



Jamsetji Tata National Virtual Academy for Rural Prosperity (NVA)

Jamsetji Tata Training School for Leadership in Rural Knowledge Connectivity (JTS)



M.S. Swaminathan Research Foundation

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Design and Printing by: **AMM Prints**, Chennai.

The beginning

The M S Swaminathan Research Foundation (MSSRF) was established in 1989 to impart a pro-nature, pro-poor, pro-women and pro-sustainable livelihood paradigm of technology development and dissemination. The bottom line of its research, education and outreach programmes is social inclusion in access to relevant technologies. In order to get guidance in converting this concept into action plans at the field level, MSSRF began in 1990 the practice of organizing an annual Inter-disciplinary dialogue under the generic title, “New Technologies : Reaching the Unreached”.

The 1992 interdisciplinary Dialogue was on “Information Technology: Reaching the Unreached”. The dialogue was organized with the generous support of IDRC, ISRO, ITTO, UNDP and CAPART. The dialogue revealed that the future of food security in the developing world, especially South Asia, may depend less on resource intensive agriculture and more on knowledge intensity. The concept of Village Knowledge Centre was thus born in the dialogue held in 1992. The proceedings of this Dialogue were published by MacMillan and Co Ltd (Swaminathan, MS(Ed)., Macmillan India Ltd, 262 Pp, 1993)

The participants suggested that, the generic



content received from Universities, National Informatics Centre (NIC), Remote Sensing Agencies and other sources need to be made locale-specific, if they are to be value to rural families. With the help of experts, these contents should be converted into local languages in an understandable manner, based on the needs of the rural community. This locale-specific and demand-driven content can in the first instance be developed at a block level knowledge center. Village Knowledge Center can then receive this locale-specific demand-driven knowledge from a block level knowledge center. After that, such locale-specific knowledge can be disseminated to rural community through the tools of modern ICT. Both dynamic (eg, weather, market etc) and generic information relevant to the day to day life of rural families are provided at the right time and place.



During 1993-1996, MSSRF conducted studies on the role of information in the lives of rural families in about 25 villages in the Union Territory of Pondicherry and Tamil Nadu. One of the studies was on estimating the reach and impact of electronic media in the rural areas. This study revealed that the reach of electronic media especially television, was reasonably high despite the prevalence of poverty in the

villages surveyed. Another study revealed that farmers gather most of the information they need from the local shopkeeper, the market place, and the input supplier. Considerable amount of information transaction takes place among the rural poor households and this indeed acts as a primary mode of information dissemination.

Based on the outcome of these surveys, MSSRF developed the concept of a Community Managed Knowledge System for Sustainable Food Security. The operational plan for translating knowledge into action involved spelling out different components of the knowledge system for food security at individual level (availability, access and absorption), different eco-farming systems (soil health care, water harvesting and management, crop and pest management, energy management, post harvest management, marketing, crop and animal components of farming systems and information, skill, organization, management and marketing empowerment) and different databases (eco-jobs, household entitlement database, self-employment, women and

children). Thus began the Village Knowledge Centre movement.

Village Knowledge Centre (VKC) or Gyan Chaupals:

The Village Knowledge Centre programme was started in January 1998 in the Union Territory of Pondicherry in Southern India with the generous support of IDRC and CIDA. In order to ensure access to all, the VKCs are located in public buildings (Panchayat, SHGs building, Community Hall, School, Farmers and Fishermen Associations, Women Self-Help Groups, Community Based Organization, etc.). The information content is developed in close interaction with the local people in a bottom-up manner.

The main aim of the programme is to empower the largely unskilled, resource-poor rural farming and fishing families to make better choices and achieve better control of their own development through building skills and capacities for enhancing their livelihood opportunities. The knowledge centres facilitate two-way communication or knowledge





transfer from the experts to the grassroots and from the grassroots to the experts.

On a visit to these Centres in the year 2000, Prof. Bruce Alberts, former President of the National Academy of Sciences, USA, has expressed the view that these centres are a wonderful model of a “bottom up approach that can link experts and the rural communities in a meaningful partnership”.

