CHAPTER 9
FROM INSTITUTIONS TO SCHOLAR-PRACTITIONERS - I:
NIRD

In dealing with state-village relations, we have focused on a particular form of development intervention, namely, rural development institutions. We have particularly chosen the NIRD and the IRMA, the two institutions associated with the issues of rural development and management respectively. Our first task was to undertake an organisational overview of these two institutions in order to situate their mediatory role in the overall matrix of rural development. In Chapters 7 and 8 we accomplished this task by way of constructing brief institutional profiles of the NIRD and the IRMA respectively.

The institutional profiles presented in the preceding two chapters are primarily based on published materials, such as annual reports, review committee reports, souvenirs, memoranda of association, booklet and leaflets, and other sundry brochures. While these materials are rich sources of information and lend themselves to a fairly good portrayal of these two institutions, they have their own limitations. Written largely for the benefit of a wider audience, and as part of the routine formal exercises, they tell us very little about the personnel manning these institutions and their ways of engagement with the institutional ideals of rural development/management.

Also, the growing pressures of internal resource generation through consultancy, and the attendant need to carve out a clientele for their expertise, have compelled both the NIRD and the IRMA to go for a more market-savvy image. Not surprisingly, the in-house literature (generated by the NIRD and the IRMA)
contains some amount of inherent self-praise and are characterised by a tendency to gloss over institutional weaknesses and shortcomings.

However, our shift in attention in this chapter, from institutions of rural development (NIRD) and management (IRMA) to the scholar-practitioners working there, is only partly guided by the limitations of the secondary data outlined above. We believe that our focus on the scholar-practitioners of rural development, apart from yielding valuable primary data, has a number of other pay-offs. More importantly, it helps us find out the nature and extent of scholar-practitioners' internalisation of the institutional motto. In fact, their orientations towards institutional consensus on rural development/management have implications for the type of work they do. After having interacted with them, we are better placed to judge whether their location in the institutions of rural development/management is solely guided by career prospects and constraints. We gain an entry into their professional world by listening to their statements. We come to know about their ways of justifying their existence as social scientists/academics in such institutions, and what they do and do not do. The scholar-practitioners' perceptions and experiences of their own location in the institutional setting and their role performance definitely add value and richness to our secondary data about the NIRD and the IRMA.

Moreover, we have been interested in probing how sociological concepts of the village have found their way into the rural development discourse. After all, social scientific discourses do influence the ideologies that policymakers and planners adopt and use to shape practices of development and social change. In a manner of speaking, the institutions such as NIRD and IRMA mediate the way we talk about state intervention through rural development, about political action by
the villagers/peasantry, about the nature and role of the state. Thus, our focus on
the scholar-practitioners can show us as to how social scientific discourses have
shaped, or indeed, have been constitutive of rural development interventions and
state practices.

For our purposes, by moving within the institutional frameworks of NIRD
and IRMA, we may identify the boundaries of 'epistemic communities' (Arce and
Long 1992: 244) in the particular instance of rural development. An 'epistemic
community' consists of persons sharing the same sources and types of knowledge.
Since most of the scholar-practitioners are trained social scientists in the case of
NIRD, and rural management experts in the case of IRMA, the structure and
contents of their particular communication networks within these institutions, are
bound to generate insights regarding the changing contours of the relationship
between the state and the social scientific/academic community. Indeed, not only
the social sciences have derived their expansionist impetus by virtue of state
support, but also the state has historically drawn on social sciences and the
academy in its quest for legitimacy.

This chapter deals with the scholar-practitioners of rural development,
working in the NIRD and the IRMA. It is primarily based on the data generated
through focussed interviews with the select group of scholar-practitioners. Since
these two institutes widely differ in their faculty strength (our scholar-
practitioners), we worked with samples of different sizes. The NIRD has an
approximate faculty strength of 100, out of which we covered 42. In the case of
IRMA, we could cover a larger proportion of scholar-practitioners compared to
their total strength - 16 out of the total faculty strength of 22. Evidently, the
difference in our sample size is not merely reflective of the differences in the
universe, as the coverage is 42 percent in the case of NIRD against that of 73 percent for IRMA. The explanation lies in the nature of our sampling. Rather than random sampling, we went for the purposive one. Our decision on sampling was largely conditioned by the type of data we wanted to collect. All through our interest has been in gaining qualitative data. For this, it was essential that our scholar-practitioners showed requisite enthusiasm and willingness to engage with the researcher’s questions. At the NIRD, some of the scholar-practitioners found the researcher’s questions unsuitable for ‘a place like NIRD’ while others felt inhibited to talk to the researcher in an unconstrained fashion by virtue of their being ‘government servants’. In fact, few of them insisted on having written permission from the head of the Institute. By contrast, scholar-practitioners at IRMA, though most were not social scientists, were quite forthcoming and engaging. They not only happily granted their time to the researcher but also showed sufficient interest in the progress of his research. Some of them went out of their way to suggest relevant readings to the researcher. Naturally, the researcher could conduct focussed interviews with much ease and comfort at the IRMA than the NIRD, and therein, lays the difference in the proportion of interviews conducted at the NIRD and the IRMA.

The researcher, with the help of an interview guide, conducted these interviews through intermittent field visits of varying duration which were spread over a period of eight months (February-September 2003) at the respective institutes. For initial familiarising, the first field visits to these institutes were made in October 2002. Six more field visits (of two-week duration each) were made to the NIRD for the purpose of data collection. These visits were made at frequent intervals so as to establish contacts with a cross-section of scholar-practitioners. At
the NIRD at any point of time approximately one third of the faculty members are out of station on different assignments such as field visits, conducting off-campus training programmes, visits to various state institutes of rural development (SIRDs) and the Ministry of Rural Development. Given the small institutional size of IRMA, and the willingness and co-operation of the scholar-practitioners there, interviews were spread over only three field visits of a week’s duration.

The interviews with the scholar-practitioners revolved around four main themes/issues. In order to set the tone of the discussion, we first concentrated on their academic background. The idea was to see whether their professional training and expertise qualify them in any special way for the type of work that the NIRD/IRMA undertakes. Parenthetically, we tried to establish the linkages (or the lack of it) between the scholar-practitioners’s past research, particularly work leading to their research degrees (that is, before they joined the respective institutes) and their current professional activities in terms of published output, training modules and consultancy work. Lastly, we looked at their professional location within an institute of rural development/management. We tried to elicit from them their orientations towards their work place, and all that the latter stands for. Thus, we did not have any specific interest in their background as such. Rather, our interest was in a cursory gauging of their special training and aptitude for rural development/management and the respective institutes.

