

PRAGATI NEWSLETTER



**From Self-Help Groups to Leadership :
The Quiet Rise of Women-Led Development under DAY-NRLM**

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From Self-Help Groups to Leadership: The Quiet Rise of Women-Led Development under DAY-NRLM

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The author Ms. Ankita Roy, interacting with SHG Women

As the afternoon fades in the Sinnar block of Nashik district, the sun settles gently over agricultural fields and village roads. In the rustic villages of Manegaon, Musalgaon, and Harsule, life moves at a calm pace, as farmers return home after tilling the land, children return from school, and women meet for their regular self-help group (SHG) meetings.

Being an aspiring rural development practitioner, I was always keen to see how SHGs transformed the lives of rural women, and I chose Sinnar for my fieldwork as part of my internship to observe their lives from close quarters.

I sat with a number of women from different SHGs after their meetings to get a deeper understanding of the process. I saw them cautiously counting their savings, making entries in their registers and discussing their small loans.

One of them was Kalpana, a young woman from Saradwadi village. She attends the SHG meetings regularly, saves consistently, and has even taken a small loan to start a tailoring business. When I asked Kalpana about her plans, she said she would need to hold discussions with her family before deciding how to use the loan.

While this brief conversation may seem trivial, it highlights an emerging trend across rural India. Although rural development programmes like Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana - National Rural Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NRLM) have succeeded in recruiting millions of women into SHGs, the real change taking place is much deeper than participation alone. It concerns whether these women can now exercise influence on matters of choice and decision-making not only in the community but also within families and other local institutions. My field visits in Sinnar



block indicate a significant shift in overall perception, thinking process and in the execution of programmes.

Mapping the Development Landscape in Sinnar

To understand what women-led development looks like in practice, one needs to go beyond stories about individual women and explore the broader picture of the current state of development in Sinnar block. During my fieldwork, I interacted with many institutions, organisations, and community representatives who helped implement development programmes in rural areas.

The field visit began with meetings with nearly 20 government bodies, including the Block Development Office, Anganwadi Centres, schools, and the Maharashtra State Rural Livelihood Mission office, known as UMED. Further, 15 Panchayati Raj Institutions located in the villages of Kundewadi, Gulvanch, Lonarwadi, and Sonambe were explored.

The key players of community institutions involved in development programmes are SHGs created under DAY-NRLM. Throughout the fieldwork, about 20 SHGs were visited, and the livelihood opportunities and plans of nearly 150 women participating in the SHGs were discussed.

Some women were interested in starting or scaling up small enterprises, including tailoring, beauty services, baking, and preparing spices for food. Although some women have started engaging in the above activities at the household level, others are in the planning stage and require support with training, finance, and market access.

Field contacts also involved interaction with almost 200 rural youth, whose main sources of income include agricultural work or migrating to MIDC industrial areas for daily

manual labour. Thus, one can see that rural livelihoods have changed, and agriculture is accompanied by wage labour and entrepreneurship.

Several NGOs – Yuva Mitra, BAIF, and Maan Deshi Foundation – that assist with community development, training for better livelihood practices, and financial literacy, among other development issues, are operating in the area. Moreover, various rural development programmes, like Mahatma Gandhi NREGA, DAY-NRLM, PMKVY, Jal Jeevan Mission, and PM-Kisan, are also being implemented in the area. The current institutional setting shows that development infrastructure has been built in Sinnar. The question then is whether the existing development systems are reaching out to women and giving them agency so they can become decision-makers and leaders in their respective communities.

The Rise of Self-Help Groups under DAY-NRLM

Over the past few years, SHGs have grown into popular institutions of rural development in the villages of the Sinnar block. As part of the DAY-NRLM, countless rural women are being brought together into collectives that meet regularly to save money, obtain credit, and discuss livelihood matters.

In practice, SHG meetings are often simple yet highly effective platforms. The women gather in the courtyards of their homes or other open spaces, keep careful records of saving and lending money, and discuss various concerns, ranging from household problems to government initiatives and the possibility of starting small businesses. However, despite their apparent simplicity, such gatherings provide many women with a rare.

opportunity for organised cooperation outside their families.

As several interviews revealed, SHGs play an important role in promoting saving and lending practices among women. With small loans from SHGs, many rural women invest in ventures such as tailoring, catering, animal rearing, or petty trading. By engaging in savings and lending practices, many women, who lacked access to formal banking systems, have entered the world of economic activity and financial inclusion.