This project was awarded the Motorola Dispatch Solution Gold Award (1999) and Stockholm Challenge Award (2001). Many journals have covered this project. Scientific American selected this project (2004) for special mention when it chose Prof M S Swaminathan as one among 50 scientific leaders of the world who are making a difference.

Jamsetji Tata National Virtual Academy for Rural Prosperity (NVA)

The field experience during 1998-2003 showed that rural women and men are not only hard working, but are very innovative with the capacity to absorb, adapt and adopt new technologies. Many of them showed a great aptitude for mastering ICT for their own knowledge and skill empowerment. A Consultation was therefore organized on 8 May 2003 at MSSRF, to discuss methods of giving

recognition to such rural ICT entrepreneurs. At this consultation, aspects such as role of data generators and providers (Universities, Research Stations, ISRO, IMD, NGOs, Financial Institutions, IGNOU, IMD, AIR, Doordarshan, Corporate Sector, Policy Makers, etc.), role of data managers (managing both content and connectivity) and the dissemination of locale specific demand driven content to the rural community were discussed. It was decided to launch a National Virtual Academy (NVA) bearing the name of one India’s greatest visionaries, Jamsetji Tata.

NVA was designed to provide an information system that connects **lab-to-lab** (organizing a consortium of scientific institutions and data providers), **lab-to-land** (symbiotic linkages between the providers of information and the users, so that the information disseminated is relevant to the life and work of the rural families), **land-to-lab** (there is considerable traditional knowledge and wisdom among rural and tribal families concerning the sustainable management of natural resources, particularly water and biodiversity; therefore, technical experts should not only learn from traditional knowledge and experience, but also take steps to conserve for posterity, the dying wisdom and the dying crops), and **land-to-land** (there is much scope for lateral learning among rural families; such learning has high credibility because the knowledge coming from fellow farm women or men would have been subjected to an impact analysis from the point of view of their economic and social relevance to the population).

On 23 August 2003, the Jamsetji Tata National Virtual Academy for Rural Prosperity (NVA) was officially launched with the generous support of Sir Dorabji Tata Trust and Tata Education

Trust by the then Prime Minister of Sri Lanka Mr Ranil Wickramasinghe. Since then all ICT-enabled development activities of MSSRF are carried out under the umbrella of NVA.

NVA endeavours to bring together experts and grassroots level communities in a two-way communication with the objective that relevant knowledge should reach every home and hut at the right time. The State Level Hub located at MSSRF is a key knowledge coordinating source that creates and maintains web sites and databases for the local hubs in close collaboration with national and international agencies. The local hubs serve as the primary data providing centres tied up with research institutions, field stations and government extension departments. They facilitate the analysis and prediction of climatic conditions in small or micro regions. The state level hub links with block level or equivalent hubs (VRCs) in the state. The latter hubs (VKCs) serve a cluster of villages. Last mile and last person connectivity will be through the integrated application of the internet and cell phone or community radio.

All the VRCs are connected through Indian Space Research Organization's (ISRO) uplink and downlink satellite facility under the ISRO's Village Resource Centre programme (ISRO-VRC). The satellite ISRO-VRCs, aim



at digital connectivity to remote villages for providing multiple services such as telemedicine, tele-education, interactive farm and fisheries advisories, government schemes and entitlements, weather services and remote sensing applications through a single window. Users located at one node of this network can fully interact with others located at another node through video and audio links. Each node can be further expanded and disseminated using different technologies such as notice boards, pamphlets, public address system, community newspaper, press releases, cable TV, audio / video conferencing through wireless, telephone, meetings, mobile phone and intranet web site.