Second, we wanted to know the scholar-practitioners’ engagement with the village/rural: How have they tried to resolve, in the course of their professional career, the diverse meanings of the village/rural? Or have they taken it as given? If so, what has been the source of this given-ness? One source of this given-ness could have been the institutional consensus. We wanted to probe this issue by
delving into their orientations towards the institutional consensus on the village/rural.

Third, we wanted to examine the scholar-practitioners' self-assessment of their roles as development professionals: How would they locate themselves as trained social scientists/academics in the development enterprise? Of necessity, this would also bring in the issue of locating institutions like the NIRD and the IRMA in relation to the national-level rural development policies and programmes. In particular, this brings forth the issue of the relationship between the state and the social scientific community: Where does social scientific research figure in policy-making – at the level of planning and formulation, or implementation, or evaluation and monitoring? Or are the researches done at the NIRD and the IRMA just of ornamental value like much of the research carried out in the universities? The idea was to discern the receptivity to the findings of social scientific research on the part of the state.

Lastly, we touched upon the scholar-practitioners' awareness and disposition towards the emerging critiques of development in social scientific literature. Our aim was not to see if they are familiar with recent trends or the frontier areas in their respective disciplines. Rather, we wanted to find out if their social scientific training has enabled them to take a critical stance vis-à-vis the theories and practices of rural development: Have they been able to transcend the diagnostic or evaluative research that their institutions pride on? Or have they been mired in the technicalities of research assignments to such an extent that their training in social science disciplines remains incidental or without much significance?
This chapter also partly draws upon the researcher’s participant observation of the two week-long training programmes conducted at the NIRD. The researcher’s field visits to the NIRD dawned on him the importance of regular training programmes being conducted there. In order to gain first-hand experience of these flagship components of the NIRD’s activities, he attended two training programmes, namely, ‘Human Resource Development in Primary Education’ (7-12 July 2003), and ‘Course on Participatory Rural Development (28 July-2 August 2003).

In the case of IRMA, participation in these programmes was not considered necessary, as the essential identity of the Institute is around its flagship postgraduate programme in rural management (PRM), and not around training programmes. Although the IRMA conducts training programmes for middle-level executives in co-operative and allied rural sectors and the functionaries of the Nongovernmental Organisations (NGOs), its self-image is that of an institute of teaching and research institute than that of training. Obviously, in terms of their self-image, these ‘management development programmes’ (MDP) conducted by the IRMA are not of the same importance as those of the NIRD. Moreover, while there are no participation fees for programmes conducted at the NIRD, one has to pay for participation in the MDP. The relatively higher participation fees also discouraged the researcher from attending the MDP.

Thus, after having discussed the life histories of NIRD and IRMA (in Chapters 7 and 8), we present in the following pages our understanding of the professional world of scholar-practitioners of rural development. Whereas this chapter exclusively deals with the NIRD, in the next one (Chapter 10) we consider the case of IRMA. Also, towards the end of Chapter 10, we present a comparative
study of the NIRD and the IRMA while drawing on our data pertaining to the scholar-practitioners.

The Umbilical Chord: The Ministry and the NIRD

One of our central concerns has been to find out how an institution like the NIRD has been mediating between the state and the village. In the case of NIRD, the state invariably means the Ministry of Rural Development (now called the Ministry of Rural Areas and Employment). In our conversations with the scholar-practitioners, the Ministry as a leitmotif figured quite prominently. No one ever felt the need to qualify the term ‘Ministry’. By virtue of their internalisation of the institutional ethos, they assumed that their interlocutors would know what they meant by the Ministry. Indeed, the Ministry for them was not merely a trope but had a very substantial presence affecting their routine professional engagements.

In terms of the authority structure at the NIRD, the office of the Director General (DG) embodies the powers of the Ministry \textit{qua} the state. As, Dr. Srinivasan,\textsuperscript{4} the senior most faculty member (due to retire next year), says:

\begin{quote}
The Ministry is supreme even though the NIRD is theoretically autonomous. In effective terms, NIRD is largely Ministry-driven. The DG is the undisputed boss: he assigns research tasks to individual faculty members, places newly recruited members in different centres [departments] and asks them to develop expertise in the areas understaffed at the Institute. In real sense, the faculty notwithstanding various committees such as academic planning committees, research committees constituted of senior faculty members do not enjoy much autonomy.
\end{quote}

Effectively speaking, the DG exercises more powers than generally vested in any executive head of a research organisation. The DG’s powers, in great measure, emanate from his being a senior Indian Administrative Service (IAS) officer. This has, wittingly or unwittingly, created a deep resentment against the bureaucratic supremacy among the votaries of academic autonomy at the NIRD. As Dr. George put it bluntly, ‘NIRD is theoretically autonomous even though the
word of mouth of an Under Secretary in the Ministry or a career bureaucrat will have more weightage than the senior most faculty member’.

Many other faculty members expressed similar sentiments. Dr. Ramchandraih, a faculty member having worked at the NIRD for more than 25 years, puts this in perspective:

NIRD has both excellent infrastructure and excellent faculty. The only stumbling block is the all-pervasive red-tapism. The faculty have to undergo a lot of bureaucratic hassles so faculty, in fact, have to do things which should have ideally been done by the administration and the support staff. For example, training programmes drain out their intellectual energy as they have to perform many administrative chores associated with such programmes. This practically means that they get less time for research... NIRD’s autonomy exists only on paper. It does whatever the Ministry asks it to do. And, that is why these two IAS officers are posted here as the DG and DDG. Registrar and the Director of Administration are also very often an IAS officer.

A powerful, though subterranean, current against the disproportionate powers and privileges of the DG runs through the institutional veins of NIRD. The tussle concerning the relative supremacy of the bureaucrats of the Ministry vis-à-vis the academics working at the NIRD is an old issue. It has haunted the Institute ever since its inception (see Chapter 7). According to Dr. Jena, who has seen the NIRD grow for over last three decades:

In the 1970s, the faculty strength was less. The infrastructure was quite poor compared to contemporary standards but the quality of research was appreciably high. The faculty in terms of research enjoyed more autonomy. The Ministry would not interfere much as they did not have many programmes. Autonomy was highly valued and guarded against erosion. Now even the professors behave as if they were bureaucrats. Autonomy has considerably eroded. Criticality and independence of mind are no longer valued and appreciated. They will try to sabotage your career chances if you become fiercely independent like they can say that your training programmes are not effective.

