agro-industrial rural society.

10. Assisting in the formulation of policy and the choice of options in rural development (NIRD 1978-79: 3-4).

In the light of the new role envisaged for the Institute in furtherance of the cause of rural development, it was felt by the EC, at its meeting on 7 October 1978, that the scope and objectives of the Institute, as enunciated in the Memorandum of Understanding, required to be redrafted. Necessary changes were, therefore, incorporated with the approval of the GC at its meetings held on 24 March 1979 and 5 December 1979. Among others, the revised objectives of the Institute aimed at providing and promoting the study of relevant factors contributing to economic development and social well-being of the rural areas. With this purpose, it committed itself to:

1. undertake and assist in the organisation of training and study courses, conferences, seminars and lectures;

2. undertake, aid, promote and co-ordinate research through its own or other agencies including universities and training centres set up by or with the aid of the Government of India or the state governments;

3. analyse and propose solutions for specific problems encountered in the planning and implementation of various programmes of rural development, panchayati raj and similar programmes; and

In due course, the designation of the chief executive officer underwent many changes of nomenclature. For example, at its meeting held on 7 August 1978, the EC decided to re-designate the post of the Dean as the Principal Director. Subsequently, at its 34th meeting held on 22 March 1979, the EC decided that the designation of the Principal Director of the Institute be changed as Director General, and the change was effected from 1 April 1979.

Minor revisions in the nomenclature of faculties have been a continuous process. In 1982, the Faculty of Women’s Studies was added. Since July 1983, a North-Eastern Regional Centre of NIRD has been functioning from Guwahati. In 1995-1996, faculties were replaced by centres, which have continued since then. At present, there are 17 faculty centres, namely, Centre for Agrarian Studies, Centre for Behavioural and Organisational Development, Centre for Disaster Management and Rural Reconstruction, Centre for Human Resources Development, Centre for Information, Education, and Communication, Centre for Information Technology, Centre for Institutional Building for Training, Centre for Micro Planning, Centre for Monitoring and Evaluation, Centre for Natural Resources Management, Centre for Panchayati Raj, Centre for Quantitative Techniques, Centre on Rural Documentation, Centre for Rural Industries and Employment, Centre for Social Development, Centre for Sustainable Economic Development, and Centre for Women Development.
One of the most significant developments has been the increasing supervisory role of NIRD vis-à-vis the functioning of other training centres in the area of rural development, which fall under the jurisdiction of state governments and union territories. Beginning in this direction was made in the mid-1980s when Government of India appointed an expert committee to make use of the physical infrastructure of these institutes for which the central funding had stopped on 31 March 1967 leading to their being in disarray. As per the Directory of Rural Development Institutes prepared by the NIRD (see NIRD 2002), there are 25 state institutes of rural development and some 103 other training centres, mostly at the regional level (intra-state). The NIRD not only administers the plans of infrastructure development for these institutes, but also provides them with academic inputs by way of workshops and training programmes. Towards this end, the NIRD organised the first colloquium of secretaries of rural development and Panchayati Raj and heads of state institutes of rural developments in 1987, which has since then become an annual feature. In fact, since the beginning of the Seventh Five-Year Plan (1985-90), the NIRD has been co-ordinating the implementation of the two centrally sponsored schemes: (1) strengthening/establishing state-level institutions for training and research in rural development, under the support of the European Economic Commission, and (2) aid programme and establishing/strengthening of extension training centres (ETCs) in states/union territories for the training of village/block level functionaries.

Although the Institute has been biased in favour of practical application of the various methods of rural development dealt with in its research and training programmes, and has been focusing on the task of enriching and enlightening the
filed-level functionaries involved in rural development, by 1993 its self-image underwent a tremendous change. It now envisages itself as the ‘think tank’ for the Ministry of Rural Development. Its hosting of Joint Parliamentary Committee meeting on the 72nd Constitution Amendment Bill and the success of its lobbying and the wide appreciation of its academic contribution to the said Bill seem to have greatly enhanced its self-confidence as an institute of rural development. Subsequently, it was asked to draft a model bill to serve as a frame of reference for the preparation of the State Panchayati Raj bills which further enhanced its reputation as a policy making institute. The Institute was asked to evolve model guidelines for transferring powers and functions to Panchayati Raj institutions in respect of the 29 items listed under the Eleventh Schedule of the Constitution. It was also called upon to prepare an action plan for the training of more than 3.1 million Panchayati Raj functionaries in different States (see NIRD 1995-96: 1).