Process

Before setting up VRCs and VKCs, NVA holds extensive discussions with policy makers, research institutions, academics, panchayat leaders, community based organizations, different associations such as farmer, fishermen, coconut, vegetable grower, etc. NVA has been working with several local partners such as constitutional panchayat, traditional panchayat, SHGs, NGOs, Farmer and Fishermen associations, temple trust, milk societies, youth association, parish council, etc. to set up VKCs. NVA is also making use of different Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) techniques such as focus group meetings with different sections of the community, social mapping (age, caste, education, health, land holding, occupation, different types of houses, infrastructure facilities like electricity, water facilities, ration card, assets, television, radio, landholdings, boats, nets, etc.), resource mapping (different types of income generating trees, irrigation resources, agriculture and fisheries related resources, other livelihood options, etc.), ven

diagram (what are the different organizations working in the village and how they help the community), seasonal diagram (employment opportunities, prevailing diseases, wind flow and direction, rain, occupation, etc.), problem matrix (marketing facilities, water availability, etc.), random house hold surveys, etc. This is usually carried out through social workers or students. NVA also collects the village profiles, details of major livestock population, crops, month wise fish catch, prevailing diseases, etc. Through such need assessment, NVA develops locale-specific demand-driven content, organizes training and awareness programmes and makes linkages with several experts' institutions / organizations for transforming the content into action. NVA has been selecting knowledge workers with the help of local partners for maintaining the VKCs. NVA has been continuously providing training to knowledge workers on aspects such as concept of VKC, methodology of collection and dissemination of need-based content, managing users and visitors, how to maintain the user register, bill books and other records pertaining to VKC, how to build rapport with users and community members, gender concerns, basic hardware and software training, etc. NVA is also maintaining the user register which contains the name of the user, age, education, occupation, what kind of services they get expect from VRC/ VKC, frequently asked questions, etc. Such information helps NVA to continuously fine tune its programmes to the needs of the rural families.

Content Generation and Dissemination

Creation and updating of relevant content to suit local needs is a key factor in the



programme. The information provided should be time-and locale-specific, demand-driven and relevant to the day-to-day life and work of rural women and men.

NVA is using both traditional and modern technologies such as notice boards, vernacular community newspaper, press releases, cable TV, video, audio, public address system, video conferencing (VSAT and WiFi), telephone, mobile jeep and intranet web site. Its philosophy is to integrate traditional wisdom with contemporary knowledge.

NVA is also developing and providing demand driven and locale specific content related to agriculture, animal husbandry, fisheries, government entitlements / announcements, micro-enterprises, employment news, etc. NVA has been conducting awareness and capacity building training programmes for converting knowledge into action.

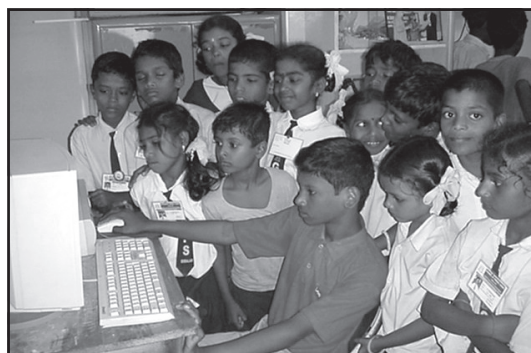
With the help of the Azim Premji Foundation, NVA conducted Computer Aided Learning Programmes for Children. Microsoft is helping NVA through its Microsoft Unlimited Potential Programme for rural women, men and youth. Intel is helping NVA to conduct the Intel Learning Programme for rural children. Apart from these, NVA is working with a number of partners regarding content generation, dissemination and capacity building. The aim of NVA is to assist rural families to derive

benefit from all on-going ICT for development programmes like the extensive and imaginative Common Service Centre (CSC) programme of the Department of information Technology of the Government of India.

Concept of NVA Fellows

Rural women and men are rich in traditional knowledge and wisdom derived from experience of working with nature and natural resources. Their strength lies in the saying; “One ounce of practice is worth tons of theory”. If rural transformation is to take place, the contributions of the grassroots academicians are essential since they know the problems of rural communities and also the potential solutions. Whether semi-literate or literate, rural families are able to master new technologies, provided the pedagogic methodology is learning by doing. This method of leapfrogging in acquisition of new skills was termed as “techniracy” in 1972 by Prof M S Swaminathan. Experience has shown that they take to new technologies like fish to water provided they are helped to do so through appropriate training and capacity building opportunities. What the rural families, particularly women, need is social prestige and recognition. This will help to build their self-esteem.