Even now, despite the NIRD having been made an autonomous organisation of the Ministry way back in 1965, the issue refuses to die down. Dr. Madhvi, a newly recruited faculty member, echoes this sentiment when she says:
NIRD is a hierarchical-bureaucratic organisation. Till recently [2002], you had designations like Directors, Deputy Directors and Assistant Directors. Administration represented by the DG, the DDG and the Registrar [all IAS officers] decides who should be doing what research, which centre will be assigned what areas of research, or what policy component. It also assigns individual faculty to respective centres, that too not always on the basis of training or background of the recruits concerned. Whether a particular centre [within the Institute] is understaffed is an important consideration in the placement of the newly recruited faculty members.

The fact that, apart from the DG, two other top-ranking administrative posts – that of the Deputy Director General (DDG) and the Registrar and the Director of Administration - belong to the IAS as well further aggravates the resentment against the bureaucratic control. In a way, in these three IAS officers all the administrative powers are vested. Moreover, they are the ones who have direct interface with the Ministry. Very often, they come to the NIRD on deputation from the Ministry. That is why, they are seen more as members of the rural development bureaucracy than as academic leaders at the Institute. Many faculty members feel that their presence at the Institute has led to the devaluation of social scientific research. According to these scholar-practitioners, the rural development bureaucracy has no respect for social scientists. Dr. Sagar caustically remarked, ‘Bureaucrats are the best policy makers, social scientists and development professionals!’

There was a time, however, when reputed social scientists, such as S. C. Dube, used to head the Institute. One gets the feeling that had the administrators come from the ranks of the academics themselves, the widely prevalent resentment against the steady erosion of institutional autonomy would have been less acute. In fact, many scholar-practitioners regaled the researcher with stories of fierce independence and courage of conviction showed by some of the former faculty members. Dr. Gowda narrated how Prof. Lalit K. Sen would never refrain from locking horns with the then DG even when it cost him an extension at the Institute.
He had to leave the Institute after having completed his term of three years without any further extension as he refused to keep the DG in good humour by surrendering his right to criticise.

Similarly, Dr. Shivaraman delighted in narrating many anecdotes about Professor Sheshadri of the Centre for Panchayati Raj. Like Prof. Sen, Prof. Sheshadri’s quest for academic autonomy made him cut short his career at the NIRD and go to some other university. According to the institutional folklore, he got furious with the then DG when he was asked to sign an indent for the use of institutional vehicle. Dr. Kumar added, ‘some of these professors were intellectual giants. They would find it below their dignity to cosy up to the DG or the DDG. Sadly enough, these days our Directors [professors] themselves behave as mini-versions of the DG’.

Most of the faculty members who have served the Institute for more than two decades were often nostalgic about its ‘golden past’. They were the ones who complained about the gradual loss of academic autonomy. There was another angle to their lament. Some of them are going to retire soon without having been made a Director [professor], whereas some of their contemporaries, are enjoying many privileges and facilities by virtue of their being professors. These elements of professional jealousy should be kept in mind while interpreting some of their statements. It should be noted that only Directors⁵ [professors] have direct interface with institutional administration or the Ministry, as they sit on all the decision-making committees and also frequently get deputed to go to the Ministry as part of routine interaction with different secretaries in the Ministry, or to negotiate and clinch research projects for the NIRD.
This is not to say that all scholar-practitioners resent the presence of IAS officers amidst them. Some of them not only approved of their being there, but also spoke in celebratory terms about how an IAS officer as the head of the Institute was an asset in disguise. Dr. Murthy was candid in this regard: ‘You see our DG is very often a secretary-level IAS officer. That is why, even the rural development secretary listens to his advice. If the DG is convinced of some programmes and projects then it is very unlikely that the Ministry will shoot it down’. They were particularly appreciative of the influence and ‘weight’ that their DG carries in the corridors of power in Delhi. The ‘weight’ of the DG necessarily facilitates speedy negotiation of research projects and consultancy assignments. Most importantly, it ensures the smooth flow of funds to the NIRD from the Ministry. Dr. Bhaskar euphorically remarked:

NIRD provides right kind of research environment and requisite resources. Through the good offices of DG, who is a secretary level IAS officer, you can clinch major research projects not only from the Ministry but also from various other multilateral international organisations like ADB, World Bank, WHO, UNDP etc. Similarly, the DG can influence agencies like NABARD and many other development-related ministries to approach NIRD for consultancy projects or research studies.

Dr. Karunakaran found nothing wrong either in the Ministry’s interference or the DG’s overarching powers. For him, ‘NIRD is the eye of the Ministry. But for the Ministry, NIRD would not have attained the status of the centre for excellence in rural development.’ Interestingly, Dr. Karunakaran’s is not the lone voice. Many of them take special pride in theirs being a Ministry-sponsored Institute. They not only derive benefits from the NIRD’s special proximity with the state, but also prefer designations of Directors, Deputy Directors, and Assistant Directors to Professors, Associate Professors and Assistant Professors. Naturally, they are the ones who would not complain about the loss of academic autonomy.
Some other faculty members, though in a minority, were largely indifferent to the issue of institutional autonomy for the NIRD. They did not think that bureaucratic interference should be made out as an issue at all. Dr. Rao seemed to be the representative voice of this group: ‘After all, NIRD is a government institute...So, unlike NGOs or the universities, it does not have the freedom to say no to the Ministry’. Dr. Malthi dismissed the issue of the loss of academic autonomy by saying that ‘though IAS officers are there, senior faculty members take all the major policy decisions’.

