

# Micro-finance Leadership summit at GRU concludes

Gandhigram, Jan 10: A two-day Micro-finance Leadership Summit jointly organised by Gandhigram Rural University, University of Iowa and Mahasemam Trust concluded, here, recently.

Inaugurating the summit, Dr C K Gariyali, Principal Secretary to Tamil Nadu Governor, had said that micro-credit could lift people out of poverty, for which credit should come in an inexpensive way and at reduced interest rate. Capacity building of women in terms of skill training, pricing and marketing strategies should be undertaken, she said, and urged the bankers to do away with hassles in micro-finance accounting and the associated workload. She added that women SHGs are committed workers and 75 per cent of loan amount has been used for productive purposes and not for consumption values.

Vice-Chancellor T Karunakaran, presided over the summit. R Rajagopalan of University of Iowa delivering the keynote address, exhorted SHG members to dream of micro-finance and to involve in reimagining of micro-finance in the context of livelihood, job security and futuristic trends.

NSethuram, founder-president, Mahasemam Trust, in his special address said that micro-finance is a powerful tool to eradicate poverty. "It is a viable and reproducible financial activity targeted to assist two million families," he added.

Case studies of micro-finance models in Tamil Nadu were deliberated during the panel discussions. The emerging models of micro-finance promoted by Indian Bank Credit Plus Model, Cooperative Model of LEAD (an NGO from Tiruchy), Mahasemam models of SHGs to company transition, micro-finance interventions and empowerment demonstrated by GRU, SHG Federation model of Gandhigram Trust, SHGs in tsunami areas and Sangamam Federation were part of the discussions.

In another technical session, the success factors like adapting best practices, innovations and achieving sales were deliberated. The futuristic scenario of clients approach in micro-finance like peoples' mobility towards urban area, unemployment problems, use of technology to reach remote areas and credit bureau were also presented. •ENS