

Genesis

Gandhigram had its genesis on 7th October, 1947 and it has indeed made remarkable progress in the areas of rural community development under the dynamic leadership of its founders. Drawing huge inspirations from Mahatma Gandhi, the disciples of Gandhiji namely the founders worked out commitment for the betterment of the rural people and this commitment has made Gandhigram what it is today.

The Gandhigram Rural Institute of Higher Education was started in 1956 to bring higher education closer to the villagers and it is located in a large area of over 200 acres. The significant educational experiment, broadly confirming to the recommendations of the Radhakrishnan Commission relating to rural universities and rural colleges, was inaugurated by Dr.R.Rajendra Prasad the then President of India in August 1956. The first academic block of Gandhigram Rural Institute was opened by the former Prime Minister of India Jawaharlal Nehru in December, 1957. The Institute is fully funded by Government of India (Ministry of Education earlier and now Human Resource Development) since its inception.

- Dr.G.Ramachandran and Dr.T.S.Soundaram Ramachandran are the founders of Gandhigram Rural Institute (GRI). They were the true disciples of Mahatma Gandhi and involved in freedom movement. Their marriage was solemnized in Sabarmathi Ashram by Gandhiji in the year 1940.
- Under the advice of Gandhiji, the couple chose the place near Chinnalapatti village, Dindigul district (45 km from Madurai) for establishing the institution for education, health and sanitation, village industries, etc.
- The Father of our Nation Mahatma Gandhi inaugurated Gandhigram village on 7th October 1947 with a strong message "*Success Attends where Truth Reigns*". Since then, Gandhigram has been a hub of community development.
- Gandhigram village received national attention for an important reason. On February 2, 1946 local people had a *dharshan* of Gandhiji while he was traveling from Madurai to Palani by train. He spoke to the eagerly waiting people for a few minutes.
- The Institute is situated in a serene campus environment of about 207 acres of lands, and most of these lands were donated by the villagers voluntarily with the hope that their children will get education and employment.
- In the year 1956, fourteen rural institutes were established by the Ministry of Education, Government of India and GRI was among them. The Central Government was providing funds to the institute from the year 1956. While most of the rural institutes were closed due to various reasons, the Gandhigram Rural Institute **still remains functioning with full spirit**.
- Out of 14 rural institutes created in India, GRI alone is surviving now because of the constant support of Central Government. This has enabled the Institute to grow fast and achieve creditable results. The Institute has been the headquarters for extension and rural development activities and credited with certain best practices.
- The most important educational experiment of Gandhigram is the system of '*Nai Talim*' as envisaged by Gandhiji because providing basic education to the rural people is a basic requirement for rural development.
- The Institute strongly believes the words of Mahatma Gandhi – "The end of all education should be service and if a student gets an opportunity of rendering service while he is

studying, he should consider it as a rare opportunity and treat it not only rarely as a suspension of his education but rather its complement”.

- The Institute grown with leaps and bounds and it was conferred the status of Deemed to be University in 1976 by the Ministry of Social Welfare and Education (now MHRD). The Institute was registered under Societies Registration Act of 1860.
- Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, Smt. Indira Gandhi, Shri C.Subramaniam, Shri K.Kamarajar, Presidents of India, number of freedom fighters, national leaders and international figures including Khan Afar Khan, Martin Luther King Jr., Morarji Desai visited the university at different points of time.
- The Chancellor and Vice-Chancellors are appointed by Government of India. Vice-Presidents of India was the Chancellors of the University till 2012. The Government appointed Ms.Renana Jhabvala, Chairperson of SEWA Bharat (Self Employed Women’s Association) as Chancellor in March 2012 for a term of 5 years.
- The present incumbent Vice-Chancellor, Dr.S.Natarajan, formerly working as Director (Soil and Crop Management Studies), Tamil Nadu Agricultural University joined in the university on 23.05.2014 after the approval of Appointments Committee of Cabinet (ACC) headed by the Hon’ble Prime Minister of India.
- The Institute is graded ‘A’ by NAAC. The MHRD also placed the Institute under A-Category University on the basis of the recommendation of Tandon Committee.