On the basis of their responses concerning the relationship between the Ministry and the NIRD, we can thus classify our scholar-practitioners into three categories: (1) the ones who feel that the autonomy of the NIRD is a sham, notwithstanding its formal autonomous status as an organisation, (2) the ones who see virtue in its not being really autonomous, and (3) the ones who are indifferent to the issue of autonomy. Those belonging to the first category have complaints not only against bureaucrats wielding enormous powers over the Institute, but also against the members of their own rank whom they see as active collaborators with the bureaucratic establishment. In this sense, their criticisms are both outwardly and inwardly directed. Those in the second category candidly admit the benefits of NIRD’s proximity with the rural development bureaucracy. In fact, some of them have made high-profile careers in the field of rural development, thanks to their location in the NIRD. For those in the last category, working at the NIRD is as good as working in any government department. They seem to be particularly happy that the facilities at the NIRD are hundred times better than at conventional government research organisations or universities.
Thus, we find that, although almost all scholar-practitioners come from conventional social science disciplines, having spent considerable time at the universities (both as students/researchers and/or teachers/research workers) before coming to the NIRD, they do not share the same orientations towards the role of the state in the context of social science research. In fact, our scholar-practitioners' institutional role as rural development professionals overshadows their self-image as trained social scientists. When we wanted to know from them their views about the possible meanings of the term 'rural', or how certain assumptions about the 'village' are embodied in rural development policies and programmes, most of them found such questions irrelevant, at times meaningless, to the type of work they were expected to do or were engaged in. Most of them evaded the issue by taking refuge under the distinctive institutional mandate of NIRD. Dr. Chandra, a sociologist by training, said unequivocally:

We do not do much theoretical work like universities. For us, training is the main focus. Very often, we work within the mandate [given to us] of the NIRD. Also, we include in our research agenda the ongoing concerns of the Ministry [of Rural Development]. Infrequently, research ideas reflecting particular researcher's areas of interest are also concretised as research proposals, and supported by the Institute. It is here that one can pursue one's own individual theoretical interests. On the whole, we concentrate more on applied kind of research.

Dr. Prasad, a senior social anthropologist, found such questions outdated. He firmly placed these questions in the domain of village studies, and added, 'the days of village studies are gone... now sociology is yielding to political science which has captured the village in a big way in the name of Panchayati Raj institutions and decentralisation'. Dr. Reddy remarked, 'In Andhra Pradesh revenue villages and the Panchayati Raj villages are almost the same. So, there is no real confusion as to the boundaries of a village. In this sense, what constitutes a
village does not really pose itself as a real issue before those engaged in rural development research'.

The complete normalisation of the village as a substantialised entity in rural development provided the essential thread in most of the responses that we got from our scholar-practitioners. From their responses it was clear that although most policies, plans, and programmes of rural development rely on certain conceptualisations (social scientific or commonsensical) of the village, the village itself is absent from their deliberations. Most of them agreed that an implicit model of the village certainly informs the strategy of rural development, but they were clueless as to how this actually takes place and in what ways notions about the village are instrumental in shaping rural development programmes.

Interestingly, not only explanations of rural development rely heavily on a stereotypical construction of the village, abstracted from the huge corpus of disparate social scientific literature, but also the local-level implementation of rural development programmes revolves around the village. This probably explains why the village as a concept has become so natural a part of the discourses of rural development and village studies. In any case, conceptualisations of the village, or the aspects of its construction as a natural entity for rural development, remained below the threshold of reflexivity for most of our scholar-practitioners.

Most of them had plenty to say on both why the village is the way it is, that is, underdeveloped or undeveloped, and how it can be developed. However, they had not much to share on what is that village which is underdeveloped. Also, most of them looked at rural development as a technocratic solution to the national problem of poverty. Very few of them looked at development as the outcome of strategic political choices. Dr. Vidyabhusan, though an economist by training, was
acutely aware of the political dimensions of rural development. For him, 'politics is central to rural development. Much of the rural development programmes, in fact, can be seen as responses to the political pressures brought about by the bottom rungs of the social ladder'. Dr. Sadasivan added another dimension to rural development. In his opinion, 'lobbies are central to rural development, both national and international lobbies'. Dr. Sankaran amplified this by saying, 'globalisation has changed the meaning of rural development. Rural development has not remained the same over the years. When you talk of the politics of rural development, you cannot afford to ignore the impact of globalisation'.

It is not that all the scholar-practitioners with whom we interacted found these questions outmoded. However, the majority of them did feel that the NIRD is not the right place to pursue such 'arcane' questions. A university department of sociology and/or social anthropology would be the right place to do that. Dr. Subramaniam, an economist, suggested:

It is difficult to read between the lines so far as rural development programmes are concerned. Still, more difficult is to get an idea of the village by working out the assumptions of such programmes... the issue of what constitutes a village is quite complex. For example, in Jhabua District of Madhya Pradesh, there are *Fallas*, and not villages which are separated socially and physically.

Some of them rightly pointed out that the notions of the village have not remained static since the heyday of the village monographs. They have changed over the last five decades, and have been reflected in the changing focus of rural development programmes. According to Dr. Naidu, the notions about the village have been guided by the 'spirit of the age'. There was a time when social anthropological studies trumpeted the unity and communitarian cohesiveness of the village. The post-colonial nation-state tried to give this idea a further push by launching massive community development programmes. Even today certain
stereotyped ideas about the village have been translated into utopian experiments.

Taking the case of Tamil Nadu, Dr. Krishnan argued:

Though social justice villages in Tamil Nadu have been projected as model villages, they have not really succeeded. In contemporary policy environment, social cohesiveness is less important. There has been a shift in the orientation of rural development since the days of the CDP [Community Development Programmes]. These days programmes are more group oriented. Indeed, target-group programmes are the mainstay of rural development planning and policy-making, than the community programmes, the reason being that debt recovery is easier in a target-group programme as compared to community programmes.

Ambiguities surrounding the idea of the village come to the fore in any discussion of rural development. We found that most of our scholar-practitioners (other than those who were sociologists/social anthropologists by training) preferred to talk of rural development than the village as such. But then, we found out there were as many views of rural development as there were scholar-practitioners. Dr. Jacob, while acknowledging that rural development is a nebulous term, attempted to delimit its scope by saying that ‘rural development refers to those programmes which are identified by the Ministry as such. Indeed, rural development is a blanket category and its scope is vast. However, we, at the NIRD, concern with only target-groups oriented programmes, that too mostly diagnostic or evaluation studies’. Dr. Sinha virtually echoed the current official definition of rural development when he said, ‘those programmes which are meant for the rural poor are rural development programmes’.

Ambiguities about the rural development have implications for the type of research work that a faculty member can undertake at the NIRD. Dr. Bhatt, a commerce graduate, was bitter that he could not undertake research on Tarapur textile industries in Tamil Nadu as the Institute, in its wisdom, decided that the said research did not fall within the purview of rural development. However, in another instance, he succeeded to convince the Institute as to how a research project on
Kolhapur footwear industry justifiably qualified as rural development research. He attributed his success on this front to the enormous amount of lobbying with the DG and the Research Planning Committee.

