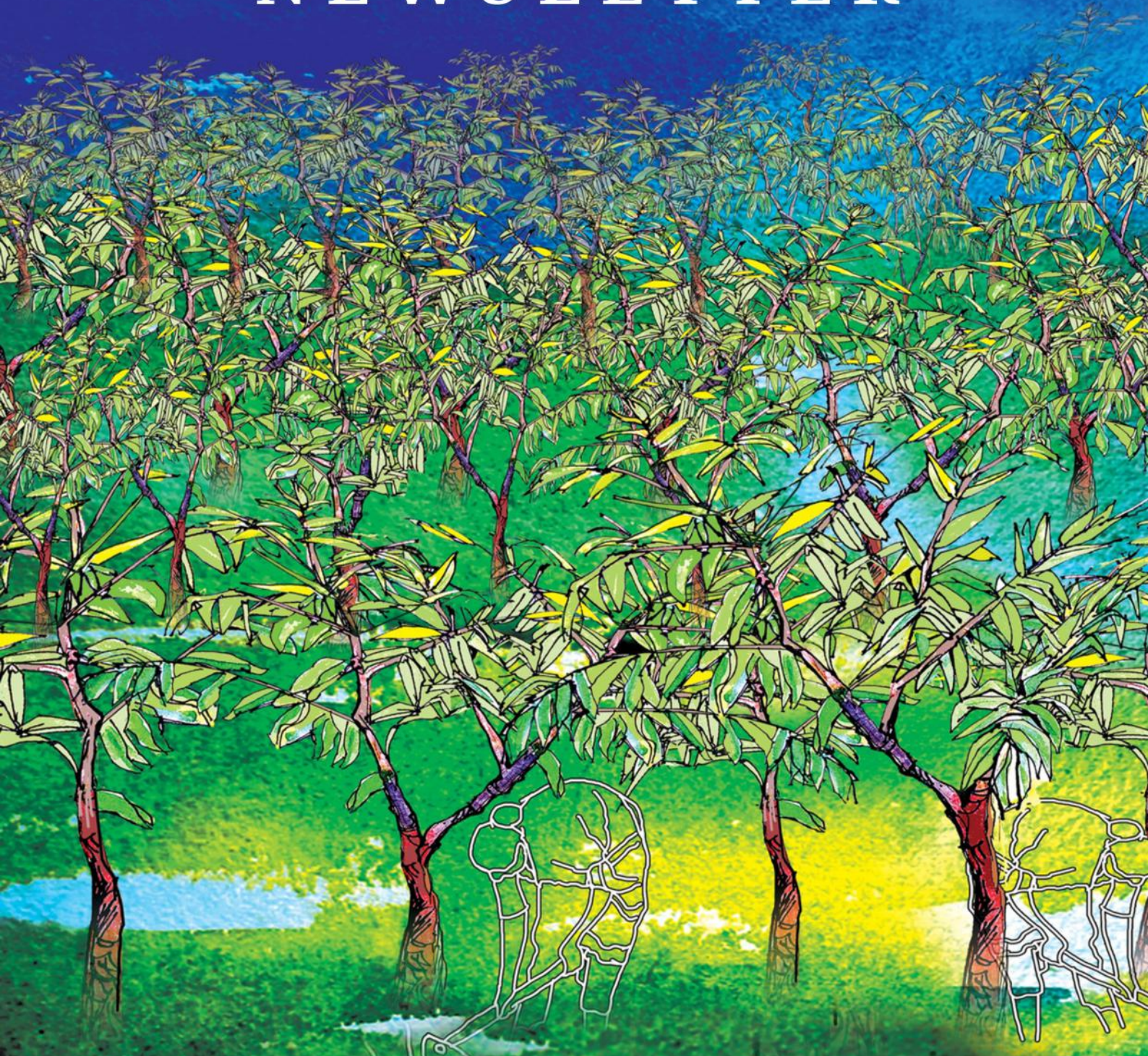


PRAGATI NEWSLETTER



**Pathways to Environmental Regeneration:
Focus on Proximate Causes**

In this Issue.....

COVER STORY: Pathways to Environmental Regeneration: Focus on Proximate Causes

-4

1. Safeguarding Forests, Strengthening Accountability: NIRDPR Reviews CAMPA Activities in Arunachal Pradesh (2014-2019) -11
2. MoRD, NIRDPR and CIRDAP Collaborative International Training Programme on Innovations in Rural Development: Policies to Practices -14
3. Orientation Programme on Audit Procedures and Compliance Conducted by CIARD - 16
4. CIARD-NIRDPR Conducts Off-Campus Training on Accounting Procedures for DAY-NRLM Functionaries -17
5. **Gender Keleidoscope**- Building Healthier Generations: Gender-Responsive Reforms in Anganwadi Services -19
6. NIRDPR Hosts Training-cum-Exposure Visit for Bihar Mukhiyas -22
7. CIARD Conducts ToT on Risk-Based Internal Audit in DAY-NRLM -23
8. Empowering Rural Women through Handmade Paper Micro-enterprise Training at NIRDPR -25
9. Strengthening Grassroots Entrepreneurship Through ToT on Enterprise Financing - 26
10. Training of Trainers Programme on Village Prosperity Resilience Plan -27
11. Training on One Stop Facility Centre (OSF) for AP-SERP Staff -28
12. Capacity Building on Millets and Soya-Based Technologies -29
13. ToT on Gender Resource Centres Strengthens Grassroots Gender Inclusion -30
14. Empowering Rural Communities through Financial Literacy and Digital Inclusion -31
15. NIRDPR Celebrates International Yoga Day 2025 -32

16	Signature Events Mark International Yoga Day 2025	-34
17.	Leadership Skills Training Empowers SRLM Professionals	-36
18.	Training of Trainers on Financial Literacy and Digital Finance	-37
19	Empowering Communities through FNHW: Strengthening DAY-NRLM's Holistic Development Agenda Sustainable Building Technologies for MSMEs: Building the Future, Sustainably	-38
19.	Training Programme on Rural Development: Issues, Challenges, Interventions and Impacts for Officer Trainees of Indian Economic Service	-40
20.	Student's Corner- Sustainable Building Technologies for MSMEs: Building the Future, Sustainably	-45



Pathways to Environmental Regeneration: Focus on Proximate Causes

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I read an interesting story of transformation in The Better India.com. The story goes like this. In the misty hills of Darjeeling, the villagers of Naya Basti once struggled under piles of rubbish. Today, those same slopes are lush and clean, thanks to a young local named Utsow Pradhan who helped spark a transformation. Rolling up their sleeves, Utsow and his neighbours mixed age-old wisdom like composting with modern permaculture techniques, turning waste into new life and hope. Children now lead morning clean-up drives, and elders share tips on living simply; nothing is “waste” anymore because everything is reused or composted. As one resident proudly said, these are “stories of people, not just policies” – proof that grassroots action can rewrite a village’s destiny.

This story from rural India carries a powerful message: while the ultimate causes of environmental degradation, such as global warming and climate change, dominate the headlines, the real levers for change often lie much closer to home. It’s the proximate causes – our everyday behaviours, local waste, nearby trees, the plastic we use and discard – that we as citizens can directly control. In a country of 1.4 billion, each small town and village that takes ownership of its environment adds up to a massive impact. True transformation happens when ordinary people take responsibility for the proximate factors under their noses, rather than waiting for top-down policies alone. And across India, a quiet revolution shows this happening in real time.

Ultimate vs. Proximate Causes

Environmental scientists often distinguish between the ultimate and proximate causes of problems. Ultimate causes are the big, deep-rooted drivers – think of industrialisation, fossil fuel dependency, or global carbon emissions. Proximate causes are the immediate, local factors, like how we dispose of waste, how many trees remain in a village, or whether people burn plastic in their backyard. One analysis noted that ultimate “deeper” causes are often resistant to quick change, so tackling proximate factors can be the most expedient way to prevent further environmental damage. We may not single-handedly stop the polar ice caps from melting, but we can stop the trash from piling up in our neighbourhood or the trees from being felled on our village common.

India’s own history of grassroots environmentalism underscores this point. In the 1970s, the famous Chipko movement saw village women in the Himalayas literally hug trees to prevent loggers from cutting them down. Their non-violent protest to save local forests eventually forced policy changes and became a symbol of people’s power over their immediate environment. The lesson from Chipko and movements since is that when citizens stand up for nature in their backyard, they can influence even the ultimate outcomes. The fight against something as vast as climate change can start with protecting one grove of trees, one stream, one heap of waste at a time.

Today, climate change and biodiversity loss are urgent global issues – the “ultimate” crises. But local actions by “Pro-Planet People,” as India’s Lifestyle for Environment (LiFE) initiative calls them, are a crucial part of the solution. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has urged each individual to adopt sustainable habits. Government policies and international treaties set important goals, yet it is

grassroots initiative and behaviour change that translate those goals into reality on the ground. The following stories from across India illustrate how local communities, often with youth at the forefront, are addressing proximate causes like waste, deforestation, and plastic pollution – and in doing so, they are chipping away at the larger environmental crisis one step at a time.

Waste Warriors: Turning Trash into Treasure

One of the most visible proximate causes of environmental degradation is unmanaged waste. India generates over 62 million tonnes of garbage each year, and too often it ends up polluting fields, rivers, and even the air when burned. But in quiet corners of the country, villages are proving that “true sustainability starts at home”. They are tackling waste with creative, community-driven solutions – treating “trash” not as something to throw away, but as a resource to transform.

In Rajasthan, the village of Chhota Narena was once literally buried in heaps of plastic and smouldering waste. Within just eight months, the villagers completely turned the page, becoming the state’s first fully waste-free community. How did they do it? Not through any top-down mandate, but through collective action. With guidance from the Barefoot College NGO (and a small donor fund), residents raised their own funds and started sorting waste in every home. Organic leftovers were composted, recyclables cleaned and sold, and only irredeemable waste sent to landfill sites. Nearly half the households joined in creating compost pits and keeping their surroundings clean. The impact went beyond aesthetics: indoor air pollution dropped (no more burning trash in the kitchen), animals stopped choking on plastic litter, and even social barriers began to erode as the whole village united for a common cause.

Hundreds of kilometres away in Maharashtra, Patoda village offers

another inspiring model. Every single home in Patoda now segregates its waste. Kitchen scraps become rich compost that fertilises the fields, while plastic and dry waste are collected and sold, adding to the village's income. Even wastewater isn't wasted – it's filtered through treatment ponds and reused to irrigate farms. The village installed water meters in each household to curb wasteful use, and lined the lanes with solar-powered streetlights. Patoda shows that with a bit of organisation and a shared purpose, “zero waste isn't just a dream – it's a way of life” for the community. Their innovations have brought tangible benefits: cleaner water, better soil, extra earnings, and pride in a greener lifestyle.

In fact, examples of such “waste to well-being” revolutions abound. Even small towns like Melathiruppanthuruthi (near Tanjavoor) in Tamil Nadu have become models of waste management, where residents sort waste at source, use electric vehicles for collection, and have completely ditched plastic bags in favor of biodegradable alternatives. And notably, the city of Ambikapur in Chhattisgarh (not a megacity but a district capital) turned its 15-acre garbage dump into a public park – after the entire city adopted a community-led, door-to-door zero-waste system. These success stories, from remote hamlets to mid-sized towns, send a clear message: when citizens organise themselves – with compost pits instead of open dumps, pride instead of plastic – they can solve the garbage crisis in a way no amount of government sweepers or trucks alone ever could.

It's worth noting that government programs are most effective when they catalyse such local initiative. The Swachh Bharat (Clean India) Mission, for example, built millions of toilets and launched mass cleanliness drives. But observers found that lasting sanitation improvements happened only in communities that embraced the mission as their own, not just a

government project. “Communities must have a central role if sanitation efforts are to be effective and sustained,” an assessment concluded – direct involvement of local residents yielded results that were both effective and long-lasting beyond the initial campaign. In other words, no matter how well-intentioned a policy, it ultimately comes down to people using those village toilets, people maintaining the local waste-collection system, and people holding each other accountable. Engaged citizens can fill the gaps that government alone cannot.