Apart from the obvious benefits for one's finances, SHGs also offer women the chance to build their awareness and confidence, as well as gain valuable contacts. The discussion at SHG meetings is likely to cover topics beyond saving and lending. Therefore,

from a broader perspective, SHGs operate as learning communities and places of collective action.

However, more than anything else, the real value of SHGs lies in their ability to go beyond mere participation. While the establishment of collectives and access to lending money are crucial initial steps, the ultimate goal pursued by DAY-NRLM is much broader. In many Indian villages, SHGs are actively developing women who become not just beneficiaries of developmental projects but facilitators of community development and financial intermediation.

In other words, the emergence of SHGs in the context of DAY-NRLM represents a prelude to a larger process in which rural women will transition from beneficiaries to a much more influential role.

The Evolution of Women-Led Development in Sinnar

Stage 1: Access (Earlier Stage)		Stage 2: Agency (Emerging Stage)
Financial Inclusion		Economic Empowerment
Opening bank accounts		Deciding how loans are used
Saving regularly in SHGs		Investing in livelihood activities
Accessing small loans		Contributing to household decisions

From Participation to Power

During one of my visits, I met some SHG members after they finished a weekly session. One among them is Chitra, a woman in her early thirties who has been associated with the SHG for a few years now. Like others, she started attending meetings to save a little bit each month without being very active in discussions. Gradually, Chitra feels that the SHG has become more than just a money-saving platform.

After regular meetings and interactions with community resource persons through DAY-NRLM, Chitra began to gain confidence in record-keeping and in discussing finances. Last year, she used an internal loan

from the SHG to expand her home-based snack-making business. At present, she offers homemade snacks in small shops near the market.



What makes Chitra's story interesting is the transformation she witnessed outside the context of

finances. According to her, before she became actively involved in the SHG and began contributing to household income, the family members would decide on finances themselves, disregarding her opinions. Now she realised that her viewpoints were taken into account too.

Chitra's example reveals one of the most important changes that takes place silently in many villages.

Participation in SHG activities usually starts with saving money. Then it leads to the development of financial literacy and even a certain degree of negotiating power for women, both in the household and at large.

This process, from passive involvement in any project to the ability to make financial decisions, can be considered an example of women-led development.

From Access to Agency: Changing Role of Women in Rural Development

Feature	Access (Earlier Stage)	Agency (Emerging Stage)
Financial Inclusion	Women open bank accounts, save regularly in SHGs, and access small loans.	Women decide how loans are used, invest in livelihood activities, and contribute to household financial decisions.
Community Participation	Women attend SHG meetings and participate in group discussions.	Women influence village development priorities and actively participate in Gram Sabha discussions.
Mobility and Exposure	Participation is mostly limited to village-level meetings and activities.	Women travel to nearby markets, training centres, and interact with banks and government institutions.
Livelihood Opportunities	Small home-based activities such as tailoring, food preparation, or livestock rearing.	Women explore entrepreneurship, expand enterprises, and connect with wider markets.
Leadership Roles	Women are seen mainly as beneficiaries of government schemes.	Women take leadership roles such as SHG leaders, Bank Sakhis, Community Resource Persons (CRPs), or facilitators.

Emerging Women Leaders

After attending an SHG meeting in Kundewadi village of Sinnar block, as the members were preparing to leave, one member, Shila, wanted to check the savings register, take stock of loan transactions, and inform all members of the date of their next meeting. Everyone, of course, looked towards her for further information. In many ways, Shila symbolises a kind of rural leadership which is taking shape through SHGs.

Shila recalled that she was not confident enough to speak in the SHG meetings at the beginning. But over time, her involvement in SHG meetings exposed her to new experiences, including recording, dealing with bank officials, and attending various training sessions organised through the DAY-NRLM programme. Now, she actively helps other members understand the procedures for savings, government schemes, and even the opportunity to start something small as a livelihood. Even when a new member joins the

group, she takes time to explain how lending and borrowing in the group work and to motivate them to consider doing some business of their own. In the village, whenever anyone wants to know about SHG activities and government schemes, they come to her for details.

One thing unique about these emerging leaders is that their leadership is not formalised in any sense of the term. It emerges over time as such women get involved in tasks such as keeping registers, organising meetings, or helping other members avail loans. They begin to occupy spaces previously reserved only for males.

Similar stories are emerging from several villages of the block. Women, who earlier were mere members of SHGs, are now turning into facilitators, leaders, and mobilisers of their communities. They prove that, given the appropriate institutional space, women can move beyond participation to become agents of development and change.