This self-image of the ‘think tank’, owing to its having been entrusted with the aforementioned tasks of policy formulation, finds articulation in the changing rhetoric of its annual reports and other published brochures since the early 1990s. For example, the Annual Report for 1994-1995 describes the NIRD ‘as one of the foremost institutes of rural development in Asia’. It claims to have endeavoured all along to provide inputs to translate into action the significance of rural development in the context of national socio-economic transformation. Furthermore, ‘as a premier organisation of the Ministry, it assists in policy formulation and choice of options in rural development’. More importantly, it now fancies itself as striving towards energising the process of democratic decentralisation in rural areas.
From 1995-96 onwards, the scope of the NIRD training programmes widens to include non-governmental organisations (NGOs) as well. It starts specifically mentioning NGOs in the context of rural development: 'there are also a number of NGOs engaged in rural development and they too require capacity building. Thus, the size of the clientele for the rural development training is so large that it needs a nation-wide network of training infrastructure' (NIRD 1998-99: 4). It re-dedicates itself to the task of facilitating 'the rural development efforts with particular emphasis and focus on the rural poor by improving the knowledge, skills, and attitudes of rural development officials and non-officials through organising training, workshops and seminars' (NIRD 1999-2000: 1). Earlier, for all practical purposes, the aim of NIRD was to train officials associated with the rural development programmes even if non-officials have always been the part of its scope of training. Its newly found determination to move beyond the officials is articulated thus:

The history of rural development in India is marked by many changes and shifts in policies and programmes affecting the lives of the rural people. These policies shifting from community based approach to individual or group based approaches have led to the levels of development that we perceive today. In this growth process NIRD has played its own modest but crucial role by contributing immensely to the policies and programmes of the Government of India and also by improving the functional capabilities of policy makers, administrators, legislators, bankers, academics, members of local self-government institutions, non-governmental organisations etc. (Ibid.: 2).

In the mid-1990s, the NIRD seems to have also done some serious thinking on its research output. It decided to look at its research output from two angles: (1) all the sponsored and long-term researches were designated as research projects, while the short-duration research projects, usually of four-month duration and diagnostic in nature were termed as research studies. The latter was also meant to supplement the inputs given in training programmes, workshops and seminars. To
enhance the utility of research reports and to avoid the delay in their completion, it was felt necessary to lay more emphasis on studies of short-duration (‘hit and run raids of the countryside’ *a la* Thorner). In other words, the focus was more on research studies than research projects in the hope that the results of short-term studies would provide appropriate and timely inputs for training programmes and also for policy making (see NIRD 1995-1996: 6). The following principles were laid down for guiding research activities of the NIRD:

1. Research should be an aid for training and provide insights into the rural development scenario, which will be used as training inputs. Research for preparation of case studies for training courses could also be encouraged.

2. The scope of research should broadly coincide with the areas of interests and concerns of the Ministry of Rural Development.

3. Research in the nature of evaluation of rural development programmes could be taken up, both to provide feedback to the Ministry of Rural Development and also to serve as inputs in the training courses.

4. Researches to suit the individual specialisations of the faculty could be taken up, provided they conform to the broad research goals of the Institute.

5. Sponsored researches to suit the needs of the sponsoring organisations could also be taken up, provided they are not in conflict with the criteria indicated above (NIRD 1994-1995: 4).

Thus, we find a definite shift from a general approach to a thematic approach in terms of the research agenda of NIRD. There is an increasing emphasis
on findings in relation to the problems in programme formulation and management (see NIRD 1990-1991: 13). A careful scrutiny of the researches done by the NIRD shows that, though there have been policy research and programme based research including action research, covering a wide range of subjects, most of it is field-based in character (see NIRD 1998-1999: 5, 17-18). The research conducted by the Institute is basically diagnostic in its nature leading to policy conclusions and identification of alternative strategies for improving the effectiveness of various programmes/schemes. 