Planting Seeds of Change

If waste is one side of the proximate-cause coin, deforestation and loss of green cover are another. Trees are our first line of defence against soil erosion, against climate change (they absorb carbon), and against biodiversity loss. Yet planting and protecting trees is profoundly local: it happens one sapling, one community at a time.

Consider Meenangadi, a village in the Wayanad district of Kerala. A few years ago, Meenangadi launched an ambitious campaign to become India's first carbon-neutral village by 2025. The idea wasn't to wait for some high-tech solution from outside, but to leverage what villagers already had – land and the capacity to nurture trees. In a novel “tree banking” scheme, the village council gives local farmers free saplings and even pays them a small stipend to plant and protect those trees. Eighty-four-year-old P.K. Madhavan, for instance, received hundreds of mahogany saplings which he planted on his once-degraded farm, and he's paid ₹50 per tree for every year he does not cut them down. “Sooner or later, my land will become a small forest filled with infinite greenery,” Madhavan says happily, as he watches the young trees thrive.

By giving farmers an immediate incentive to grow a future forest (instead of the usual decades-long wait to profit from timber), Meenangadi managed to get 350,000 trees planted in

a short time. The community-driven approach serves the planet and the people: it aims to neutralise the village's carbon footprint while also providing fruit, fodder, and income to locals in the long run. Inspired by Meenangadi's success, other areas in Kerala are now following suit with their own tree-planting net-zero programs. It's a shining example of linking the global fight against climate change with grassroots action—villagers literally rooting the abstract concept of carbon neutrality in their own soil.

Communities have found their own creative ways to marry local culture with tree conservation. In parts of Rajasthan, for instance, some villages celebrate the birth of every girl by planting 111 trees in her honour. This beautiful tradition not only fights the stigma some associate with girl children, but also means each family effectively grows a small forest as their daughter grows up. Over the years, these “birthday forests” have significantly enhanced green cover while instilling a sense of personal connection to the trees. It's a grassroots initiative that ties social values to environmental action, yielding benefits for both society and nature.

From the Bishnoi community of Rajasthan, who have protected trees and wildlife as a religious ethic for centuries, to modern youth-led afforestation drives, India's rural heartland teems with examples showing that tree planting and conservation flourish best under community ownership. Large government reforestation schemes have their place, but villagers often point out that saplings planted by contractors don't survive without local buy-in. As seen in Meenangadi and elsewhere, when locals themselves decide to grow trees (and gain from them), survival rates skyrocket. And these efforts contribute to global goals: every tree planted sequesters carbon, contributes to rainfall, and improves soil health in a way that cumulatively fights climate change and

land degradation. The power of proximate action in this case is literal green in the ground – a direct antidote to the ultimate threat of a warming planet.

Breaking Free from Plastic: Community vs. the Plastic Peril

Few environmental scourges feel as overwhelming as plastic pollution. It's estimated that India generates around 5.5 million tonnes of single-use plastic waste annually, littering our waterways, harming cattle and marine life, and even entering our food chain. In 2022, the central government took the bold step of banning many common single-use plastic items – bags, cutlery, straws, and more. Yet nearly two years on, such items remain widely in use, especially in markets and small shops. Analysts say the ban's impact has been blunted by weak enforcement on the ground and a lack of affordable alternatives for everyday consumers. It's a classic example of a well-intentioned ultimate solution (a nationwide law) that struggled with implementation at the local level. Plastic is still so entrenched in daily life that rules alone can't undo the habit, but people can. If a massive segment of the population tends to support single-use plastics, then governmental efforts go down the drain.

High in the Himalayan state of Sikkim, the village of Lachung decided not to wait for the rest of the country. Lachung's residents noticed their pristine valley, a haven for tourists, was accumulating plastic waste brought in by visitors and locals alike. So the village, led by its council and elders, collectively banned single-use plastics in their territory. “We have waged a war against single-use plastic,” declares Thupden Lachungpa, a community leader, describing how banning plastic bottles and bags was not just a rule but an absolute necessity to protect their fragile ecosystem. In Lachung, anyone caught bringing in disposable plastic faces a fine, and confiscated plastic items are not simply tossed out but creatively reused in the village (for

example, repurposing plastic bottles rather than abandoning them). The community has embraced bamboo and metal alternatives – tourists now drink from bamboo flasks, shop with woven baskets, and use traditional mortar-and-pestle instead of plastic kitchenware. By the villagers' own account, going plastic-free was challenging at first, but it has quickly become a matter of pride. Lachung's holistic approach is setting an example for the region: they hope to eventually ban all plastics from their valley, proving that if a small mountain community can do it, so can the rest of the world.

The contrast between Lachung's success and the patchy enforcement of the national plastic ban underscores a key point: grassroots action is the game-changer. Where citizens themselves internalise an environmental norm – be it shunning plastics, segregating waste, or saving water – compliance becomes driven by social consensus and pride, not just fear of fines. Other Indian states have attempted similar moves (Sikkim and Himachal Pradesh, for instance, were early to ban plastic bags statewide), but enforcement truly sticks when the local community is on board. It is encouraging to see that in many villages and towns, especially those recognised as India's "cleanest," people now treat plastic litter as socially unacceptable. Schools run plastic-awareness rallies, women's self-help groups teach households to make cloth bags, and youth volunteers jog while picking up trash, turning cleanup into a sporty challenge. All these small efforts gradually shift mindsets toward seeing single-use plastic as an avoidable nuisance. While policymakers debate large-scale solutions like biodegradable plastics or recycling technologies, everyday citizens are already wielding the simplest weapon: refusing, reducing, and reusing plastic in their daily lives.

The threads running through these stories – whether it's waste, trees, or plastic – all tie back to one idea: the real change begins when people move from awareness to action. Academics and researchers can provide data, and the government can provide infrastructure or laws, but it's the community and individual level where attitudes and habits actually change. And nowhere is this shift more evident than among India's youth and local leaders who are bringing fresh energy to long-standing problems. Showing that local collective action can indeed have far-reaching effects. In essence, one village's change can ignite a hundred others.

The Power Is in Our Hands

The fight against environmental degradation will not be won in boardrooms or international conferences alone. It will be won in our farms, our neighbourhoods, our villages – wherever ordinary people decide they will no longer tolerate dirty water, denuded land, or plastic-choked drains. The stories from rural India all carry the same refrain: the environment is everyone's business. When citizens take ownership, the results can be astonishing – cleaner towns, restored forests, healthier children, and livelihoods that flourish in harmony with nature. Grassroots action is not a sideshow to the "big" work of climate policy – it is the front line. And it is a front line where each of us has the ability to stand up and make a difference. As these communities have shown, the seemingly insurmountable challenges of climate change and pollution become manageable, winnable battles when broken down into proximate causes we can tackle here and now.

If we address those proximate causes head-on – if we change our behaviours and rally our neighbours – the ultimate causes begin to recede. Cleaner local air and water mean a healthier planet overall. Thousands of villages choosing

to grow trees could collectively absorb millions of tons of carbon. Cutting single-use plastics from daily life can significantly reduce the pollution load on land and sea. And importantly, these are victories we can achieve within our lifetime, not in some distant future. We don't have to wait for 2050 or 2100 to see improvement; we can create it year by year, village by village.

A Climate Checklist

The most-asked question about the climate crisis is what to do, where to start, and how to make a difference.

A Climate Checklist can guide our action. The guidelines are yes or no questions. Every action either moves toward a desired outcome or heads away from it. Like Mahatma's Talisman, we know of, this should clarify when we are in doubt about whether something is causing / not causing damage to the environment.

1. Does the action create more life or reduce it?
2. Does it heal the future or steal the future?
3. Does it enhance human well-being or diminish it?
4. Does it prevent disease or profit from it?
5. Does it create livelihoods or eliminate them?
6. Does it restore land or degrade it?
7. Does it increase global warming or decrease it?
8. Does it serve human needs or manufacture human wants
9. Does it reduce poverty or expand it?
10. Does it promote fundamental human rights or deny them?
11. Does it provide workers with dignity or demean them?
12. In short, is the activity extractive or regenerative?

By employing the guidelines, you pivot and begin action by action, bit by bit, step by step to create regeneration in

one's life. What am I eating? Why? How am I feeling? What is happening to my community/locality? What am I wearing? What am I buying? What am I making, etc.

The call now is to move from awareness to action. Here are a few clear action points that individuals and communities, especially youths and local leaders, can adopt starting today to be part of reversing degeneration and move toward regeneration:

- **Manage Waste Responsibly:** Segregate your trash into wet (organic) and dry recyclables. Compost kitchen and farm waste to create natural fertiliser and set up local collection drives for recyclables. Encourage your community to aim for a "zero landfill" goal where almost nothing is thrown away, because it's being reused or recycled.
- **Ditch Single-Use Plastics:** Carry cloth bags, steel or bamboo water bottles, and say no to disposable plastics. Organise community clean-ups to remove existing plastic litter. Work with local shops to shift to alternatives (cloth or jute packaging, leaf plates, etc.), and consider community bylaws to discourage or ban single-use plastic items. Small changes, like using a refillable flask or wooden cutlery, add up to a big difference.
- **Plant and Protect Trees:** Make it a community mission to plant trees – on birthdays, festivals, or village common lands. More importantly, ensure those saplings survive by watering them and guarding them (consider initiatives like watering schedules or "adopt a tree" for each family). Grow native species that support local biodiversity. If space is limited, start a community nursery to raise saplings for distribution. One tree at a time, you can create a green shield for your village.

- Conserve Water and Soil:** Environmental degradation often comes from neglecting natural resources. Build simple rainwater harvesting structures (earthen check dams, roadside soak-pits, recharge wells) to capture rainfall and replenish groundwater. Practice water-efficient agriculture (like drip irrigation or mulching) to reduce stress on local water sources. Prevent soil erosion by planting on slopes and avoiding overgrazing. Healthy soil and ample water will make your community resilient and productive.
- Lead by Example and Education:** Nothing inspires others more than seeing someone from their own community model the change. Youth can form eco-clubs in schools to promote recycling and tree-planting. Teachers and researchers can simplify scientific facts about climate and pollution into local languages and contexts, so everyone understands why these actions matter. Conduct awareness drives – a street play, a folk song, a village meeting – to discuss environmental problems and solutions in a relatable way. When people understand the “why,” they are more eager to join the “how.”
- Collaborate and Support Each Other:** Join hands with local panchayats (village councils) and NGOs to access resources or funds for your initiatives. Encourage the formation of self-help groups focused on eco-friendly income activities (like making compost, handicrafts from waste). Share

your community’s success stories with nearby villages – friendly competition and pride can spur others to act. Remember, environmental stewardship is not a one-person job; it thrives on community spirit.

Each of these action points is within reach of ordinary citizens – they don’t require vast money or PhDs or government positions. They require will, creativity, and cooperation. The sweeping changes we need will come from many such humble efforts blooming across the nation. As the examples in this article show, India’s villages and towns are not waiting passively for someone else to rescue them; they are already lighting the path. It is time for all of us – academics, researchers, youth, farmers, teachers, workers alike – to join in and amplify this momentum. The fight against environmental degradation is not only necessary; it is also winnable, and indeed being won in small pockets every day. By focusing on the proximate causes we can tackle directly, we chip away at the ultimate challenges that seem so daunting. The message is one of empowerment and optimism: a greener, cleaner future is in our own hands, and together we can achieve it – one cleaned street, one planted tree, one changed habit at a time.

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Safeguarding Forests, Strengthening Accountability: NIRDPR Reviews CAMPA Activities in Arunachal Pradesh (2014–2019)

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Project Lead inspects the compound wall construction at Arunachal Pradesh Forest Training Institute, Roing

Introduction

The Compensatory Afforestation Fund Management and Planning Authority (CAMPA) was established at the national, state, and union territory levels following a 2008 Supreme Court directive. The CAMPA Act seeks to mitigate the ecological impact of diverting forest land for non-forestry purposes by ensuring timely, effective, and transparent fund utilisation.