It will be important to identify and elect suitable rural women and men who have shown leadership qualities as Fellows of NVA, so that they become role models in their respective villages. Selection of Fellows is done on the basis of their innate abilities and their proven social commitment. The most important criterion is the commitment of the individual to the progress of his / her village. Uniform standards are maintained and election to the Fellowship is not on the basis of patronage.



Also, the principle of social inclusion is adopted in the selection process. The Fellows are so chosen that they become torch-bearers of the rural knowledge revolution and agents of change, bringing about a paradigm shift from low wage unskilled work to value-added skilled work. Poverty will persist as long as the human resource is undervalued and material resources are over-valued. The aim of NVA is to provide the economic of human dignity and enable “blossoms in the dust” to flower and bear fruit.

Election of NVA Fellows:

The Jamsetji Tata National Virtual Academy for Rural Prosperity has developed the following guidelines for election of rural women and men as Fellows of the Academy.

- o Nomination for NVA Fellowship is open to residents of villages (not semi-urban areas), in any part of the country.
- o Nominees should be grassroots workers possessing leadership qualities with social consciousness and commitment to serve the community.
- o Fellowship is awarded not only on the basis of previous achievements, but with the expectation of continued involvement and participation in the NVA programme for a minimum of three years.

- o Fellows must be willing to spend a few hours daily in training/ information dissemination work and be available when required to travel for workshops, training courses, etc.
- o Prior ICT competency is desirable
- o Fellows have to be proposed by a nominating organization. Self – proposals will not qualify for nomination.
- o Proposer’s assessment is essential and he / she should outline the nominee’s special abilities and potential, and justify her/his candidature.
- o Details of the work of her/his organization, or of the proposing organization are not essential.

The selection of NVA Fellows is being done on the basis of a Peer Review Process by a team headed by Smt Tara Gandhi. Also, the principle of social and geographic inclusion is adopted in the selection process.

Based on this concept, 369 Fellows have so far been elected from 20 States (Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Chhattisgarh, Delhi, Gujarat, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Orissa, Pondicherry, Punjab, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh, Uttaranchal and West Bengal). NVA has organized until now three convocations, with the President of India, Dr A P J Abdul Kalam as the Chief Guest in the first 2 convocations.

NVA has selected 89 Fellows [M: 49, F: 40] from 8 States [Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Jarkhand, Rajasthan, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu and Uttar Pradesh] during this year. On 17th February 2007 NVA will organize the 4th Convocation of Jamsetji Tata National Virtual



Academy for Rural Prosperity (NVA) Fellows at the Tamil Nadu Agricultural University, Coimbatore as part of the 8th Agricultural Science Congress of the National Academy of Agricultural Sciences. After this Convocation the total number of Fellows elected so far will go upto 458.

Mission 2007 Alliance partners, academic and scientific institutions, Government agencies, private sector companies as well as NGOs working in the field of sustainable development are participating in a nation-wide search for such grass-root academicians. A special effort is being made to establish contact with people living and working in farmers’ distress hotspots, drought or flood-prone areas and geographically remote regions.

So far NVA has brought out three publications containing brief bio-data of NVA Fellows. The profiles of the NVA Fellows outlined in these publications, reveal a wide range of competencies and expertise. Yet, however diverse their interests may be – agriculture, education, micro-finance, environment, health, or any other field, the common link among them is the special spirit of service that each Fellow possesses, and the quality of their leadership to bring about rural transformation.