Not only research assignments but also the training programmes have to be justified as falling within the scope of rural development. This has certainly posed problems to some of the faculty members having no real interest in rural development. However, once they joined the Institute they had to justify their professional existence on the basis of their contributions to rural development training and research. Most of such scholar-practitioners, though, internalised the institutional ethos and developed their areas of interest under the broad category of rural development. In many cases, they did not have much option to do that even. The DG decided their areas of interest and placed them to the departments of his choice. For example, Dr. Latika, a newly recruited faculty member having worked on the issue of displacement for her Ph.D. in the area of sociology of development, was attached to the Centre for Human Resources Development and was asked to undertake research in the areas of primary education, health, water and sanitation. Obviously, there is a lack of continuity between her prior research interest/experience and her current assignment. However, she did not complain, as she felt that the Institute has assigned her to an area that is understaffed.

In the same Centre we had Dr. Banerjee, another senior scholar-practitioner, who has successfully evaded the burden of rural development in his professional life. Trained as an anthropologist, his interests were mainly in the area of medical anthropology. After having joined the NIRD, he started adding ‘rural’ as a prefix to his training programmes in the area of health. A certain amount of lobbying with the DG and the senior faculty members ensured that he did not have
to deviate much from his earlier research interests in his career. Similarly, some other faculty members having an interest in the area of sociology of education have been managing to stick to their original research interest by adding 'rural' to their training programmes in the area of education. There are other such cases where particular faculty members have made use of the ambiguities surrounding rural development and have circumvented the institutional mandate to carry on with their areas of interest through lobbying with the DG and convincing him that the particular areas do fall within the ambit of rural development.

By contrast, we met Dr. Dinakaran who saw no conflict between his earlier training/interest in psychology and his current location in a rural development institute. He has successfully organised training programmes on topics such as 'Attitudes and Behaviours of Primary Stakeholders in Rural Development', 'Gender Disparities and Attitudes and Behaviours of the Rural Society towards Girl Child'. There are many scholar-practitioners like Dr. Dinakaran who see not much problem in adjusting to their new research assignments. As Dr. Tirthankar, a sociologist, said it laughingly, 'we can go and work in any kind of development related institute as social component is required everywhere. So, where is the problem?'

A close look at the academic background/research training of the scholar-practitioners reveals that the majority of them did not have prior exposure in the area of rural development. True, after having joined the NIRD, most of them did successfully cultivate an interest in this area. But, this seems more an outcome of their location in an institute of rural development than that of their earlier research and training. However, there are some centres, for example, Centre for the Panchayati Raj (CPR) and Centre for Social Development (CSD), where one could
find a good deal of continuity between scholar-practitioners’ earlier research experience and their professional engagements at the Institute. No wonder, these centres are rated as the best within the NIRD.

We met Dr. Rangachari from the CPR who has done his Ph.D. from Kashi Vidyapeeth, Benares on the topic of emerging leadership in the rural areas. He saw a positive relationship between one’s prior research exposure to the area of rural studies and his/her potential for excellence at the NIRD. Dr. Nachane (of the same Centre) opined, ‘it helps in adjustment if there is some continuity between the faculty’s earlier research interests and the assignments that he gets at the institute’. He told us how most of his colleagues, though political scientists, had done considerable amount of research concerning rural political processes, voting behaviour in rural areas, and the villager’s responses to the Panchayati Raj elections. Not surprisingly, his Centre has made valuable contributions to policy-making in the areas of democratic decentralisation and popular participation in water resources management. However, he placed the issue in a larger perspective:

NIRD has good facilities but it all depends on individual’s interests, drive and motivation. If someone has come here by accident, merely for the sake of a job, then naturally s/he is not going to excel. Some 10-15 percent of the faculty belong to this category. But that is true of any organisation. You go for a job because you have to run the family and not because you are interested in the job.

Dr. Waghmare, his colleague in the Centre, did not agree with him on the issue of importance of earlier research exposure to rural studies. His training in public administration did not allow him to go for any distinctive identity for the rural. He averred, ‘slums are rural Sir, rural means poor’. There were many scholar-practitioners who, like Dr. Waghmare, had categorical personal opinions on what is rural, or what constitutes a village. But when it came to reflexivity on such issues in their routine professional engagements, they would better leave it to
the all-pervasive institutional wisdom of the NIRD. For most of our scholar-practitioners, the burden of defining what is rural development is that of the Ministry, and it gets communicated to them by the DG and the DDG, and the Research Programmes Committee of the Institute.

When it came to the interface between social scientific research and the policy-making concerning rural development, our scholar-practitioners were more than willing to talk. Almost all of them had definite opinion on the types of work that they do at the NIRD, or the types of work that the NIRD is expected to do. Also, they had varied assessment of the value and significance of their work in relation to the enterprise of rural development. For most of them, the NIRD is mainly concerned with training the rural development functionaries to keep them abreast of the changes in the policies and programmes of rural development. In this sense, the self-image of our scholar-practitioners is that of rural development professionals/trainers than social scientists/researchers. Effectively speaking, training programmes for rural development functionaries are the mainstay of NIRD. We soon realised that ‘course participant’ is the most familiar term out there. The in-house publications of the NIRD have even special discount (of twenty percent) for the course participants. Any stranger is taken to be a participant in one of the training programmes that run concurrently at the NIRD at any point of time. On every Monday some training programme gets inaugurated and on every Saturday some get terminated. The entire institutional set-up at the NIRD is geared towards these training programmes.

The researcher’s participation in two such training programmes revealed certain interesting insights. Most of these training programmes have the same standard format whatever be the theme. It should be remembered that organising
such programmes is not a voluntary option for the faculty members. Every faculty member has to organise at least two training programmes in a given financial year. So, faculty members are immensely preoccupied with these programmes. They have to advertise these programmes far and wide in order to ensure minimum number of participants. Under the burden of successful organisation of training programmes, many a time they have to compromise on the quality of course participants. For example, although the NIRD claims that it imparts training only to district level rural development functionaries, this is not always the case as is evident if one scrutinises the list of participants of a given training programme. Dr. Vijaya justified this by saying, ‘of course, secretaries from the Ministry will not come to the NIRD for training. Also, IAS officers at the district level would find it below their dignity to come here. Mostly, state government functionaries working at the district and other subsidiary levels come here for training’. She put the record straight by adding that some IAS officers, at times senior ones, also come to the NIRD to undergo training programmes.