Under this framework, the Government of Arunachal Pradesh launched a series of CAMPA activities between 2014 and 2019. To evaluate the outcomes of these initiatives, the National Institute of Rural Development & Panchayati Raj (NIRDPR), North Eastern Regional Centre (NERC), Guwahati, was engaged to monitor and assess CAMPA activities across multiple forest divisions with Zone III of the state as part of an agreement with Principal Chief Conservator of Forest, Department of Environment, Forest &



Research Assistant from the CAMPA Project, NIRDPR, inspects the boundary demarcation work undertaken by the Dibang Forest Division

limited Climate Change, Government of Arunachal Pradesh. This article presents key findings, performance analyses, and policy recommendations from the five-year review.

The State CAMPA is responsible for managing the money received from the State Compensatory Afforestation Fund (SCAF) and utilising the funds to conduct compensatory afforestation, assist in natural regeneration, conserve and protect forests, develop infrastructure, and safeguard wildlife, along with other related activities. Compensatory afforestation, Net Present Value, Catchment Area Treatment, and Wildlife and Biodiversity are the four key programs for which the funds are utilised under CAMPA.

The success of CAMPA activities varied across forest divisions, with some achieving satisfactory afforestation outcomes while others displayed incomplete documentation and limited

verifiable results. For instance, Pakke and Mehao Wildlife Sanctuaries demonstrated exemplary performance in execution and record-keeping. However, Lohit and APFTI divisions exhibited significant operational deficiencies that require immediate intervention. Persistent issues across divisions included inadequate documentation, poor geo-coordination, insufficient photographic records, and weak nursery planning. Infrastructure development, such as forest roads, fire prevention mechanisms, and watchtowers, exhibited inconsistent adherence to prescribed standards. Financial and physical performance indices varied widely among the forest divisions. Financial record-keeping inconsistencies impacted transparency and accountability. Inadequate data management emphasised the necessity for systematic, electronic documentation. Monitoring and tracking mechanisms were insufficient, and plant journals were inconsistently maintained. Geographic documentation was often missing or inaccurate. Inadequate photographic evidence and irregular uploads to the E-Green Watch platform were also common issues.



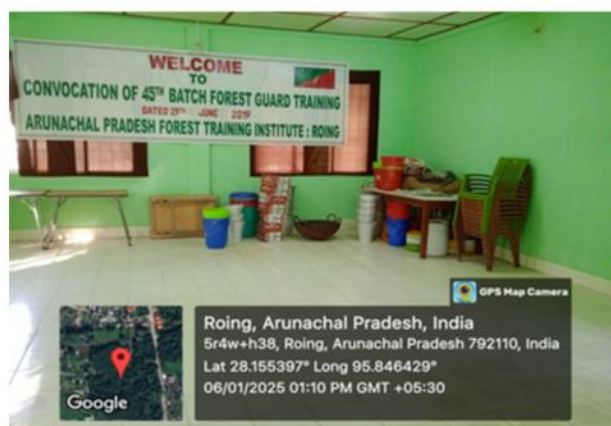
Inspection of the creation of the botanical Garden for in-situ and ex-situ conservation at Arunachal Pradesh Forest Training Institute

To address these challenges, the report recommends establishing centralised digital financial management systems at each Divisional Forest Office (DFO), accompanied by audit-ready, standardised documentation protocols and a Utilisation Certificate Repository. Developing structured monitoring

mechanisms linked to centralised dashboards and mandatory detailed, geo-tagged photographic evidence for all activities are crucial. Regularly updated electronic databases integrating field records, expenditures, and plantation data must be maintained, and mandatory GIS data submissions (KML/KMZ files) must be ensured to comply with E-Green Watch reporting requirements.

Enhancing local stakeholder participation through awareness programmes and capacity-building initiatives is vital, alongside promoting the use of GIS tools for boundary demarcation and nursery management. Linking fund disbursement to verified physical and financial achievements and instituting performance-linked incentives and penalties will encourage better compliance and performance.

The study involved physical verification of activities, financial auditing, geo-referencing of intervention sites, and analysis of procedural adherence. A combination of field surveys, document analysis, and stakeholder consultations informed the evaluation.



Utensils purchased under CAMPA to facilitate the smooth functioning of training at the Arunachal Pradesh Forest Training Institute

Findings from the study reveal that while some divisions, notably Pakke and Mehao Wildlife Sanctuaries, demonstrated excellent financial and physical performance, others, such as Lohit and APFTI, faced substantial challenges. Common issues included incomplete documentation, discrepancies between reported and

verified expenditures, inadequate photographic documentation, and a lack of systematic project monitoring.

Financial irregularities primarily stemmed from poor documentation practices and the absence of centralised digital record-keeping. Field inspections revealed that infrastructure projects such as forest roads and fire protection mechanisms often lacked compliance with technical standards. Moreover, the uploading of project data to monitoring platforms like E-Green Watch was inconsistent across divisions.

The evaluation highlighted the urgent need for reforms, emphasising the establishment of centralised, digital financial management systems, geo-referenced project tracking, and regular third-party audits. The findings underline the necessity for comprehensive reform in the planning, implementation, and monitoring processes of CAMPA activities to ensure better forest conservation outcomes. Addressing these challenges will ensure that CAMPA funds are utilised optimally to promote afforestation, conserve biodiversity, and

enhance ecological security in Arunachal Pradesh.

Research Highlights

The evaluation employed a robust methodology combining physical site verification, geo-referencing, photographic documentation, and financial auditing. The Aggregate Performance Index approach assessed financial and physical achievements, categorising divisions based on performance metrics into Excellent, Good, Fair, and Poor.

The monitoring exercise employed the Aggregate Performance Index method to assess financial and physical performance outcomes related to the Net Present Value (NPV) and Compensatory Afforestation (CA) components under CAMPA, during 2014–2019.

Division-Wise Performance

The following table presents the financial and physical performance of CAMPA activities across the forest divisions in Zone III (2014–15 to 2018–19), along with separate ratings for each parameter:

Division	Financial Performance (%)	Financial Rating	Physical Performance (%)	Physical Rating
Pakke Wildlife Sanctuary	99.56	Excellent	86.66	Excellent
Mehao Wildlife Sanctuary	100	Excellent	75.19	Good
Anjaw Forest Division	96.66	Excellent	80.47	Good
Dibang Forest Division	100	Excellent	57.57	Fair
Namsai Forest Division	73.48	Good	54.92	Fair
Kamlang Wildlife Sanctuary	76.47	Good	65.3	Fair
Mouling Forest Division	78.22	Good	49.12	Poor
Anini Social Forestry Div.	66.66	Fair	36.97	Poor
Lohit Forest Division	42.13	Poor	47.35	Poor
Arunachal Pradesh Forest Training Institute (APFTI)	33.33	Poor	52.25	Fair

Rating Criteria (Indicative):

Excellent: ≥ 90%
 Good: 70% – 89%
 Fair: 50% – 69%
 Poor: < 50%

Conclusion

The CAMPA initiative remains a vital mechanism for restoring forest ecosystems impacted by developmental activities. While the 2014–2019 review of Zone III in Arunachal Pradesh highlighted several exemplary models, it also exposed systemic gaps that require urgent attention.

The project findings emphasise the need to strengthen record-keeping and reporting mechanisms, build technical capacities in GIS, digital monitoring, and geo-tagging, and enhance financial discipline and transparency. Promoting community participation and innovative afforestation models suited to varied ecological landscapes is essential.



Maintenance of orchid house at Jengging



Renovation of SPT II building at Jengging

MoRD, NIRDPR and CIRDAP Collaborative International Training Programme on Innovations in Rural Development: Policies to Practices



A session in progress during the international training programme on "Innovations in Rural Development: Policies to Practices - Learnings" at NIRDPR, Hyderabad.

The National Institute of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj (NIRDPR), Hyderabad organised a one-week international training programme titled "Innovations in Rural Development: Policies to Practices - Learnings" from 15th to 22nd June 2025. The programme was jointly organised by the Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India, the Centre on Integrated Rural Development in Asia and the Pacific (CIRDAP), and NIRDPR. Heads of national institutes working in rural development from CIRDAP Member Countries (CMCs) participated in the event.

The programme was inaugurated by the Director Generals of both CIRDAP and NIRDPR. During the inaugural address, Dr. P. Chandra Shekara, Director General of CIRDAP, stated that the programme aimed to foster discussions and the exchange of experiences on rural development strategies implemented across CMCs. He emphasised the sharing of exemplary innovations in rural policies and initiatives and highlighted the programme's role in promoting sustainable rural economic growth and serving as a platform for cross-learning among participating countries.

Dr. G. Narendra Kumar, IAS, Director General of NIRDPR, in his inaugural speech, underlined the critical role of CMC participants in shaping the future



Dr. G. Narendra Kumar, IAS, Director General, NIRDPR, and Dr. P. Chandra Shekara, Director General, CIRDAP, along with delegates from CIRDAP Member Countries and NIRDPR officials, posing for a group photo

of rural development institutions. He stressed the importance of establishing a regional capacity-building network among CMCs to facilitate ongoing mutual learning. He also assured participants that NIRDPR was committed to supporting this initiative through regional training efforts and the provision of digital learning courses on rural development and decentralised governance.

Throughout the week-long programme, key rural development policies and flagship initiatives of the Government of India were presented and discussed. These included the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS), Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana - National Rural Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NRLM), Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Grameen Kaushalya Yojana (DDUGKY), Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY), Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana (PMKSY), Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yojana - Gramin (PMAY-G), and the National Social Assistance Programme (NSAP).

Officials from the Government of India provided a national perspective on these programmes, while State Government representatives showcased best practices. NIRDPR faculty shared insights into their ongoing capacity-building efforts aligned with these flagship schemes.

Orientation Programme on Audit Procedures and Compliance Conducted by CIARD



Coordinator Dr. U. Hemantha Kumar, Ms. Prasuna Rani, Mr. K. Anil Kumar, and Mr. Ch. Srinivas of CIARD with participants



The Centre for Internal Audit in Rural Development (CIARD), NIRD&PR, conducted a two-day off-campus orientation programme on “Different Types of Audits and Compliance to Audit Paras in DAY-NRLM” from 12th to 13th June 2025 at TGIRD, Hyderabad. The programme was sponsored by DAY-NRLM and saw participation from 31 officials from Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, and Telangana, including SMMU staff, DFMs, DPMs, TFM, and BFM.

Day 1- Understanding Audit Types and Processes

The programme commenced with a welcome address by Dr. U. Hemantha Kumar, Head (i/c), CIARD, who explained the objectives of the training. The inaugural session was also attended by Ms. S. Prasuna Rani, JD (RD), Mr. K. Anil Kumar, Head, CDPA, and Mr. Ch. Srinivas, Prof & Head, CNRM, TGIRD.

A pre-test was conducted to assess participants' existing knowledge. The first session, led by Dr. Hemantha Kumar, covered the basic concepts and objectives of various audit types. In the next session, Ms. G. Naga Lakshmi discussed the scope and process of statutory/CA audits, with additional insights on audits in societies based on participant interest.

Post-lunch, Ms. H. Shashi Rekha conducted a session on CAG/AG audits, explaining the planning, execution, and reporting processes, along with steps for audit compliance. The final session of the day, by Dr. C. Dheeraja, Head (i/c), CSA, NIRDPR, focused on social audit processes in MGNREGS and MoRD schemes, emphasising people's participation and its impact on service delivery.

Day 2- Internal Audits and Practical Discussions

The second day began with feedback from participants, followed by a session on internal audits—types, processes, and compliance—delivered by Ms. H. Shashi Rekha, who also shared real examples from internal audits conducted by the O/o CCA.

Post-tea, an open discussion allowed participants to share their experiences and challenges related to audits and responding to audit observations. Most agreed the orientation had improved their preparedness for future audits. The discussions continued after lunch and were concluded by Dr. Hemantha Kumar.