Barriers to Progress

Despite the encouraging progress visible through Self-Help Groups, conversations with women across villages in Sinnar block also revealed several challenges that continue to shape their everyday realities.

During one SHG discussion, a member, Sonali, shared her experience of starting a small tailoring activity using a loan from the group. While she had the skills and enthusiasm to expand the work, reaching a larger market remained difficult. Most of her customers were from the same village, and travelling to nearby markets required time, transport, and family support that were not always easily available.

Sonali's case is not an isolated one. Women expressed interest in activities such as food processing, tailoring, beauty services, or small retail businesses. However, many of them

faced limited access to markets, lack of advanced skill training, and uncertainty about how to scale up their enterprises beyond household-level production.

Another frequently mentioned challenge was time constraints. Rural women often balance multiple responsibilities—household work, childcare, agricultural labour, and SHG meetings. Even when livelihood opportunities are available, finding the time and flexibility to pursue them becomes a challenge.

Financial literacy and digital access also emerged as barriers. While SHGs have improved access to savings and small loans, many women still feel hesitant when dealing with formal banking systems, digital transactions, or online platforms that could help expand their businesses.



These experiences highlight an important reality: while programmes like DAY-NRLM have successfully mobilised women into groups and improved financial inclusion, the journey toward full economic empowerment involves addressing deeper structural barriers. Recognising and responding to these challenges will be essential to ensuring that the progress achieved so far translates into sustainable, scalable livelihood opportunities for rural women.

The Next Phase of Women-Led Development

Over the last decade, DAY-NRLM have successfully mobilised millions of women into Self-Help Groups, creating a strong institutional foundation for financial inclusion and collective action.



However, conversations with SHG members indicate that rural women's aspirations are evolving. Many women are no longer content with participating only in savings groups; they are increasingly interested in building sustainable enterprises, accessing larger markets, and taking leadership roles within their communities. In several SHG meetings, women spoke about expanding small activities such as tailoring, food processing, and retail businesses if they could receive better training, market linkages, and financial support.

This shift reflects a broader transition from women's participation in development programmes to women shaping the direction of local development itself. In other words, the focus is gradually moving from "development for women" to "development led by women."

To support this transition, the next phase of rural development initiatives must go beyond basic financial inclusion. Greater emphasis is needed on enterprise development, skill upgrading, market access, and digital literacy to enable SHG members to transform small livelihood activities into viable rural enterprises. Strengthening linkages between SHGs, local markets, producer groups, and financial institutions can play a crucial role in this process.

If these enabling systems are strengthened, the collective strength of SHGs could create a new generation of rural women entrepreneurs and community leaders. The silent changes already detectable in villages like those in Sinnar block suggest that the foundation has been laid—the next challenge is to build pathways that allow these women not only to participate in development, but to lead it.

A Reform Agenda for Inclusive Growth

Women-led development has been built through Self-Help Groups; the next step is to strengthen the systems that allow these women to translate

participation into sustainable livelihoods and leadership. For this transition to happen, a few key policy priorities need greater attention.

First, skill development must move beyond basic training to enterprise-oriented learning. Many SHG women expressed interest in activities such as food processing, tailoring, beauty services, and small retail businesses. However, they often lack advanced technical skills, business planning knowledge, and exposure to market trends. Structured training programmes that combine technical skills with entrepreneurship development could help women transform small household activities into viable rural enterprises.

Second, improving market linkages is essential for scaling women-led enterprises. Many SHG products are currently sold within the village or nearby markets, which limits income potential. Creating stronger connections between SHG enterprises and larger markets—through cooperatives, producer groups, digital platforms, and local fairs—can significantly expand economic opportunities.

Third, strengthening financial and digital literacy can empower women to navigate formal banking systems more confidently. While SHGs have improved access to savings and credit, many women still feel hesitant about digital transactions, online banking, and formal financial institutions. Targeted financial education programmes can help bridge this gap.

Finally, local governance institutions can play a stronger role in supporting women-led initiatives. Panchayati Raj Institutions, block-level agencies, and rural development departments can create enabling environments by supporting SHG enterprises, facilitating access to government schemes, and encouraging women's leadership in community decision-making.

The stories emerging from villages in Sinnar block suggest that rural women are ready to take this next step. What they need now are the right

institutional pathways to turn their aspirations into lasting economic and social change.

A Quiet Transformation in Rural India

As the day ends, the rhythm of rural life slowly settles again in the villages. Fields fall silent, small shops shut their doors, and families gather at home after a long day's work. Yet beneath this familiar routine, a quiet transformation is unfolding.