In the next chapter, we will discuss our shift in attention from the level of discourse to that of institutions in the context of IRMA. As an institution which emerged as part of a vibrant co-operative ideology and practice, it presents a fascinating contrast to the NIRD. The relatively short career of IRMA demonstrates a different trajectory of the Institute’s relationship with the state. Also, it offers alternative conceptualisations of rural development with a distinctive focus on rural management.

Notes

1 This quotation of Jawaharlal Nehru has been used as the epigraph in the first Annual Report of CISRCD (1958-59).
2 Though the first Annual Report was published under the name of the Central Institute of Study and Research in Community Development, for the purposes of this chapter we have clubbed all the annual reports together under the rubric of NIRD. Also, in the bibliography, there is a single entry under NIRD which covers all the annual reports published so far, beginning from 1958-59 to 2002-2003. Some of these have appeared as the annual reports of the National Institute of Community Development (NICD), the previous incarnation of NIRD. It is to be noted that, since 1965 till the time NICD turned into NIRD, the annual reports were published under the auspices of the National Institute of Community Development, Hyderabad. Earlier all annual reports were issued under the Ministry of Community Development and Co-operation, Government of India along with the Central Institute of Study and Research in Community Development. Earlier,
all annual reports covered the calendar year. Since 1 April 1967 they have followed the financial year principle. In the references cited in the text of this Chapter, wherever NIRD is followed by hyphenated years, the reference is invariably to the corresponding annual reports.

3 It is noteworthy that the then Prime Minister Nehru inaugurated the first training programme of the Institute by way of a lecture on ‘community development’. Another prominent political leader of that time, Jayaprakash Narayan, was a frequent guest faculty to the training programmes organised by the CISRCD.

4 However, it took some time before the NICD got firmly grounded in Hyderabad. Although, as late as 1997, meetings of the Executive Council continued to be held at New Delhi, after 1980, more often, the meetings of the General Council (GC) took place at Hyderabad. After 1989, all the GC meetings were held at Hyderabad.

5 There have been minor periodic changes in the constitution of the GC and the EC. The latest constitution of these two bodies is spelt out in NIRD Office Order No. 944 dated 28 February 2003 containing amendments of the Rules of NIRD, 1991. Some of the sociologists who have been on the General Council of NICD, and its later avatar, the NIRD, at various points in time are: S. C. Dube, M. N. Srinivas, Yogendra Singh, T. N. Madan, P. N. Mukherji. Dube had a fruitful stint at the Institute as the Director of Research, and later as the Principal of the Institute. He continued his association with the Institute long after he had left it formally. Srinivas, too, was a frequent visitor to the Institute in its initial years. Almost all the training programmes (orientation courses as they were called then) would have lectures by Srinivas on various themes.

Many other social scientists of repute have been associated with the Institute. Rajni Kothari was a research associate at the Institute. He subsequently became a member of its GC and EC. Economists like C. H. Hanumantharao and A. M. Khusro have also been the members of its GC and EC.

6 Incidentally, it is for the first time, that too in the context of the journal, that the Annual Report of the Institute mentions the term rural development. Before that, and till the time when the NICD got re-christened as the National Institute of Rural Development (NIRD), community development remained the prime theme.

7 The same meeting also decided to call all the research officers of the Institute as Assistant Directors. Even now, the faculty members of the Institute are formally designated as Directors, Deputy Directors, and Assistant Directors, in the descending order of formal gradation. All the centres (earlier faculties and departments) are generally headed by the Director rank officers/faculty members.

8 For example, our scrutiny of the Compendium of Summaries of Research Studies, for the Centre for Panchayati Raj, for the period 1966-1993, showed only two instances of what can be called theory-driven research. The first was a research project entitled ‘Politics in an Indian Village: A Theoretico-Empirical Exploration in Political Sociology (see pp.114-22 of the said publication) by M. Shiviah. This research had engaged itself with wider conceptual issues, such as freedom, political culture, participation, communication and socialisation. The other was a joint research project by S. P. Jain and K. Sheshadri on ‘Political Perception of Electorate’ (see pp. 217-21 of the said document), which was essentially a study of electoral behaviour with a view to build a theory of political development and political socialisation.