A post-test was administered to assess knowledge gain, followed by an evaluation through the Training Management Portal (TMP). In the valedictory session, participants shared positive feedback and received certificates from Dr. U. Hemantha Kumar, Ms. Prasuna Rani, Mr. K. Anil Kumar, and Mr. Ch. Srinivas.

CIARD-NIRDPR Conducts Off-Campus Training on Accounting Procedures for DAY-NRLM Functionaries



Participants with Coordinator Dr. U. Hemantha Kumar, Ms. Prasuna Rani, Mr. K. Anil Kumar, and Mr. Ch. Srinivas of CIARD

The Centre for Internal Audit in Rural Development (CIARD), NIRDPR, organised a three-day off-campus training programme on "Accounting Procedures for the Functionaries of DAY-NRLM" from 9th to 11th June 2025 at the Telangana Institute of Rural Development (TGIRD), Hyderabad. Sponsored by DAY-NRLM, the programme aimed at strengthening financial accountability and effective fund management at the grassroots level.

A total of 42 participants from Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, and Telangana—primarily accountants from DMMUs and BMMUs—attended the training. The course was coordinated by Dr. U. Hemantha Kumar, Associate Professor and Head (i/c), CIARD, along with Ms. G. Naga Lakshmi, Course Coordinator, and supported by CIARD staff.

Day 1: Inauguration and Conceptual Sessions

The programme commenced with a welcome address by Dr. U. Hemantha Kumar, Associate Professor and Head (i/c), CIARD, who outlined the objectives of the training. The inaugural session was also graced by Ms. S. Prasuna Rani, JD (RD), Mr. K. Anil Kumar, Head, CDPA, and Mr. Ch. Srinivas, Professor & Head, CNRM, from TGIRD.



A pre-test was conducted to assess participants' baseline knowledge. The first two technical sessions were conducted by Shri P. Ram Mohan Rao, Retired Sr. AO, AG Office, focusing on basic accounting concepts, principles, and preparation of financial statements. In the afternoon, Dr. U. Hemantha Kumar led sessions on the overview of the DAY-NRLM scheme, audit-related issues, and the importance of Micro Credit Plans (MCPs). The day concluded with a practical session on journal entries and ledgers by Ms. G. Naga Lakshmi, Course Coordinator and Accountant, CIARD.

Day 2: Field Exposure Visit

On the second day, participants visited Pedda Toopra Gram Panchayat, Shamshabad Mandal, Rangareddy District. They interacted with Village Organisation (VO) Presidents and Accountants, reviewed financial records such as cash books, balance sheets, and loan registers, and discussed success

stories. One VO President shared how SHG loans enabled her to educate her children and help her son establish a mobile shop.



Record Verification at Pedda Toopra VOs

In the afternoon, participants visited the BMMU/CLF office in Shamshabad Mandal. They engaged with the CLF President, Accountant, and Cluster Coordinator, examining records and discussing convergence with other departments. Although CLF's financial records were well maintained, participants noted gaps in the leadership's understanding of financial intricacies.

Day 3: Reflections and Practical Training

The final day began with a discussion on field observations. Participants acknowledged the good practices observed but suggested further capacity-building for VO and CLF staff, especially Presidents. The Andhra Pradesh team appreciated VO-level practices such as charging 0.3% of the loan amount as maintenance fees, generating income for the VO.



The day's sessions included:

- Cash and fund flow preparation by Ms. G. Naga Lakshmi
- Standard deductions and tax filing by Ms. H. Shashi Rekha, Sr. Consultant
- GEM & CPP portal training by Shri K. Rajeshwar, Faculty, NIRDPR
- Tally software demo by Ms. G. Naga Lakshmi



Certificates being distributed to the participants

A post-test was conducted, followed by participant feedback and training evaluation. In the valedictory session, participants expressed high satisfaction with the programme and requested it be extended to one week. The Karnataka team specifically recommended conducting future programmes at ANSSIRD, Mysuru, for greater accessibility. Certificates were distributed by Dr. U. Hemantha Kumar, and the session concluded with a vote of thanks by Mr. K. Anil Kumar.



Gender Kelidoscope: Building Healthier Generations: Gender-Responsive Reforms in Anganwadi Services

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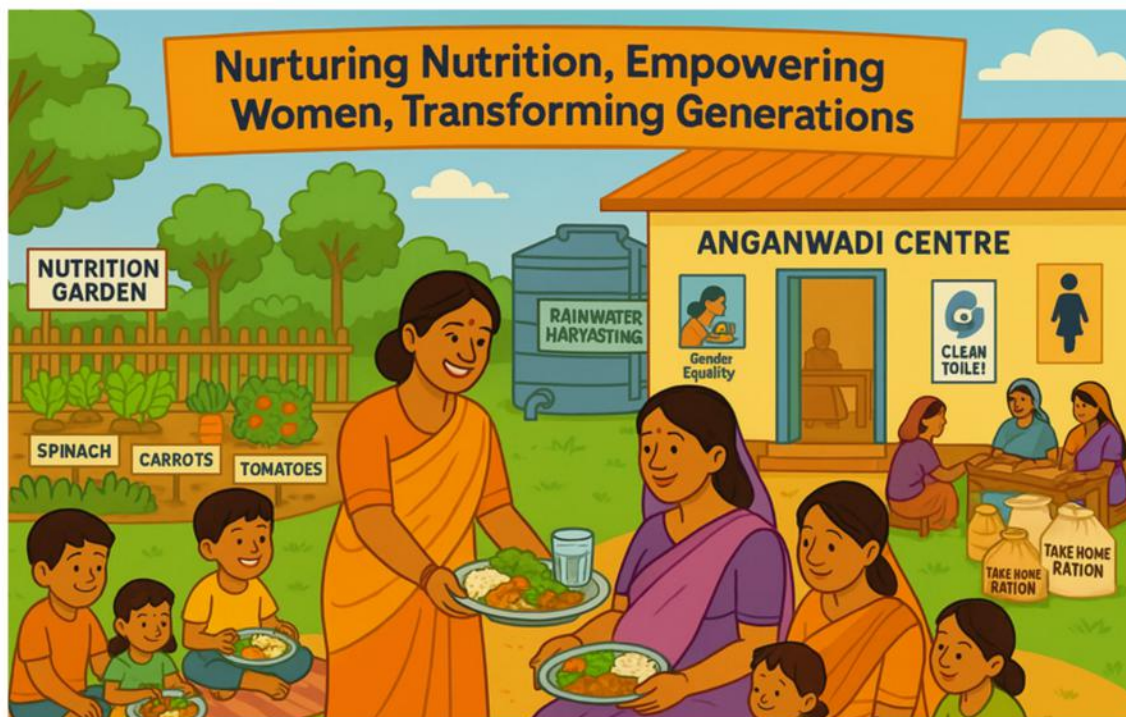


Photo Credit: ChatGPT

India's Anganwadi Centres (AWCs) are the lifeline of the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS), reaching millions of pregnant women, lactating mothers, and young children with supplementary nutrition, health, and early learning support. Yet, ground realities highlight persistent challenges: inadequate nutrition quality, food safety issues, gender-based disparities, and lack of functional water and sanitation facilities. Addressing these requires a systematic, community-driven, and gender-responsive approach.

Ensuring Nutrition Quality and Safety

Ready-to-eat (RTE) foods and hot-cooked meals remain central to the ICDS nutrition strategy. However, challenges related to food quality, inadequate portion sizes, and irregular supply limit their impact. Many AWCs face storage constraints, risking spoilage and contamination of take-home rations (THR). Addressing this requires locally sourced, diverse, and culturally acceptable ingredients while exploring innovative methods such as

dehydration or solar drying to extend shelf life. Partnering with women's Self-Help Groups (SHGs) for preparation and distribution can improve supply chain efficiency while empowering women economically.

Hot-cooked meals also face challenges related to infrastructure limitations, safe cooking practices, and menu diversity. Establishing nutrition gardens at AWCs and sourcing fresh produce from local farmers can improve meal diversity and freshness. Training Anganwadi workers in nutrition-sensitive cooking practices and food safety can enhance meal quality while preserving nutrients. Involving mothers' committees and Panchayati Raj members in monitoring meal quality ensures accountability and transparency.

Gender Issues in Take-Home Rations

Despite the widespread reach of THR, women and girls often receive less food within households, reflecting deep-rooted gender norms. The limited decision-making power of women over food allocation further reduces the

effectiveness of these rations. To address this, community sensitisation campaigns engaging men, women, and local leaders are essential to promote gender-equitable food distribution. Providing targeted nutrition and health education at AWCs empowers women to demand and prioritise nutritious food for themselves and their children. Collecting gender-disaggregated data on THR utilisation will help identify disparities and inform corrective actions, ensuring the nutritional needs of adolescent girls, pregnant women, and young children are prioritised.

Early Identification and Management of Malnutrition

Early identification of Severe Acute Malnutrition (SAM) and Moderate Acute Malnutrition (MAM) in children under five is critical to prevent irreversible impacts on health and cognitive development. Regular growth monitoring using calibrated equipment and trained AWC staff ensures accurate detection of malnourished children. Post-identification, linking children to Nutritional Rehabilitation Centres (NRCs) and providing continuous follow-up through AWC workers and ASHAs ensures recovery. Community awareness drives focusing on exclusive breastfeeding, appropriate complementary feeding, and micronutrient supplementation can prevent the onset of malnutrition. Addressing underlying issues like poverty, food insecurity, and poor sanitation is key to sustainable improvements.

WASH in Anganwadi Centres: A Non-Negotiable

Functional toilets and safe drinking water at AWCs are not just infrastructure needs but are central to dignity, hygiene, and health for children and women. Yet, many AWCs still lack functional toilets and a reliable water supply. Convergence with the Jal Jeevan Mission, Swachh Bharat Mission, and Finance

Commission funds can bridge these gaps. Building rainwater harvesting structures, ensuring clean water storage, and establishing handwashing facilities can strengthen hygiene practices. Regular maintenance of toilets and water facilities, coupled with sanitation and hygiene education for children and caregivers, ensures sustained use and upkeep.

Community Engagement and Capacity Building

Transforming AWCs requires engaging communities as active partners. Mothers' committees, Ward Members, and Panchayats should be involved in monitoring nutrition and WASH services at AWCs. Training Anganwadi workers in nutrition, food safety, hygiene, and gender-sensitive counselling equip them to deliver quality services and address community concerns effectively. Using Social and Behaviour Change Communication (SBCC) interventions, families can be encouraged to adopt healthier practices, dismantle harmful gender norms around food allocation, and ensure women's nutritional needs are prioritised.

Towards Gender-Responsive, Holistic Child Development

Strengthening India's AWCs means investing in the nutrition, health, dignity, and empowerment of women and children. A gender-responsive lens—recognising the unique needs and constraints of women—must guide efforts to improve supplementary nutrition and WASH services. Local solutions, community participation, and effective monitoring are critical to addressing operational gaps. By centering women's voices and addressing gender inequalities in service delivery and household practices, India can transform its AWCs into engines of intergenerational nutrition, empowerment, and well-being.

The One Full Meal program, intended to provide pregnant and lactating women with essential calories and nutrients, often struggles with inconsistent implementation. Meals may fall short in quantity and diversity, lacking the protein, micronutrients, and variety necessary for maternal health. Irregular distribution further compromises the program's effectiveness, leaving women without consistent support during critical stages of pregnancy and lactation.

Similarly, the Take-Home Ration program, while intended to supplement household nutrition, faces issues of accessibility, especially in remote and marginalised communities. Challenges related to storage, spoilage, and delayed distribution can reduce the nutritional quality of these rations, diluting their impact on maternal and child nutrition outcomes. These gaps contribute to a cycle where undernourished mothers give birth to underweight babies, perpetuating intergenerational malnutrition and hindering children's physical and cognitive development.

To transform these programs, India needs a multi-pronged strategy that addresses structural and implementation challenges.