Participatory Knowledge Management Workshops

NVA has conducted three national participatory knowledge management workshops for Fellows. These are:

- o 10-12 July 2005, 1st National Participatory Knowledge Management Workshop, National Academy of Agricultural Sciences, New Delhi
- o 3-5 January 2006, 2nd National Participatory Knowledge Management Workshop, MANAGE, Hyderabad
- o 21-23 August 2006, 3rd National Participatory Knowledge Management Workshop, National Academy of Agricultural Sciences, New Delhi

NVA has also conducted six regional participatory knowledge management workshops for Fellows as follows.

- o 14-15, March 2006, Tamil Nadu and Pondicherry Fellows, Pillayakuppam VRC, Pondicherry
- o 30 April 2006, Maharashtra Fellows, Rashtrabasha hall, Nagpur
- o 14-15 June 2006, Tamil Nadu Fellows, KVK Guest House, Gandhigram Rural Institute, Gandhigram
- o 5-6 October 2006, Rajasthan Fellows, Vidya Bhawan, Krishi Vigyan Kendra, Badgaon, Udaipur
- o 10-11 October 2006, Gujarat Fellows, Gujarath Vidhyapith, Ahmedabad
- o 12-13 October 2006, Gujarat Fellows, Gujarath Vidhyapith, Ahmedabad

These Participatory Knowledge Management

Workshops play a vital role in enhancing their self-esteem and motivation, since they highlight their current competencies and indigenous knowledge. These workshops also provide exogenous knowledge that the Fellows did not possess earlier, say for instance on subject matters like more income per drop of water, genetic literacy (GMOs), *codex alimentarius* standards of food safety, disaster management and WTO issues. These aim to bring out the felt needs of the community as a whole for creating content and functional literacy for rural knowledge connectivity.

On 1-2 September 2006, Jamsetji Tata National Virtual Academy for Rural Prosperity (NVA) organized a training programme for developing locale-specific content using a virtual platform at Pillyarkuppam VRC, Pondicherry. The main aim of the training was to develop locale-specific content using the expertise of NVA Fellows and share the content among themselves using virtual platform. Aspects such as existing skills of NVA Fellows and their interest in content development, concept of virtual platform, difference between knowledge and information, introducing Wikipedia, "A-Tutor Learning Management System to Content Development", management of virtual platform, interview techniques, method of local content and its presentation techniques and audio content development were included.

Jamsetji Tata Training School for Leadership in Rural Knowledge Connectivity (JTS)

“A candle which is not lit cannot light others; A teacher who is also not learning cannot teach others”

- Rabindranath Tagore, Gitanjali

All those who wish to be teachers and leaders in life need opportunities for life-long learning and professional growth. JTS will help NVA Fellows to develop further in their creative and leadership qualities. JTS will also serve as a source for the recruitment of staff for NVA and for other ICT organizations in the country working in rural areas. It will imbibe some of the features of the Trombay Training School established by Dr Homi Bhabha for human resource development for the Department of Atomic Energy.

Gram Swaraj leading to Poorna Swaraj, as envisaged by Gandhiji, will come only from such grassroots leaders. A recent evaluation of VKCs by the Tata Institute of Social Sciences on behalf of the Tata Tsunami Relief and Rehabilitation Project has concluded as follows:

“The VKCs and VRCs are path-breaking ideas to democratize access to knowledge and

deepen people centered development. Having demonstrated the value of this idea, the MSSRF is playing a pivotal role in implementing VRC and VKCs in different contexts. The MSSRF should find ways to strengthen community process in order to realize the full potential offered by the VKCs and VRCs. It could motivate the Schools for Social Work in the districts to attach themselves with the VKCs to strengthen community processes”.

If technology is to serve this purpose, access to it must be based on the principle of social inclusion. The *Antyodaya* or unto the last principle of Mahatma Gandhi is the pathway for inclusive economic growth. Technologically it is now possible to reach the unreached and voice the voiceless through internet-cell phone / FM Radio synergy.

NVA aims to provide a platform for according recognition to grassroots workers who have shown a spirit of innovation and social commitment to doing public good. The experience of NVA has shown that there is immense capability in rural India and the ability to absorb and adapt ICTs to deal with rural needs. Such capable and committed rural women and men will remain as blossoms in the dust if we do not provide opportunities for them to flower and bear fruit. Providing such opportunities is the basic aim of JTS.