Be that as it may, the NIRD faculty have to see to it that participants give favourable feedback on such programmes, as these feedback forms provide the basis for evaluating the success (or otherwise) of a training programme. Faculty members can be indicted if it is found that the training programmes organised by them are not effective enough. Some scholar-practitioners felt that the burden of organising training programmes leaves them with little time and energy to do other meaningful work like pursuing their individual research interests. Even otherwise, they find their workload at the Institute to be excessive. Dr. Sikligar complained:

We have too much of work load here. Faculty members are mandated to conduct two training programmes, do at least three pieces of research – individual, programme-based, and thrust area based. Earlier, say in the early 1980s, burden was not so much. Only senior faculty members were expected to conduct training
programmes and others were expected to assist them. These days, apart from these training programmes, you have to have at least two published papers. Your annual confidential report depends on all these achievements. Mind it, NIRD faculty members have also to act as link officers to various State Institutes of Rural Development (SIRDs) and conduct off-campus training programmes. To top it all, faculty strength is declining. In fact, it has declined from 100 odd to 60-70 whereas the strength of the support staff [the non-teaching-administrative] has gone up enormously, standing at 450 something.

Such complaints were, however, not widespread. Some scholar-practitioners saw in these programmes a good opportunity to network with like-minded professionals and institutes as they had the liberty to invite resource persons of their choice. In fact, after the Institute shifted to Hyderabad, 90 percent of the guest speakers [called resource persons in the context of training programmes] are from Hyderabad. This testifies the growing interaction between the NIRD and other Hyderabad-based institutions, namely, Osmania University, Acharya N. G. Ranga Agriculture University, Dr. B. R. Ambedkar Open University, National Institute of Agricultural Extension Management, National Academy of Agricultural Research and Management, Swami Ramananda Thirtha Institute of Rural Development, and Andhra Pradesh State Institute of Rural Development. Conversely, it shows the declining influence of Delhi-based experts ever since the Institute shifted out of Mussoorie.

Most scholar-practitioners that we met were favourably disposed towards these training programmes. They offered us a different order of explanation as to the value and significance of these programmes. The essential argument, almost commonly agreed upon, was that training is a good forum where social scientific insights get disseminated to a larger audience by way of lectures, course materials and training modules. In their view, the most significant role that the NIRD plays is at the level of implementation of rural development programmes. It is at this level that the NIRD, through its training programmes, imparts to the rural
development functionaries - high, middle and low – a high degree of exposure to the state of the art in the field of rural development. Moreover, by bringing in realistic grassroots level research inputs to the task of training, it creates a niche for itself as a training institute. Most of such scholar-practitioners also emphasised the essential linkage existing between the training and research at the NIRD. In the words of Dr. Chatterjee:

We, unlike universities, are not armchair researchers. We work at the grassroots level. We frequently go to the field of whatever duration - even for a day. The insights that we bring are different from the ones generated through top-down bureaucracy. In a way, our research inputs to rural development training are crucial, as rural development bureaucracy has no proper mechanisms of getting realist insights from the field. We do that job as their subordinates manipulate the feedback.

Other faculty members shared Dr. Chatterjee’s sentiments. According to them, by bringing to bear its research inputs on the training programmes, the NIRD is serving the cause of rural development. NIRD faculty go directly to the field and bring back new case studies and insights to be used in training programmes. In this sense, as Dr. Choudhary put it, the NIRD can be seen as ‘some sort of pre-fabrication lab for various rural development programmes’.

There were few scholar-practitioners who believed that the NIRD encouraged field-based empirical work not only for the sake of in-house training programmes but also with a view to directly influence rural development policies. The NIRD’s role in the Panchayati Raj legislations [73rd Constitutional Amendment] and its formulation of guidelines pertaining to participatory watershed management were frequently mentioned as instances of successful policy-making. In particular, faculty members of the CPR never got tired of mentioning how their then Director Prof. B. Shiviah was invited for a breakfast
meeting by the late Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi which culminated in the NIRD playing a vital role in drafting the Panchayati Raj legislation.

Dr. Rajaraman felt that, although the NIRD does not have enough to boast so far as its impact on the policy-making at the central level is concerned, many state governments have greatly benefited from the expertise available at the Institute. He further explicated:

State has to be seen at different levels such as centre, state and the panchayati raj. It is not that state at the central level only is engaged in policy-making. State level has its own mechanisms of policy-making. So, an attempt to differentiate different levels of policy-making is crucial for any assessment of the relationship between state and the social sciences. This will also help you better appreciate the role that NIRD has played in the policy-making over the years.

Still, there were many faculty members who felt that not much of the work done here directly influences policy decisions concerning rural development. For Dr. Jaykumar, ‘doing policy-oriented research does not necessarily translate into any direct role in policy-making. Different policy-makers and agencies approach the NIRD for different types of inputs. It is up to them to use these inputs the way they deem fit’. On the other hand, Dr. Chaube was quite clear about the NIRD’s role in policy-making: ‘The Ministry gives policies. Either they ask you for inputs on a particular ongoing programme, or in the broad existing policy area you can come up with research projects that the Ministry will finance’.

Before assessing the role of NIRD in terms of its research contributions to policy-making it is imperative to understand the types of research carried out there. Also, we would do better to know the mechanisms through which research assignments are chosen and then distributed across the faculty. We could aptly quote Dr. Navlakha in this context:

There are mainly two mechanisms to assign the research tasks to particular centres/faculty member. In many cases some joint secretary in the Ministry writes
to the DG, and the DG marks it to the relevant centre/faculty. We can call this 'top down approach' of research assignments. Also, there is 'bottom up approach' where a particular centre or the faculty member proposes certain research proposals along with other academic plans such as the number of training programmes, workshops, seminars etc. Generally, such proposals are invited once in a given financial year. The Institute's academic committee deliberates on them, and if found suitable, accords approval and financial sanction.

Dr. Joshi clarified it further:

Though individual faculty members have the freedom to undertake the research in their respective fields of specialisation they should see to it that their research interests fall within the purview of the mandate of the Institute. In any case, they have to take prior approval or concurrence of the NIRD before undertaking any research assignment.