First, enhancing the quality and diversity of the meals provided is essential. Locally sourced, nutrient-rich ingredients such as millets, pulses, and vegetables can improve dietary diversity while supporting local farmers and women's collectives.

Second, regular monitoring and evaluation mechanisms should be instituted to ensure timely and consistent distribution, quality checks, and accountability within the system. Leveraging community-based monitoring and empowering self-help groups to oversee meal quality can foster local ownership.

Third, community participation is critical. Engaging women's groups and local leaders in the planning and execution of these programs can enhance their reach, quality, and acceptability. Nutrition education campaigns can empower women with knowledge about balanced diets and infant feeding practices, ensuring that nutrition extends beyond program boundaries into households.

A comprehensive approach should integrate these nutrition programs with health, sanitation, and livelihood initiatives. Clean water and sanitation are essential to prevent infections that exacerbate malnutrition, while livelihood initiatives can empower families, particularly women, to improve their economic stability and access to diverse foods.

Importantly, women's empowerment must be at the heart. Evidence shows that when women have control over resources and decision-making within households, nutritional outcomes for children improve significantly. Ensuring that supplementary nutrition programs are gender-responsive and implemented with sensitivity to women's needs and constraints can increase their effectiveness. Finally, robust data collection, feedback loops, and policy support at the state and national levels are essential to adapt programs in real time, respond to community needs, and scale up successful interventions.

India's mothers and children deserve more than calories; they deserve nutritious, diverse, and dignified food that enables them to lead healthy lives. By rethinking and strengthening our supplementary nutrition programs, India can take a decisive step towards breaking the cycle of malnutrition and nurturing a healthier, brighter future for its next generation.

NIRDPR Hosts Training-cum-Exposure Visit for Bihar Mukhiyas



Mukhiyas from Bihar who participated in the Training cum Exposure Visit held in three batches

The National Institute of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj hosted a three-day Training cum Exposure Visit for 117 Mukhiyas (Gram Panchayat Presidents), 4 Panchayat Secretaries, and 3 young professionals—totaling 124 participants—from the Bihar Institute of Public Administration and Rural Development (BIPARD).

Inaugurated on 5th June 2025 by Dr. Anjan Kumar Bhanja, Associate Professor & Head, CPRDP&SSD, the event was graced by esteemed faculty including Dr. Chinnadurai, Dr. Pratyusna Patnaik, Dr. Aruna Jayamani, Mr. Ajit Kumar Singh, and Mr. G. Laxmi Narshimha Reddy, former Sarpanch of Kartal Gram Panchayat, Telangana.

In his keynote, Dr. Bhanja highlighted NIRD&PR's leadership through its School of Excellence in Panchayati Raj (SoEPR) and its transformative initiatives—continuous training, e-enablement, development of training modules, eGram Prashikshan, GPDP guidelines, and capacity-building programs for ward members. He

stressed the vital role of Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) through practices like watershed management, afforestation, renewable energy, and decentralised GPDP planning.

Dr. Chinnadurai welcomed participants, urging them to adopt best practices observed during the visit to enhance local governance and service delivery. He emphasised the importance of PRIs in inclusive development and effective grassroots implementation of national policies.

Held from 5th to 7th June, the program includes exposure visits to award-winning Gram Panchayats in Telangana and Andhra Pradesh. Coordinated by NIRD&PR faculty with support from the Department of Panchayati Raj & Rural Development, Government of Telangana, the initiative aims to equip Mukhiyas with practical insights into successful governance models, empowering them to lead sustainable change in their communities.

CIARD Conducts ToT on Risk-Based Internal Audit in DAY-NRLM



Participants of the ToT on Risk-Based Internal Audit with Coordinator Dr. U. Hemantha Kumar, Ms. Prasuna Rani, Mr. K. Anil Kumar, and Mr. Ch. Srinivas of CIARD

The Centre for Internal Audit in Rural Development (CIARD), NIRD&PR, organised a five-day Training of Trainers (ToT) programme on Risk-Based Internal Audit (RBIA) in DAY-NRLM from 19th to 23rd May 2025 at NIRDPR, Hyderabad. The programme was sponsored by DAY-NRLM and aimed at building a cadre of master trainers to strengthen accountability frameworks within the mission. A total of 31 participants from Haryana, Jharkhand, Sikkim, Odisha, and Karnataka took part, representing SRLM units as District Finance Managers, APMs, Cluster Supervisors, and Accounts Officers.

Day 1 – Understanding the Basics of RBIA



Inaugural Session Inaugural Session in progress

Dr. U. Hemantha Kumar, Course Director and Head (I/c), CIARD, welcomed the participants and outlined the objectives of the ToT. Participants expressed their interest in learning the fundamentals of RBIA, a relatively new area for many of them.

Ms. G. Naga Lakshmi delivered sessions on accounting principles and the preparation of financial statements, while Ms. H. Shashi Rekha led post-lunch sessions on types of audits, internal audit principles, and risk and fraud awareness.

Day 2 – RBIA Methodology and Risk Registers

Day two began with feedback and was followed by sessions from Sri P. Rama Mohan Rao, who explained RBIA planning, audit execution, documentation, and report writing. Ms. H. Shashi Rekha covered the audit process in DMMUs/BMMUs, introducing the 5 “C” model (Criteria, Condition, Cause, Consequence, Corrective Action) for writing audit observations.

Participants prepared Risk Registers in groups under the guidance of Dr. U. Hemantha Kumar, identifying and classifying risks, assessing their impact, and proposing mitigation and monitoring mechanisms. The day ended with a discussion on previous audit reports and post-audit review practices.



Participants preparing and presenting Risk Registers

Days 3 & 4 – Field Practicum in RR District

Participants undertook a two-day field practicum to apply their classroom learnings. On Day 3, they visited Stri Shakti Bhavan, Mandal Mahila Samakhya, and later Mohabbat Nagar VO in Maheshwaram Mandal, Ranga Reddy District. They reviewed records, interacted with office bearers, and appreciated best practices in record maintenance, particularly commending the Mandal Samakhya Accountant.

On Day 4, the team visited DMMU Ranga Reddy, where Shri Yadaiah, DPM (Finance), explained fund flows, record maintenance, and audit practices. Participants engaged in discussions and clarified doubts regarding audit observations and documentation standard.



Participants with Mandala Samakhya (CLF) Staff – Maheshwaram Mandalam

Day 5 – Knowledge Assessment and Valedictory



Participants writing Test

The final day began with a test to evaluate knowledge gained. Participants then presented risks identified during field visits using the 5 “C” model, addressing issues like delayed fund release, weak financial awareness among CBO leaders, incomplete documentation, and lack of group-based livelihood initiatives.

In the valedictory session, Dr. U. Hemantha Kumar thanked participants for their enthusiastic involvement. Participants appreciated the relevance and depth of the training and suggested extending the duration to 10 days for a more intensive learning experience. Certificates were distributed to all trainees.



Participants presenting Risks identified in 5 ‘C’s

Empowering Rural Women through Handmade Paper Micro-enterprise Training at NIRDPR



Dr. C. Kathiresan, Head, CIAT&SJ, and Mr. M. D. Khan, Senior Consultant, CIAT&SJ, NIRDPR with participants of the Handmade Paper Production Training

The Centre for Innovations and Appropriate Technologies for Skills and Jobs (CIAT&SJ), in collaboration with the NRLM Resource Cell, NIRDPR, Hyderabad, successfully conducted a five-day training programme on “Handmade Paper Production and Conversion into Value-Added Products” from 2nd to 6th June 2025. The programme was organised under the Entrepreneurship Development Programme (EDP) with a special focus on building entrepreneurial capacities among Lakhpati Didis—women who aspire to become successful rural entrepreneurs.

This innovative training initiative aimed to equip participants with practical, eco-friendly skills in handmade paper production using locally available raw materials and agricultural waste. The programme also focused on product diversification, teaching techniques to convert handmade paper into value-added items such as diaries, folders, gift boxes, and eco-friendly packaging materials.

Key Objectives of the Training Programme:

- To train Lakhpati Didis in sustainable, eco-friendly handmade paper-making techniques
- To promote product diversification through design innovation and value addition
- To facilitate the development of micro-enterprises using indigenous skills and local resources
- To encourage green entrepreneurship and rural income generation with a focus on environmental sustainability

Over the course of five days, participants gained hands-on experience in the full cycle of handmade paper production—from pulp preparation and sheet formation to drying and crafting finished products. Sessions also covered aspects of enterprise management, branding, and marketing strategies for rural micro-enterprises.

This initiative not only enhanced the participants’ technical knowledge but also fostered entrepreneurial mindsets and confidence to start eco-enterprises in their communities.

Strengthening Grassroots Entrepreneurship Through ToT on Enterprise Financing



Participants of the ToT programme on Individual Enterprise Financing, along with Dr. Jyoti Prakash Mohanty, Deputy Director, NRLM Resource Cell, NIRDPR, Hyderabad

The DAY-NRLM Resource Cell, NIRDPR Appropriate Technologies for Skills organized a Training of Trainers (ToT) programme on Individual Enterprise Financing from 2nd to 5th June 2025 at its Hyderabad campus. The programme aimed to strengthen the capacities of professionals from State Rural Livelihood Missions (SRLMs) and NRLM to promote and support individual micro-enterprise development under the Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana – National Rural Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NRLM).

This four-day ToT programme was designed to empower trainers with the knowledge, tools, and strategies necessary to build a robust ecosystem for entrepreneurship at the grassroots level. Participants included functionaries responsible for enterprise promotion, capacity building, and financial inclusion across states.

Key Focus Areas of the Training:

- Building capacities of SRLM and NRLM functionaries to promote individual enterprise financing.

- Introducing suitable financing models and tools for rural entrepreneurs
- Detailed modules on micro-credit planning, bank and financial linkages, and risk management
- Strategies to identify, develop, and support individual micro-enterprise opportunities
- Sharing successful implementation models and case studies for hands-on learning

The ToT facilitated interactive learning through technical sessions, group exercises, real-life case studies, and peer discussions. Participants also explored innovative financing mechanisms and approaches to overcome barriers faced by rural entrepreneurs in accessing credit.

This initiative played a vital role in creating a pool of trained professionals who can cascade the learnings at the grassroots level, ensuring that more rural entrepreneurs receive informed guidance and timely support.

Training of Trainers Programme on Village Prosperity Resilience Plan



Programme coordinator Dr. Jyoti Prakash Mohanty, Deputy Director, NRLM Resource Cell, NIRDPR, Hyderabad, with participants of the ToT on Village Prosperity Resilience Plan.

The DAY-NRLM Resource Cell at the National Institute of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj (NIRDPR) successfully conducted a Training of Trainers (ToT) programme on the Village Prosperity Resilience Plan from 2nd to 5th June 2025 at the institute's Hyderabad campus. The training programme was designed to build the capacities of trainers to support resilience-focused development planning at the grassroots level, in alignment with the objectives of DAY-NRLM.

The ToT aimed to empower professionals from State Rural Livelihood Missions (SRLMs) with the knowledge, tools, and facilitation techniques needed to implement the Village Prosperity Resilience Plan (VPRP) in rural communities. The VPRP serves as a strategic extension of the Gram Panchayat Development Plan (GPDP), placing emphasis on resilience-building and the long-term socio-economic well-being of rural households.

Key Highlights of the Programme:

- Enhanced the capacity of trainers to guide communities in formulating prosperity and resilience plans.

- Emphasised integrating resilience indicators into local development frameworks such as the GPDP.
- Included hands-on sessions on participatory rural appraisal (PRA) tools, data collection, and community engagement.
- Promoted a data-driven approach to identify vulnerabilities and prioritise interventions for long-term impact.
- Focused on enabling village institutions, including SHGs and federations, to take ownership of local planning processes.

Throughout the four-day programme, participants were exposed to both conceptual and practical aspects of resilience planning. Facilitators used a blend of lectures, field-level simulations, and group exercises to help participants internalise the process of preparing VPRPs. Special emphasis was laid on ensuring convergence with existing schemes and leveraging local data to develop context-specific, actionable village plans. The training highlighted the critical role of community institutions and their leaders in spearheading resilience initiatives. Participants also learned how to mobilise and engage SHG members, youth, and panchayat functionaries to make the planning process inclusive and effective.