The NVA has developed a toolkit for helping NGOs and others interested in setting up Village Knowledge Centres. Capacity building of local women and men in operating computers and managing VKCs is vital for its success. Village women and men should operate the VKCs in order to create a sense of ownership among them, and to ensure sustainability. Master trainers will also undertake the care and management of the centre.





Addressing the First Convocation of the Jamsetji Tata National Virtual Academy for Rural Prosperity at New Delhi on 11 July 2005, H E The President of India, Dr A P J Abdul Kalam made the following observations about the Fellows of NVA. “I have seen the composition of NVA Fellows 2005. It is indeed a **celebration of our rural core competence**. My greetings to the organizers, who have thought of such innovative schemes to recognize and train the people who are wedded to Rural development and empowering them to promote rural transformation in certain areas. Particularly, the choice of fellows such as Mr. Anwarji of Balipara, Assam with the core competence of education, suitable for local people in areas such as literacy, sanitation and use of ICT. Ms. Pushpa Ben of Village Sokhada, Gujarat with the core competence on water conservation and vegetable vending; Ms. Vijyantha Raut of Nimgoan Bhogi, Maharashtra, with the core competence of social work particularly in micro credit movement, Mr. Narsingh Singh from Charanwala Bajju village of Rajasthan with the core competence of Computer education in rural areas; Mr. V. Deenadhayalan from Umbalchery village, Tamil Nadu, with the core competence of indigenous livestock keeping and also practicing animal healing using herbal plants. This clearly indicates the spectrum of experience of the fellows selected”. JTS will

provide opportunities to such Fellows for life long professional growth.

NVA has become the capacity building arm of the National Alliance for Mission 2007. A Fellow of the NVA was invited to address the World Summit on Information Society (WSIS) held in Geneva in 2003. Two more Fellows were invited to take part in the WSIS, Tunis, 16-19 November 2005.

Each Fellow has his/her own area of strength that can be harnessed for rural development. Considering this pragmatic fact, it is crucial to decode their existing inherent or acquired skills and strengthen them through capacity building activities to become change agents of knowledge revolution.

Activities of the JTS

The following activities will be carried out through Jamsetji Tata Training School for Leadership in Rural Knowledge Connectivity.

- o Organizing need based capacity building programmes
- o Organizing **virtual thematic work shops** between scientists and NVA Fellows
- o Developing open distance learning modules for rural community
- o **Filling gaps in the competence of the Fellows to assume leadership roles**
- o **Addressing grassroots issues** to the relevant government / other agencies or organizations
- o **Equipping Fellows to manage the Village Knowledge Centers**, catering to the needs of the community
- o Training on **computer applications** including assessing virtual forums,

entrepreneur skill (including proposal writing, estimation of profit and loss, sustainability, market linkages, license, etc.), **SHG accounts software, communication skills, groundwater conservation, livestock and fodder management, SRI method of paddy cultivation, seed treatment, tree plantation, herbal garden, drip irrigation, medicinal plants, techniques of promoting small-scale industries such as fish pickle, mushroom, tailoring,** etc.

- o Organizing **web site** for NVA Fellows to share their expertise through virtual platform
- o Transforming NVA Fellows into **Rural Science Managers** and ICT Entrepreneurs

Different communication techniques and strategies including group discussions, flash cards, posters, field demonstrations, role plays, video documentary films, social games etc. will be used. Video conferencing will also be used wherever possible for organizing competency analysis and follow-ups and for assisting NVA Fellows across the nation to share their experience with each other.

The specific competencies of the NVA Fellows need to be identified in order to cluster the available human resource on various aspects. **Region wise interactive** meetings are planned for documenting the core competencies of NVA Fellows. The Fellows will be given a chance to demonstrate their skills as trainers during this workshop, especially where “hands-on” or “field-level” training is required. The second part of this workshop would reiterate the factual issues. Fellows will also be sensitized to the major programmes being initiated during the Eleventh Five Year Plan.