It was a common observation among the scholar-practitioners that the NIRD provides limited scope for individual research though, in theory, faculty members can come up with their own research themes. Nonetheless, they have positive appreciation of the type of research that they do. Many of them emphatically underlined how the NIRD has pioneered a number of innovative rural development programmes. As Dr. Jain remarked, 'In fact, many rural development programmes have resulted from the research studies of the NIRD faculty. One can mention programmes like Jawahar Rojgar Yojana (JRY), Swarna Jayanti Grameen Rojgar Yojna (SJGRY)'. Many other faculty members stated that the government guidelines for various rural development programmes heavily draw on the NIRD research studies. Similarly, the faculty members belonging to the Centre for Rural Industries and Employment (CRIE) took credit for designing many pilot programmes pertaining to wage labour. They felt that they were the leaders in arguing the case for a shift from the programmes based on assets creation to those based on wage labour in both cash and kind. Dr. Venkaih's was, however, a sober voice when he qualified his colleagues' statements by saying:

Truly speaking, the Ministry does not accept all the recommendations that you might have on the basis of your studies. You have to convince them and argue
your case. And, at times, they accept your recommendations and suggestions in toto. At other times, your reports, recommendations and action points find their way to the dusty cupboards of the Ministry. It does not matter how many times you submit your recommendations to the Ministry.

However, the NIRD faculty members were unequivocal in their belief that the researches conducted by them had been quite useful in identifying the gaps in the existing programmes, as also in designing better programmes in the light of past experiences. According to Dr. Jayanthan, many programmes, for example, the Training of Rural Youth for Self Employment (TRYSEM), have emerged out of such rural development programmes-based research undertaken by the NIRD faculty. According to Dr. Jacob, even a modest assessment of the research studies undertaken by the NIRD faculty convincingly demonstrates how they have identified major loopholes in the design and field-level implementation of rural development programmes. In fact, most of the faculty members had a penchant for narrating how her/his particular research study found out such and such gaps in the implementation of a given programme. They regale in such stories which probably enhance their reputation as field-based experts.

Dr. Vinayakumar narrated his research findings about the construction of washing ghats in the Mysore District of Karnataka. These ghats caused back pain to the washerwomen, as the engineers associated with the construction programme had no idea about the bodily postures that women adopt while washing clothes. The lack of participation of the villagers in the plan for the construction of these ghats gave them no opportunity to learn from the local wisdom. Similarly, Dr. Raju shared his findings as to how in Andhra Pradesh toilets constructed under the state government’s sanitation schemes are used as storage places for grains. Many more scholar-practitioners would narrate innumerable incidents as to how the bluff of the field officer was exposed, or how the beneficiaries were only on the paper, or
how the contractors never paid the minimum wages to the workers, or how veterinary doctors and Regional Rural Banks’ officials indulged in corrupt practices in the name of rural development.

A section of the scholar-practitioners felt that the findings of their research studies are not disseminated widely. They thought only Ministry-sponsored, and that too only programmes-linked, researches have had some impact on policy-making. Other research findings were kept in cold storage. Dr. Goswami amplified this issue:

True, there are enough mechanisms in place for the regular interface between policy-making at the Ministry and the NIRD. Religiously, we submit copies of research highlights [annual publications of the NIRD containing some of the major research findings], recommendations of the seminars, and suggestions emanating out of the workshops held at the Institute. But not always researcher’s findings find their way up... anyway, one has to keep up the belief that your research is going to add to the policy enterprise otherwise you will get disenchanted.

Surprisingly, some of them were quite convinced that, compared to the NIRD, universities had more opportunities to disseminate research findings even when they lacked the type of infrastructure facilities available at the Institute. They appreciably viewed the freedom of expression and the vibrancy of the research output at some of the universities in the country. At the NIRD most of the faculty members have a tendency to publish in the in-house journals. This certainly calls for an explanation in terms of the quality of research and the academic rigour of research publications. Whether in-house journals and other publication facilities facilitate and encourage publication of even substandard research output is a moot question. Very few faculty members wanted to comment on the issue. Dr. Gangaram was forthright in accepting that this type of ‘incestuous’ research publication served no good, either to the scholar-practitioner or to the Institute. Dr. Seth said that the DG was aware that not all the in-house publications were of high
quality. He fondly expressed the hope that something would be done to ensure the quality of NIRD publications at the highest level.

In a way, the closed character of the NIRD research is also linked to the general lack of a culture of critical appreciation among the faculty members. Some of the NIRD faculty were candid on this count. They frequently complained about their colleagues who seemed to have internalised the ethos that being a government organisation they would not be criticising the government. A few of them also felt that the Ministerial presence through the offices of the DG and the DDG constrained them to tone down open criticisms of the government-sponsored rural development programmes. Some of them despaired at the very thought that the Ministry would ever listen to their recommendations. Dr. Khan, while talking of the SJGRY, of which he has conducted evaluation studies in Uttarakhand, had this to say:

Most of the villagers covered under the SJGRY want cash wages and not food grains as they can buy the better quality food grains from the market at roughly the same price. But the guidelines do not allow it. Obviously, the Ministry has other considerations in mind: what will happen to the tonnes of food grains stocked in the FCI godowns if food grains as wages are dispensed with? So the programmes, very often, are guided by what the Ministry thinks is important and appropriate, and not by what the villagers want or the researchers suggest. In this case, no one dare recommend money wages as the Ministry apparently thinks that the nutrition by way of food grains is more important than the cash for the villagers.

Very often the discussion about the NIRD’s research contributions would come back to the commonly agreed upon belief that they were crucially important inputs to the training programmes. Very few of our scholar-practitioners would place this in the larger context of a general lack of a culture of critical appreciation. For those who could feel this constraint, the explanation laid in the all-powerful, though theoretically distant and invisible, control by the Ministry. As Dr. Motwani remarked, ‘independent thinking has declined even though the infrastructure
facilities have improved. No doubt, the NIRD has progressed a lot as an institute but to what extent it has achieved its own mission of contributing to rural development remains highly debatable’. Dr. Motwani’s scepticism finds its counterpart in Dr. Bansal’s bland assertion that ‘NIRD is an excellent institution’. He further adds, ‘all faculty members have Ph.D., and all of them are doing good work. Naturally, their work is influencing the policy-making exercises’. Dr. Madhilika’s is perhaps the most realistic assessment:

Critical approach towards development is completely lacking, as NIRD is a government institute. Whatever comes from the Ministry is taken as given. No questioning towards the general wisdom of the Ministry is encouraged. Of course, you will have number of studies pointing gaps in the existing corpus of rural development programmes. Also, there will be equal number of studies suggesting alternative [rural development] programmes. At the very least, these studies contain ways and means of plugging loopholes in the existing programmes. After all, the ministry has to allocate a certain proportion of its budget to ‘independent’ research and evaluation studies of rural development policies and programmes. No doubt, NIRD faculty are the major beneficiaries as most of these studies get assigned to them.