Training on One Stop Facility Centre (OSF) for AP-SERP Staff



Dr Vanishree Joseph, with participants of the Training on One Stop Facility Centre(OSF)

The DAY-NRLM Resource Cell at the National Institute of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj (NIRDPR) conducted a three-day training programme on One Stop Facility Centre (OSF) under Non-Farm Livelihoods from 11th to 13th June 2025 at the NIRDPR campus, Rajendranagar, Hyderabad. The training was organised for staff from Andhra Pradesh State Rural Livelihoods Mission (AP-SERP), including participants from Batches I and II.

The programme was held under the aegis of the Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India, with the primary objective of strengthening the capacity of field-level functionaries to implement and manage OSF initiatives effectively at the community level.

Focus Areas of the Training Programme:

- Understanding the operational models of OSF, including structure, governance, and service delivery.
- Building robust institutional mechanisms for managing OSFs at the cluster and block levels.
- Exploring convergence strategies with line departments and

financial institutions to optimise support.

- Facilitating market access, business development services, and enterprise promotion for non-farm entrepreneurs.

The sessions were delivered through a combination of presentations, interactive discussions, case studies, and exposure to successful models.

Participants explored the role of OSFs as integrated service hubs offering a range of support services for rural non-farm entrepreneurs, including skilling, mentoring, credit linkage, market connectivity, and infrastructure support.

Through this training, the AP-SERP staff were equipped to guide rural communities in accessing and managing OSFs effectively, thereby supporting the larger mission of enhancing income diversification and enterprise sustainability in rural areas. The programme marked a significant step toward fostering inclusive rural growth through non-farm enterprise support.

Capacity Building on Millets and Soya-Based Technologies



Participants of the millet and soya processing training with coordinator Dr C. Kathiresan, CIAT Head, and Mr M. D. Khan, Senior Consultant.

The Centre for Innovations and appropriate Technologies for skills and Jobs (CIAT&SJ), in collaboration with the NRLM Resource Cell, successfully conducted a five-day training programme on “Processing Technology for Millets and Soya-Based Products” from 9th to 13th June 2025 at NIRDPR, Rajendranagar, Hyderabad.

This hands-on, skill-oriented training was designed as part of the non-farm livelihoods initiative under the Lakhpati Didis programme and focused on empowering Community Resource Persons (CRPs) and Self-Help Group (SHG) members. The programme aimed to enhance their capacity to undertake sustainable, women-led micro-enterprises rooted in value-added agri-processing.

Key Objectives and Outcomes:

- Provided practical training in processing millets and soya into high-value products, including flour, snacks, milk substitutes, and more.
- Strengthened the entrepreneurial skills of women SHG members to

support income generation and local employment.

- Promoted sustainable non-farm livelihoods by encouraging agro-based micro-enterprises using locally available, climate-resilient crops.
- Introduced participants to innovative technologies and low-cost machinery suited for rural contexts.

The sessions included technical demonstrations, interactive learning modules, and discussions on enterprise development, packaging, branding, hygiene, quality control, and market access. The programme also showcased successful case studies and business models to inspire and guide participants in launching or scaling their own agri-processing units.

This initiative directly contributed to DAY-NRLM’s broader mission of enhancing livelihood diversification and promoting rural self-reliance, particularly for women-led households aspiring to become “Lakhpati Didis.” By combining skill development with entrepreneurial guidance, the training created a foundation for grassroots innovation and economic resilience.

ToT on Gender Resource Centres Strengthens Grassroots Gender Inclusion



Participants of the three-day Training of Trainers (ToT) on the Establishment and Functioning of Gender Resource Centres (GRCs), seen posing for photo with the Programme Coordinator, Dr. Vanishree Joseph, Asst. Professor & Head i/c, CGSD, and Director, NRLM.

A Training of Trainers (ToT) programme on the Establishment and Functioning of Gender Resource Centres (GRCs) was conducted from 16th to 18th June 2025 at NIRDPR, Hyderabad, under the ambit of the Aajeevika – National Rural Livelihoods Mission (NRLM). The training was organised by the NRLM Resource Cell, NIRDPR, with the objective of building the capacities of mission staff and stakeholders to operationalise GRCs as vibrant platforms for promoting gender equity and social inclusion at the grassroots.

The three-day programme brought together participants from various State Rural Livelihood Missions (SRLMs), who engaged in discussions around institutional approaches to mainstream gender within rural development frameworks. As NRLM continues to prioritise inclusive growth, the establishment of functional and community-driven GRCs has become critical to ensuring that rural women have access to support systems, services, and leadership opportunities.

Key Areas of Learning:

- Understanding gender dynamics and their implications for rural development

- Designing and managing Gender Resource Centres as support hubs for women
- Promoting SHG-led women's empowerment and leadership development
- Building inclusive and participatory institutions to address gender-based disparities

The sessions included a mix of expert presentations, case studies, group exercises, and peer learning. Participants explored how GRCs can act as bridges between women's collectives and access to entitlements, legal awareness, financial services, and livelihood opportunities. Discussions also focused on overcoming socio-cultural barriers and creating safe, enabling spaces for women within their communities.

The programme emphasised that gender-responsive planning must go beyond token representation—it must be embedded in the very fabric of community institutions and decision-making. Participants left with a deeper understanding of how to integrate gender perspectives into policy, programme design, and field implementation.

Empowering Rural Communities through Financial Literacy and Digital Inclusion



Coordinator Dr. Jyoti Prakash Mohanty, Deputy Director, NRLM Resource Cell, NIRDPR, Hyderabad, posing for a group photo with participants of the ToT on Financial Literacy and Digital Finance.

The Training of Trainers (ToT) programme on Financial Literacy and Digital Finance under the Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana – National Rural Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NRLM) was successfully conducted from 18th to 20th June 2025 at the National Institute of Rural Development & Panchayati Raj (NIRDPR), Hyderabad.

Organised by the DAY-NRLM Resource Cell, the three-day capacity-building programme aimed to enhance the competencies of Community Resource Persons (CRPs) and Self-Help Group (SHG) leaders in promoting digital financial practices at the grassroots level. This initiative aligned with the Ministry of Rural Development's ongoing efforts to foster financial empowerment and digital inclusion among rural populations.

Core Focus Areas of the Training:

- Building foundational knowledge of financial literacy and budgeting.
- Promoting the use of cashless transactions and mobile-based financial tools.
- Enhancing awareness of banking

services, digital wallets, and UPI platforms.

- Strengthening the role of SHGs in financial decision-making and inclusion

Participants were introduced to practical digital finance tools such as mobile banking, UPI, Aadhaar-enabled payments, and digital wallets. The sessions blended technical inputs with hands-on activities like role-plays and simulations, enabling participants to confidently explain digital financial concepts in simple, relatable terms. The training was particularly impactful for SHG leaders and CRPs, many of whom will now take these learnings back to their communities.

By the end of the programme, participants were equipped not only to adopt digital tools themselves but also to serve as financial literacy facilitators. They gained the skills to guide SHG members and villagers through digital transactions, promote formal banking, and troubleshoot basic issues, effectively extending the impact of the training across rural households through a peer-led model.

NIRDPR Celebrates International Yoga Day 2025



Director General Dr. G. Narendrakumar, IAS, addressing faculty, students, trainees, staff, and their families during the International Yoga Day 2025 celebrations at the Sports Complex, NIRDPR.

The National Institute of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj (NIRDPR) organised the 11th International Day of Yoga (IDY) 2025 on 21st June 2025, on its Hyderabad campus. Dr G. Narendra Kumar, IAS, Director General, NIRDPR, served as the Chief Guest of the occasion.

The event commenced with a welcome address by the Director General, highlighting the usefulness of yoga in our day-to-day life.

The yoga session was led by four teachers - Shri Mukesh Kheer, Shri Vinay, Shri Arun, and Shri Anil from the Hyderabad Unit of Vivekananda Kendra, Kanyakumari. They taught the participants, comprising faculty, staff, their families, and trainees of training programmes, about loosening practices, yogasanas, pranayama, and meditation.

Shri Manoj Kumar, Registrar & Director (i/c), Dr Anjan Kumar Bhanja, Associate Professor, Dr. Lakhan Singh, Assistant Professor, Dr. S. Raghu, Assistant Director, Shri Upendar Rana, system



Faculty, students, trainees, staff, and their families participate in a rejuvenating yoga session led by Shri Mukesh Kheer, Shri Vinay, Shri Arun, and Shri Anil from Vivekananda Kendra, Hyderabad Unit.

Analyst, Shri K.C. Behera, Public Relations Officer, attended this event with the other staff members.

The event ended with a vote of thanks by Dr P.K. Ghosh, Assistant Registrar (T) & (E) i/c. A write-up on the Significance of International Yoga Day, along with 45 minutes of Common Yoga Protocol (CYP), was circulated among the participants.



Common Yoga Protocol (CYP) 45 minutes

PRAYER : 1 Minute



ॐ Samgacchadhvam samvadadhvam, sam vo manāmsi jānatām
devā bhāgam yathā pūrve, sanjānānā upāsate ||

LOOSENING PRACTICES : 6 Minutes



YOGĀSANAS : 25 Minutes



KRĪYĀ, PRĀṆĀYĀMA, DHYĀNA, SĀṆKALPA : 12 Minutes



Shanti Mantra : 1 Minute

ॐ Sarve Bhavantu Sukhinaḥ,
Sarve Santu Nirāmayāḥ
Sarve Bhadrāṇi Paśyantu,
Mā kaścīt Duḥkha Bhāgbhavet
ॐ Śāntiḥ Śāntiḥ Śāntiḥ

Signature Events Mark International Yoga Day 2025

Compiled by Dr Pranab Kumar Ghosh

Assistant Registrar (T) & (E)

NIRDPR, Hyderabad



Prime Minister Shri. Narendra Modi leading the International Yoga Day 2025 in Andhra Pradesh.
Photo credit: Press Information Bureau (PIB)

Yoga which has its roots in India, is a physical and mental health-enhancing activity. It is more than just an exercise, but a method for empowering oneself, the body, and the psyche. Yoga provides a holistic approach to health and well-being that assists in restoring balance in our busy lives.

The United Nations established the International Day of Yoga on 11th December 2014 in response to a proposal made by the Indian Prime Minister, Narendra Modi, at the 69th session of the UN General Assembly. The first International Day of Yoga was celebrated on 21st June, 2015. The date coincided with the summer solstice, the longest day of the year in the Northern Hemisphere and a

symbol of light and health. On this special day, we celebrate its transformative power. Whether you are just starting or have been practising for years, yoga continues to be a powerful tool for navigating modern life with purpose and peace.

Significance of This Year's Celebration

This year's celebration features 10 signature events designed to engage diverse groups, embodying the spirit of 'Yoga for All'. The flagship event, 'Yoga Sangam', stands at the heart of IDY 2025. The other nine signature events are Yoga Bandhan, Yoga Park, Yoga Samavesh, Yoga Prabhava, Yoga Connect, Harit Yoga, Yoga Unplugged, Yoga Mahakumbh, and Samyoga.



Thousands joined Prime Minister Shri. Narendra Modi for International Yoga Day 2025 Celebrations

The theme for 2025 is 'Yoga for One Earth, One Health.' The theme emphasises the relationship between individual well-being and the health of the planet. This theme underscores the intrinsic connection between individual well-being and the planet's health. Yoga cultivates balance not only within us but also in our interaction with the natural world. Through mindful breathing, conscious eating, and ethical living, yoga encourages us to minimise waste, reduce pollution, and safeguard biodiversity.

The relevance of this theme is particularly heightened amidst growing climate concerns. Yoga philosophy, with its emphasis on ahimsa (non-violence), extends its principles to all living beings, inspiring practitioners to adopt sustainable choices.