Life-Long Education

The following monitoring mechanisms will be adopted for Fellows’ life long capacity building.

- o **Periodical interaction** with NVA Fellows through Video Conference wherever possible
- o **Strengthening linkages with the partners/ stakeholders** for monitoring and evaluating the performance of NVA Fellows
- o Bringing out **quality monitoring case studies** about the changes that have taken place
- o Undertaking **impact assessment study** involving partners / stakeholders

Team India for a New India:

The National Commission on Farmers has proposed that every village in the country should have a **Gyan Chaupal** or Village Knowledge Centre to bridge the growing know-how do-how gap.

The Government of India has accepted the recommendation of the National Commission of Farmers that knowledge connectivity should become an integral part of the Bharat Nirman (i.e, New Deal for Rural India) programme. The Bharat Nirman document (November 2005)

contains the following commitment.

“The Government is committed to expanding rural connectivity through a slew of measures, so that rural users can access information of value and transact business. This will include connecting block headquarters with fiber optic network, using wireless technology to achieve last mile connectivity and operating information kiosks through a partnership of Citizens, Panchayats, Civil Society Organizations, the Private Sector and Government”.

The Department of Information Technology of GoI has initiated a programme for establishing 100,000 Common Service Centres to cater to the needs of Rural India.

The stage is thus set for ushering in a knowledge revolution in rural India. The Green Revolution helped to improve the production of wheat, rice and other crops, and the Knowledge Revolution can lead to the enhancement of human productivity and creativity in every area of human endeavor.

While equipment like computers and innovations like the Internet are important for facilitating the rural knowledge revolution, only rural women and men can help to shape



the direction and relevance of this revolution. This is where the Jamsetji Tata National Virtual Academy for Rural Prosperity is playing such a critical role. NVA is the largest capacity building and human resource development organization in the areas of ICT for villages in the country. Its Fellows are grassroots workers in villages who have mastered modern ICT procedures and are devoting their time and talent to training rural women, men and children in the use of the new tools of knowledge and skill empowerment.

The ultimate goal is to enlist one woman and one man from every village as Fellows – they will be master trainers, training others in the village. They will also be in charge of the care and management of the VKC in the respective villages. **By 2010, the Jamsetji Tata NVA will be the largest professional academy in the digital world.** The Fellows are drawn from all parts of the country and belong to different organizations. Thus, the Jamsetji Tata NVA has become a truly national integrating force in the present Knowledge Era.

The JTS will be formerly launched on 17th February 2007 during the 8th Agricultural Science Congress.

Partners

NVA is working with a number of partners regarding the resources, content, connectivity and capacity building. The partners include

- AME Foundation, Bangalore
- Aquaculture Foundation of India, Chennai
- Aravind Eye Hospital, Puducherry
- Arya Vaidya Sala, Kottakal
- Athan Kottasan Muthamizh Kazhagam, Nagercoil
- Azim Premji Foundation, Bangalore