The lack of a culture of internal debate and discussion notwithstanding, the NIRD has been a great source of distribution of academic patronage right through its initial years by way of the award of research projects and junior and senior research fellowships. Very often, such patronage has been grossly misused and the beneficiaries have come from many places including universities and research institutes. They were not necessarily confined to the NIRD. It was an enviable case of an overflow of funds with few in-house takers, as the Institute itself was under-staffed. Now such distribution is rather almost intra-institutional in nature, as the growing strength of the faculty has generated more reliance on the in-house expertise.

Over the years the NIRD has witnessed tremendous expansion both in terms of physical infrastructure and human power. Gone are the days when it was
referred to as ‘an old Tehsildar’s office’. Beginning with 1980s, the international collaboration with other like-minded development institutes has substantially grown. There has been an increase in the number of faculty going abroad for short/long term courses. Likewise, foreign rural development experts have also visited the Institute. It is not unusual to find many faculty members who have had stints of fellowship at the Institute of Development Studies, Sussex and/or at the Cornell University’s International Development Department. These visits were made possible in the name of capabilities development programmes for the NIRD faculty. The outcome of this programme in terms of rigour of research or other contributions is yet to be assessed.

One thing is, however, certain: the NIRD has successfully consolidated itself as a national-level rural development Institute based in Hyderabad. Initially all the General Council and Executive Committee meetings used to be held in Delhi. Later, some of them would take place in Delhi and others in Hyderabad. Beginning with 1990s, almost all such meetings have been held in Hyderabad. This could probably be seen as an empirical indicator of the Institute’s consolidation in Hyderabad. The visit of the Union Minister of Rural Development to the Institute is a regular annual feature. Prime Ministers like the late Shri Rajiv Gandhi and Shri P. V. Narasimha Rao have lent added glamour to the Institute through their high-profile visits. Faculty members delight in sharing anecdotes about the late Rajiv Gandhi when he had come to the NIRD to address the august gathering of the District Magistrates from all over India on responsive governance. Likewise, they have stories of Prime Minister Rao when he had gone there to inaugurate the National Council of Rural Institutes.
After our initial round of interviews with the scholar-practitioners associated with the various centres of the NIRD, we gained the impression that its functionaries were a group of good people with good intentions but with limited knowledge of what bureaucrats in the Ministry were doing. At times, we came across contradictory definitions of the objectives and contents of their tasks. Also, we found out contradictory ways in which various faculty members expounded the institutional problems, or viewed the institutional mandate. Not surprisingly, some departments, sections or units did more work compared to others. This was, in fact, reflected in the self-image of such centres as CPR, CHRD, and CSD. However, few people really bothered about the meanings of the village/rural. A recurring explanation elicited during the fieldwork was that the rural was what the Ministry decided.

One does not fail to notice that the institutional logic at the NIRD was permeated by the desire to resolve rural development issues through the imposition of efficient institutional and technological support systems. What strikes one is the fact that most of the scholar-practitioners showed equally less botheration about the politics of rural development forget the semantics surrounding the idea of the village. For example, they fail to see that rural development need not always result in successful implementation of particular programmes. It could very well lead to the integration of the villagers into the national political system through a network of patron-client relationships, and possibly rural development policies might have been geared towards such incorporationist strategy. In this sense, the failure of rural development programmes could very well be because of the success of the strategy of political incorporation. Dr. Batra, a political scientist by training, captured the essence of this criticism when he said:
Sadly, my colleagues at the NIRD fail to understand that an independent and competent administration in the context of rural development is not simply a product of institution-building [establishment of institutes like the NIRD], or improved training expected of NIRD, but of politics. The neglect of power and politics at the NIRD results in an almost exclusive focus on commercialisation and technology as the main sources of rural change and portrays rural development as a unilinear process leading to a determinate outcome.

But then our scholar-practitioners would throw their hands in despair saying that they had no control over the politics of rural development, meaning that such issues did not fall under the purview of what they understood by rural development. And what they understood by rural development was almost a \textit{fait accompli} for them given their location in an Institute that has abstained from severing its umbilical chord from the Ministry.

By contrast, the IRMA has emerged, and subsequently developed, outside the direct regulatory framework of state. Moreover, its general outlook has been markedly different as compared to the NIRD. It has charted out its institutional trajectory in the field of rural development through the medium of rural management. Indeed, the theory and practice of rural management has been the defining marker of IRMA as an institute. In the next chapter we shall examine the set of issues presented in the beginning of this chapter with particular reference to the IRMA.

Notes

1 It is to be noted that the researcher had sent an advance request to the head of the NIRD for permission to visit the Institute and interact with the faculty members there. Despite several reminders (both by post and the electronic medium) he did not hear anything. By contrast, the IRMA Director was prompt in welcoming the researcher to his Institute and arranged for the logistic support.

2 For example, in the training calendar for the year 2003-2004, the NIRD lists 176 training programmes while the IRMA has merely 36 scheduled ‘management development programmes’ (MDPs) for the year under reference. Even when one
factors in the relative strength of the two institutes, the difference is noteworthy. In the case of NIRD, very rarely a training programme gets cancelled or postponed, while the IRMA, of late, has been witnessing frequent cancellation of these programmes taking their effective number further down. Though, Prof. Tushaar Shah, a former Director of IRMA, claims that the IRMA has successfully marketed six-week MDPs to the NGOs for Rs. 35,000 per participant for over a decade (Shah 2000: 32).

3 In general, short duration MDPs are of five-day duration and are charged at the rate of Rs. 2000 per day per participant. This is in addition to the non-refundable registration fee of Rs. 500. According to the insiders, the fee structure is a great deterrence so far as the participation of the staff of the NGOs working in rural areas are concerned. Most of such NGOs are financially too fragile to afford this type of fees for their staff.

4 In order to protect the privacy of the respondents, all the names used in this chapter, and in Chapter 10, are pseudonyms. Any resemblance to the real persons will be merely incidental.

5 As mentioned in Chapter 7, till recently, the faculty members of the Institute were designated as Directors, Deputy Directors and Assistant Directors, which would correspond to the de facto positions of Professors, Associate Professors and Assistant Professors. Now, faculty members are formally placed in the designated hierarchy of Professors, Associate Professors and Assistant Professors. However, they are free to use designations from the earlier formal hierarchy.