Health Benefits of Yoga

- **Enhanced Mental Well-being:** Regular yoga practice reduces stress, anxiety, and depression, promoting clarity and emotional stability.
- **Improved Physical Fitness:** Yoga increases flexibility, strengthens muscles, and enhances posture, supporting overall physical health.
- **Cardiovascular Health:** Mindful breathing and gentle movement improve circulation and heart function.
- **Inner Peace and Resilience:** Yoga fosters self-awareness, compassion, and a deeper connection to oneself and the world.
- **Holistic Wellness:** By harmonising body, mind, and spirit, yoga nourishes the soul and brings a sense of wholeness.

Yoga is more than just an ancient art; it is a transformative way of life connecting us to our essence. It is a timeless practice that nurtures physical, mental, and spiritual well-being. By cultivating inner peace, balance, and resilience, yoga empowers us to thrive in every aspect of our lives. As we step onto the yoga mat, we embark on a divine journey of self-discovery—a path that leads to a healthier, happier, and more harmonious world. With today's life going so fast, everybody should integrate yoga into daily practice.

Training Programme on Leadership Skills for Development Professionals



Participants of the Leadership Skills for Development Professionals, seen with Programme Coordinator Dr. Vanishree Joseph, Assistant Professor & Head (I/c), CGSD, Director, NRLM, and Dr Lakhan Singh, Assistant Professor, CHRD.

The National Institute of Rural Development & Panchayati Raj (NIRDPR), Hyderabad successfully conducted a Training Programme on Leadership Skills for Development Professionals of State Rural Livelihood Missions (SRLM) from 24th to 27th June 2025. The programme brought together a diverse group of participants from across the country, all working at the grassroots level to drive rural development.

The intensive four-day training was designed to enhance leadership capabilities among SRLM professionals, with focused sessions on key areas such as strategic leadership, effective communication, team management, and vision-driven planning and execution. The curriculum combined interactive lectures, group exercises, and real-world case studies to ensure practical learning and skill development.

Participants engaged actively in discussions around inclusive leadership, problem-solving in rural contexts, and fostering collaboration across teams. The programme emphasized the importance of people-centric leadership to bring about sustainable and participatory rural transformation.

By the end of the programme, the participants were better equipped to lead development initiatives with a clear vision, stronger communication, and a deeper commitment to accountable and inclusive governance. The training reaffirmed NIRDPR's role as a capacity-building hub for empowering leaders in the rural development ecosystem.

Training of Trainers on Financial Literacy and Digital Finance



Participants of the three-day Training of Trainers (ToT) on Financial Literacy and Digital Finance seen with Programme Coordinator Dr Raj Kumar Pammi, Assistant Professor, CNRM, CC & DM

The National Institute of Rural Development & Panchayati Raj (NIRDPR), Hyderabad conducted a three-day Training of Trainers (ToT) programme on Financial Literacy and Digital Finance under the Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana – National Rural Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NRLM) from 26th to 28th June 2025.

The training was aimed at enhancing the capacities of master trainers in the areas of digital transactions, financial technologies, budgeting, saving, and credit management. Participants were trained through interactive sessions, case studies, and practical demonstrations to effectively cascade financial literacy in their respective regions.

A special focus of the training was on promoting responsible borrowing and sound financial decision-making, particularly in rural areas. Trainers were equipped with strategies to educate Self-Help Group (SHG)

members and rural households on identifying financial risks and making informed choices.

The programme aligns with the larger goal of DAY-NRLM to empower rural communities—especially women-led SHGs—by strengthening their financial capabilities. By building a cadre of informed trainers, the initiative contributes to sustainable livelihoods and inclusive rural development.

The training received positive feedback from participants and marked a significant step toward deepening financial inclusion and digital awareness in grassroots communities. NIRDPR continues to play a pivotal role in building the capacities of rural institutions through such impactful programs.

Empowering Communities through FNHW: Strengthening DAY-NRLM's Holistic Development Agenda

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The model houses at the National Building Centre in RTP, NIRDPR

Introduction

The Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana National Rural Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NRLM) has been at the forefront of rural transformation in India by enhancing livelihoods and investing in the overall well-being of rural households. Recognising that poverty is multidimensional, DAY-NRLM has embedded Food, Nutrition, Health, and WASH (FNHW) as critical components within its broader community-driven development framework. FNHW interventions under NRLM are designed not merely as welfare efforts but as empowerment tools that ensure women and their communities have access to health services and entitlements essential for a dignified life.

At the heart of NRLM's approach lies the understanding that poor health and nutrition directly impact a household's economic productivity and resilience. Malnutrition, maternal mortality, poor sanitation, and limited

access to primary healthcare services continue to disproportionately affect the poorest families, particularly women and children. Through its FNHW strategy, NRLM empowers women-led institutions such as Self-Help Groups (SHGs), Village Organisations (VOs), and Cluster Level Federations (CLFs) to address these issues by creating demand for services, behavioural change, and building convergence with frontline departments.

To strengthen this agenda further, a five-day orientation cum exposure programme was organised during April 2025, in Gaya, Bihar, under the leadership of the National Mission Management Unit (NMMU), DAY-NRLM and the NRLM Resource cell, NIRDPR. JEEViKA, Bihar's State Rural Livelihoods Mission (SRLM), and the ROSHNI Centre played a key role in demonstrating ground-level FNHW implementation and institutional coordination. The programme brought together National Resource Persons (NRPs), resource organisations, and technical experts

to deepen their understanding of the national FNHW framework and align them with state-level priorities and strategies.

The training served as a window into how FNHW can be operationalised effectively through community institutions. During the exposure visit, one of the standout themes was the emphasis on convergence – a cornerstone of NRLM’s philosophy. In blocks like Kako (Jehanabad) and Manpur (Gaya), convergence between SHG platforms and departments such as Health, Women & Child Development, and Panchayati Raj was evident. For example, community cadres such as Community Nutrition Resource Persons (CNRPs) and Community Mobilisers coordinated with ASHAs and anganwadi workers to conduct growth monitoring, nutrition counselling, and early family planning awareness. These engagements demonstrate how NRLM is not working in silos but is facilitating the integration of health and nutrition into everyday community discourse and action.

Furthermore, the exposure to initiatives like the “Didi ki Rasoi” enterprise at the Anugrah Narayan Magadh Medical College in Gaya illustrated how NRLM’s livelihood promotion intersects meaningfully with nutrition and health outcomes. Operated by trained SHG women, the enterprise generates income and contributes to patient well-being by supplying nutritious meals in a hospital setting. Such examples reinforce NRLM’s commitment to leveraging women’s collective power for improved health and economic outcomes, truly making livelihoods a means to a dignified life.

Another critical aspect observed was the use of Social and Behaviour change Communication (SBCC) tools at SHG and VO meetings. Flipbooks, diet diversity games, and tools like the “Katori ka Khel” were used to spark discussions and correct misinformation around topics like

complementary feeding, sanitation, handwashing, and adolescent health. These tools reflect NRLM’s emphasis on participatory learning and belief that sustainable change must be community-led and culturally embedded.

Importantly, the field visit also showcased how FNHW is becoming embedded in governance mechanisms within community institutions. CLFs in Bihar have begun incorporating FNHW into their annual action plans, utilising funds like the Health Risk Fund and Vulnerability Reduction Fund (VRF) to support members in need. This aligns with NRLM’s broader vision of promoting decentralised planning, enabling communities to take ownership of their development and tailor solutions based on local needs and capacities.

The programme highlighted the operational framework of FNHW under NRLM, which is structured around four key strategies: system strengthening, SBCC, convergence, and FNHW enterprises. NRPs were oriented on supporting states in adopting these strategies by developing immersion sites, promoting Agri-Nutri Gardens, applying a gender lens, and monitoring indicators to track performance. This aligns with NRLM’s goal to institutionalise FNHW across all states, ensuring that women’s collectives are equipped to lead health, nutrition, and WASH-related initiatives systematically and sustainably.

By prioritising FNHW within its mission, DAY-NRLM addresses the root causes of poverty and enables rural families, especially women, to live healthier, more secure, and empowered lives. The programme has paved the way for a strengthened cadre of NRPs who will act as catalysts in scaling this integrated approach across India. As states move towards universalising FNHW within their rural development efforts, such capacity-building platforms will be key in ensuring consistency, quality, and community ownership on the ground.

Training Programme on Rural Development: Issues, Challenges, Interventions and Impacts for Officer Trainees of Indian Economic Service



Participants with Dr. G. Narendra Kumar, IAS, Director General, NIRDPR and program coordinator, Dr Partha Pratim Sahu, Associate Professor & Head i/c, CEDFI and CGG&PA, for a group photo

The Centre for Entrepreneurship Development & Financial Inclusion (CEDFI), NIRDPR conducted a residential 5-day training programme on Training Programme on “Rural Development: Issues, Challenges, Interventions and Impacts” for Officer Trainees (OTs) of Indian Economic Service (IES) - Batch 2025 sponsored by the Department of Economic Affairs (DEA), Ministry of Finance, Govt. of India during 16 – 20 June 2025 at NIRDPR Hyderabad campus.

The training programme was designed to offer a fine blend of theory, practice, experiential learning and lessons from good practices to empower the participants to understand and assess the diverse range of emerging issues and concerns relating to rural development and panchayati raj. The participants were also apprised about a series of Govt schemes and programmes of MoRD and MoPR, and capacitated them to critically analyse those schemes. In all sessions, discussions were carried out on inter-disciplinary,

evidence-based and research-driven methods. Eighteen IES Officer Trainees (OTs) participated in this training programme, who were undergoing training programmes at various places.

Dr Sahu introduced the whole programme and took a comprehensive session on various facets of inclusive and sustainable rural development. He discussed a set of cross-cutting issues such as gender, SDGs, localisation of SDGs, convergence and so on. He also discussed a series of data sets to track and monitor the progress of rural development. He emphasised the emerging changes in the rural development landscape, i.e. economic disparity, rise of the non-farm sector, educated youth unemployment, women’s employment, role of local institutions, changes due to the COVID pandemic, such as reverse migration, digital revolution and major RD and PR interventions.

Director General Dr G Narendra Kumar, IAS delivered the inaugural address and interacted with the participants. In his

address, he emphasised the role and potential of rural areas in our journey towards Viksit Bharat @ 2047. He discussed many new initiatives, such as ABP, Lakhpati Didi and NIRD's contribution with respect to training and capacity development in these initiatives. He discussed digital transformation and financial inclusion, the role of technology in rural governance and service delivery. He emphasised the possible pathways for addressing various challenges witnessed by rural India, including setting up rural-specific targets, incentivising the rural workforce through skilling, revolutionising infrastructure development, strengthening the rural governance system, economic diversification, technology integration, climate resilience and so on. The inauguration session was very enriching, which sets the context of the programme, and the issues flagged up were taken for further deliberation in subsequent sessions.



Dr G Narendra Kumar, IAS, Director General, delivering the inaugural address

A series of theme-based lectures were arranged, including the role of panchayatiraj system on rural development, large-scale public employment programmes, Mahatma Gandhi NREGA, emerging debates on poverty, skilling, nutrition challenges, biodiversity, climate change, WaSH, internal audit and so on.



Prof. Srijit Mishra of Hyderabad Central University delivering on poverty debates

Prof Srijit Mishra took a comprehensive session on the advantages and disadvantages of various measures of poverty and inequality. He also discussed the use of new measures, i.e. MDPI and various concerns relating to it. In the emerging discussion on the localisation of SDGs, local institutions such as the panchayat can play a decisive role in achieving sustainable rural development. The various contours of Gram Panchayat functioning in India were discussed with recent data sets, cases and good practices. This session apprised participants about the existing status of resource allocation and management within Gram Panchayats in India, while also considering potential reform options to enhance their financial sustainability and effectiveness in local governance. Participants were apprised about Mission Antyodaya (data available at Panchayat level), Gram Panchayat Development Plan (GPDP), Gram Sabha and its variants such as Bal Sabha, Mahila Sabha.