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- BASF India Limited, Chennai
 - Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), Canada
 - Central Food Technological Research Institute (CFTRI), Mysore
 - Central Institute of Brackishwater Aquaculture (CIBA), Chennai
 - Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute (CMFRI), Mandapam
 - Central Research Institute for Dryland Agriculture (CRIDA), Hyderabad
 - Central Tuber Crops Research Institute (CTCRI), Thiruvananthapuram
 - Centre for Development of Advanced Computing (C-DAC), Bangalore
 - Development Research Network (D.NET), Bangladesh
 - Export-Import Bank of India, Chennai
 - Family Health Development Research Service Foundation, Virudhunagar
 - Fishery Survey of India, Chennai
 - Ford Program-Global Education Initiative [GEI Project], US
 - Foundation for Infrastructure reconstruction
 - Foundation for Infrastructure Reconstruction and Employment, Coimbatore
 - Friends of MSSRF, Australia and Tokyo
 - Gandhigram Rural Institute (GRI), Dindigul
 - Global Knowledge Partnership, Malaysia
 - Goodwill, Dindigul
 - Grama Seva Sangam, Kilikkudi
 - Gramiya Education Development Trust, Dindigul
 - Gujarat Vidyapeeth, Ahmedabad
 - Hewlett-Packard India Sales Pvt. Ltd., Bangalore
 - Hope Foundation, Nagapattinam
 - India Meteorological Department, Pune
 - Indian Institute of Technology - Bombay and Madras
 - Indian National Centre for Ocean Information Services (INCOIS), Hyderabad
 - Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO), Bangalore
 - Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU)
 - Information and Communication Technology Agency of Sri Lanka (ICTA), Sri Lanka
 - Intel, Bangalore
 - International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT), Hyderabad
 - International Development Research (IDRC), Canada
 - Larsen & Toubro Limited, Chennai
 - Livestock Development Group, University of Reading, UK
 - Livestock Research Station, Kattupakkam
 - Maharashtra Foundation India
 - Marine Products Exports Development Authority (MPEDA)
 - Meivizhi Murugamalai Ananthar Trust, Pudukottai
 - Microsoft Corporation India Pvt. Ltd., New Delhi
 - Multi Commodity Exchange of India Ltd. (MCX), Mumbai
 - NASSCOM Foundation, New Delhi
 - National Bureau of Soil Survey & Land Use Planning, Nagpur
 - National Centre for Medium Range Weather Forecasting (NCMRWF), New Delhi
 - National informatics Centre, New Delhi
 - National Pulses Research Centre, Vamban

- National Remote Sensing Agency, Bangalore
- National Research Centre for Banana, Tiruchirapalli
- Nesakarangal, Rameswaram
- Peoples Action for Development (PAD), Vembar
- Practical Action, Sri Lanka
- Qualcomm India Pvt. Ltd., New Delhi
- Rajiv Gandhi College of Veterinary and Animal Science, Puducherry
- Regional Remote Sensing Service Centre, Bangalore and Nagpur
- Rights Trust, Vamban Nall Road, Pudukottai
- Rotary Club of Coimbatore Metropolis
- Royal Agricultural College, UK
- Sankara Natheralaya, Chennai
- Sarvodaya, Sri Lanka
- Save the Eastern Ghats Organization, Thiruvanamalai
- Single Teacher School
- Sir Dorabji Tata Trust, Mumbai
- Society for Participatory Research and Integrated Training (SPRIT), Manamelkudi
- Soil and Water Management Research Institute (SWMRI), Kattuthottam
- Space Application Centre, Ahmedabad
- State Bank of India
- State Bank of Mysore, Chennai
- Sustainable Agriculture and Environment Voluntary Action (SEVA), Madurai
- Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), New Delhi
- Tami Nadu Open University, Chennai
- Tamil Nadu Agricultural University, Coimbatore
- Tamil Nadu Veterinary & Animal Sciences University, Chennai
- Tamil Nadu Veterinary University - Regional Resource Centre, Machuvadi
- Tata Consultancy Services Limited, Mumbai
- Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS), Mumbai
- Tata Relief Committee
- Tata Teleservices Ltd., New Delhi
- Telecentre.org, Canada
- Tuberculosis Research Centre, Chennai
- Tulsi Trust, Coimbatore
- United Nations Centre for Regional Development (UNCRD), Japan
- University of California, Berkeley
- Uttan Trust, Ahmedabad
- Vidhya Bhawan Krishi Vigyan Kendra (KVK), Udaipur

The JTS will have formal linkages with the Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU), so that they can have opportunities for further academic advancement.

The Jamsetji Tata National Virtual Academy consisting of Fellows drawn from rural areas from all over the country is truly a “**Team India for a New India**”, an India where rural and urban areas prosper together and where there is social inclusion in access to digital technologies based on Mahatma Gandhi’s *antyodaya* approach.