Agriculture still holds the backbone of the rural economy. But agriculture has witnessed various changes over the years, starting from the Green Revolution, public investment vs. subsidy, public procurement, Minimum Support Price, FPOs, agri-start-ups, use of drones and so on. In a session titled Agrarian Linkages to Development Challenges these issues were discussed. Nutritional challenges continue to be a barrier to robust human development in rural areas.

Resource person Dr. SubbaRao M Gavaravarapu, ICMR-NIN Hyderabad, discussed the current scenario and challenges in nutrition. A comprehensive and detailed discussion was carried out on understanding the Water Supply, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) Sector. Various efforts of the central Govt, such as JJM, SBM, and ODF, were also critically discussed in the session.

Skilling is an important enabler towards inclusive and sustainable rural development. The role and potential of skilling were discussed with respect to DDU GKY, which is a placement-linked skill programme. The whole process, starting from the mobilisation of participants to the monitoring of the programme, was elaborately discussed.

Although we have a large number of schemes and programmes, because of poor implementation, lack of transparency and monitoring systems, we are not getting the desired outcomes from these programmes. To appraise participants about an emerging tool, i.e. internal audit, a session was spent on Improving Transparency and Accountability of Rural Development Programmes: Learnings from Internal Audit System.

A field visit was arranged to Gadda Mallah, Guda Gram Panchayat, Yacharam Mandal, Ranga Reddy District, Telangana, where they got first-hand knowledge on the functioning of a Gram Panchayat. They all interacted with various functionaries of the Gram Panchayat, such as Sarpanch, Secretary, Mandal Parishad Development Officers (MPDOs) and other officials. They also got an opportunity to interact with SHG women and learnt about the economic activities of these women and the type of challenges they are facing, including those of marketing. Various developmental works carried out by the Panchayat, such as a dumping yard, a nursery, a mango orchard, grocery shops and other farm and non-farm livelihoods, were also visited by them. Our colleagues, Mr Upendra Korra and Ms Vidyanidhi Saraswathi, facilitated this visit. We also gratefully acknowledge MPDO, Panchayat Secretary and other officials for hosting our participants and providing all support.

The participants were taken to RTP to see a live demonstration of more than 20 livelihood models as well as affordable housing typologies. Such livelihoods may be promoted aggressively in villages to moderate poverty and inequality. A visit to the library was arranged to apprise participants about e-resources and the rich book collection.



Participants interacting with GP functionaries and SHG women of Gadda Mallah, Guda Gram Panchayat, Yacharam Mandal, Ranga Reddy District, Telangana during their field visit



Participants receiving certificate from the course director Dr Partha Pratim Sahu

In addition to these sessions, a pre- and post-training quiz was undertaken. Each participant was evaluated on the basis of punctuality, attentiveness and participation in classroom discussions and essay writing. Detailed feedback was taken in the last session as well on the Training Management Portal (TMP). All presentation files and a set of papers on various issues related to rural development were also shared with the participants. It is hoped that all the IES probationers find this programme useful and they will apply some of the learnings from it in their professional work. Overall, the intent

and the spirit in which this programme was conducted seems to have delivered the desired outcomes.

Besides external resource persons, NIRDPR faculty members, i.e. Prof. S Jyothis, Dr S Ramesh Sakthivel, Dr. Surjit Vikraman, Dr R Ramesh, Dr C Kathiresan, Dr Anjan Kumar Bhanja, Dr U Hemantha Kumar and Dr. Sandhya Gopakumaran, took engaging sessions in the training programme. This programme was coordinated by Dr Partha Pratim Sahu, Associate Professor and Head of CEDFI.



NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT AND PANCHAYATI RAJ

(MINISTRY OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT, GOVERNMENT OF INDIA) RAJENDRANAGAR, HYDERABAD – 500030



Admission Notification for Distance Mode Programmes

Last Date:
31st July 2025

About School

National Institute of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj (NIRDPR) is a premier national institution under the Ministry of Rural Development, dedicated to advancing rural development through capacity building, research, training, and consultancy. As a "think tank" for the Ministry, it supports policy formulation, offers knowledge-based solutions, and serves as a repository of expertise. Its contributions are recognized both nationally and internationally.

Programme Overview

Programme	Duration	Fee (Gen/OBC/EWS)	Fee (SC/ST/PWD)	Contact Person
PG Diploma in Sustainable Rural Development (PGDSRD)	18 months (3 semesters)	₹18,200	₹16,400	Ms. Gamyra 74168 60345
PG Diploma in Tribal Development Management (PGDTDM)	18 months (3 semesters)	₹18,200	₹16,400	Dr. Satyaranjan Mahakul 99048 69707
PG Diploma in Geospatial Technology Applications in Rural Development (PGDGARD)	18 months (3 semesters)	₹21,800	₹18,200	Dr. N S R Prasad 78962 57663
Diploma in Panchayati Raj Governance & Rural Development (DP-PRGRD) in collaboration with Univ. of Hyd.	12 months (2 semesters)	₹15,000	₹13,000	Dr. Pratyusna Patnaik 99857 14966

Fee

- **General/OBC/EWS:** Rs. 18,200/-
- **SC/ST/PWD:** Rs. 16,400/-
- (Payable in 3 equal instalments)

Evaluation

- **Evaluation:** Continuous assignments + Semester-end exams + Project work

Eligibility

- Bachelor's degree from a UGC-recognised university

How to Apply

- **Download the brochure and apply online:** www.nirdpr.org.in
- **Application Fee:** Rs. 500/- (Gen/OBC/EWS), Rs. 300/- (SC/ST/PH)
- **Upload:** Attested certificates with the application

Contact Classes

- Contact classes will be conducted online/offline.

Contact:

Professor & Head (CPGS&DE)
Centre for PG Studies & Distance Education, NIRDPR
☎ 040-24008442 / 7416860345
✉ dec.nird@gov.in

Scan for Admission Details





Sustainable Building Technologies for MSMEs: Building the Future, Sustainably

Ms. Kriti Chhetri, Mr. S. K. Janith

PGDM-RM, NIRDPR, Hyderabad

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The model houses at the National Building Centre in RTP, NIRDPR

Introduction

AS India rapidly urbanises and its infrastructure, the need for Sustainable construction methods become ever more critical. Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), especially in rural areas, can be pivotal in leading this transformation. Sustainable Building Technologies (SBTs) offer an innovative pathway to achieve eco-friendly, cost-effective, and durable construction. By integrating natural, recycled, and locally available materials into the building process, these technologies reduce environmental damage while empowering local communities.

Understanding the Technology

Sustainable Building Technologies aims to replace conventional, energy-intensive construction practices with alternatives that promote resource efficiency. Central to this approach are materials such as Compressed Stabilised Earth Blocks (CSEBs), fly ash

bricks, bamboo, and recycled construction waste.

These materials are not only eco-friendly but also robust and suitable for various geographical conditions. For instance, CSEBs are produced by compressing soil mixed with a small quantity of cement or lime, offering a viable substitute for traditional bricks. This process consumes less energy and utilises locally available soil, making it highly sustainable.

These technologies also adhere to the principles of the circular economy, focusing on the reuse of resources, waste minimisation, and local production. They help in reducing carbon footprints and promote long-term environmental and economic sustainability.

Scientific Approach to Adoption

The selection and implementation of sustainable building methods are not



Authors Kriti Chhetri and S. K. Janith at the RTP Stabilised Mud Block House.

arbitrary; they follow a well-defined, scientific approach. Factors like material availability, energy consumption, cost-effectiveness, and climate adaptability are thoroughly evaluated. Locally available resources, such as bamboo and soil, are prioritised for their low environmental impact and cost. The energy efficiency of construction methods is examined to minimise carbon emissions. Furthermore, a cost-benefit analysis ensures that these technologies are affordable yet durable, making them suitable for wide-scale adoption. Techniques are also chosen based on their adaptability to local climatic conditions—passive cooling for hot regions, moisture-resistant materials for humid areas, and thermal insulation for colder climates.

Project Timeline and Resource Requirements

The time taken to implement these technologies varies depending on the materials used. CSEBs, for example, require a curing period of around 7 to 28 days, while fly ash bricks are typically ready in 14 to 28 days.

Prefabricated components can be installed immediately, and features like green roofing and insulation become functional within days.

Adopting these technologies requires raw materials such as soil, lime, fly ash, bamboo, and recycled aggregates. Water is needed primarily for curing and preparation, which can be sustainably sourced through rainwater harvesting systems. Essential equipment includes mechanical presses and brick moulding machines. Energy requirements are minimal and can be supplemented through renewable sources like solar power.

Scalability and Suitability

Sustainable construction units can be easily scaled to fit different needs. A small production unit can function efficiently within 500 to 1000 square feet. Modular setups allow flexibility based on production demand. These technologies are also geographically versatile. CSEBs combined with reflective roofs help maintain cooler interiors in hot and dry regions. In coastal and humid regions, materials like treated bamboo offer resilience against moisture. For colder regions, insulation and thermal mass materials are used to retain heat. In seismic zones, flexible and durable materials provide structural stability.

Investment and Economic Viability

The investment required for adopting sustainable technologies varies by scale and technique. A small CSEB unit can be set up with ₹2–5 lakh, while fly ash brick manufacturing may require ₹10–15 lakh. Bamboo-based units and recycled material processing centres may need an investment of ₹5–10 lakh. Larger prefabricated building component units could cost ₹15–30 lakh, depending on the degree of automation. The gestation period for small units is typically between one and three months, while large-scale projects may take up to a year to become fully operational.

Sustainability and the Circular Economy

Sustainable building technologies support a circular economy by reusing materials like fly ash and demolition waste, conserving water through rainwater harvesting, and reducing energy use with solar power and passive design. These systems also encourage local production, using village-sourced materials and small-scale units that create jobs and reduce urban migration, making rural areas more self-reliant and resilient.

Implementation and Employment

Effective implementation involves 2–6 months of training for rural workers, targeting MSMEs, SHGs, and local entrepreneurs. Units can range from small family-run setups to larger automated plants based on available funding. These initiatives create jobs for both skilled and unskilled labour and can be supported by government schemes, MSME loans, and private investors.

Commercialisation and Certification

Sustainable materials are increasingly used in government schemes like PMAY and private green projects. To gain market acceptance, materials must meet certification standards like BIS and IGBC, along with local environmental regulations.

Challenges

The key challenges include market risks and limited public awareness. Understandably, the adoption of sustainable materials depends on government policies and consumer awareness. The price of raw materials, especially bamboo and lime, can fluctuate based on supply chain efficiency. A shortage of skilled labour trained in sustainable construction in rural areas may hinder the integration of the technology on a large scale. Furthermore, weather-related delays can affect material curing and production efficiency. Overcoming these barriers requires stronger policy support and investment in rural capacity building.

Conclusion

Sustainable building technologies are more than just a construction solution—they represent a movement towards self-reliant, eco-conscious communities. By leveraging locally available resources and creating decentralised production systems, these technologies empower rural populations while preserving the environment. For MSMEs, they open new avenues of entrepreneurship and innovation. As India looks towards a greener future, integrating sustainability into the foundation of its infrastructure is not just an option but a necessity.

The National Institute of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj (NIRDPR), an autonomous organisation under the Union Ministry of Rural Development, is a premier national centre of excellence in rural development and Panchayati Raj. Recognised internationally as one of the UN-ESCAP Centres of Excellence, it builds capacities of rural development functionaries, elected representatives of PRIs, bankers, NGOs and other stakeholders through inter-related activities of training, research and consultancy. The Institute is located in the historic city of Hyderabad in Telangana state. The NIRDPR celebrated its Golden Jubilee Year of establishment in 2008. In addition to the main campus in Hyderabad, this Institute has a North-Eastern Regional Centre at Guwahati, Assam, a branch at New Delhi and a Career Guidance Centre at Vaishali, Bihar.



राष्ट्रीय ग्रामीण विकास एवं
पंचायती राज संस्थान
**NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF RURAL
DEVELOPMENT AND PANCHAYATI RAJ**
MINISTRY OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT, GOVERNMENT OF INDIA

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