During my field visits, the most striking change was not always visible in large infrastructure projects or official statistics. Instead, it appeared in smaller, everyday moments: a woman confidently maintaining the SHG register, another discussing plans for a small business, or a group of women collectively deciding how to use their savings. These moments may seem ordinary, but together they reflect a deeper shift in the social and economic landscape of rural communities.

Programmes like DAY-NRLM have created spaces where rural women can come together, share experiences, and gradually build confidence and financial independence. What often begins as a simple savings group can slowly evolve into a platform for learning, entrepreneurship, and leadership.

The stories emerging from villages suggest that women are not only participating in development programmes but are increasingly shaping their own aspirations and futures. In many ways, the future of inclusive rural development in India is already unfolding in these village meetings and conversations. With the right support systems, better training, stronger market linkages, and enabling policies, these small beginnings can grow into a much larger movement of rural transformation. What appears today as a quiet change has the potential to become a powerful force for women-led development across rural India.



Exposure Visit on Best Practices of Mahatma Gandhi NREGS for Karnataka Officials (Batch I)



Participants of the Exposure Visit on Best Practices of Mahatma Gandhi NREGS for officials from Karnataka with Dr V. Suresh Babu, Associate Professor & Head, CWEL, and Dr Anuradha Palla, Assistant Professor, CWEL, NIRDPR

An exposure visit focusing on best practices under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS) was organised for officials from Karnataka from 16 to 18 March 2026 at the National Institute of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj (NIRDPR), Hyderabad. The programme was conducted by the Centre for Wage Employment and Livelihoods (CWEL) with the objective of facilitating cross-learning and strengthening implementation strategies through field-based insights.

The exposure visit provided participants with an opportunity to understand successful models and innovative practices adopted in the implementation of MGNREGS. Sessions at the Institute highlighted key aspects such as planning processes, effective utilisation of resources, transparency mechanisms, and convergence with other development programmes. Emphasis was laid on improving the quality and sustainability of assets created under the scheme.

Field visits formed a significant component of the programme, enabling participants to observe ongoing works and completed projects at the grassroots level. These visits offered practical insights into community participation, asset durability, and the role of local institutions in ensuring effective implementation. Participants interacted with field functionaries and beneficiaries to gain a better understanding of ground-level challenges and solutions.

Discussions during the programme also focused on addressing operational issues, strengthening monitoring systems, and enhancing accountability in the implementation of MGNREGS. Participants deliberated on ways to adapt and replicate successful practices in their respective districts, taking into account local conditions and institutional contexts.

The exposure visit culminated in a reflective session, where participants identified key learnings and potential areas for adaptation in Karnataka.

International Training Programme on Local Governance for Elected Representatives of Sri Lanka



Participants of the International Training Programme on Local Governance for Elected Representatives of Sri Lanka with Dr Anjan Kumar Bhanja, Associate Professor & Head, CPRDP & SSD, NIRDPR, Hyderabad

In a step towards fostering international collaboration and knowledge exchange in local governance, National Institute of Rural the National Institute of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj (NIRDPR), Hyderabad, conducted an international training programme on “Local Governance for Elected Representatives of Sri Lanka” from 9 to 18 March 2026 at the Institute. The programme was organised by the Centre for Panchayati Raj, Decentralised Planning and Social Service Delivery.

The programme focused on key aspects of democratic decentralisation, institutional frameworks, and the functioning of Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) in India. Sessions highlighted the roles and responsibilities of elected representatives in ensuring effective governance, participatory planning, and delivery of public services. Emphasis was placed on inclusive governance practices and community engagement in decision-making processes.

Resource persons shared insights on planning and implementation of development programmes at the

grassroots level, including Gram Panchayat Development Planning (GPDP), convergence of schemes, and monitoring mechanisms. The sessions also covered themes such as financial management, transparency, accountability, and the use of digital tools in governance. Experiences from different states were presented to illustrate successful models of decentralised governance.

The programme included interactive discussions, case studies, and field exposure, providing participants with practical insights into the functioning of local governments. Participants had opportunities to engage with practitioners and observe implementation practices, enabling them to relate theoretical concepts to real-world governance contexts.

The programme concluded with a focus on cross-learning and institutional cooperation between India and Sri Lanka in local governance. Participants acknowledged the programme's relevance and expressed interest in adopting suitable practices to strengthen decentralised governance and service delivery in their respective regions.

Training Programme on Mushroom Production Technology under Lakhpati Didi Initiative



Dr C. Kathiresan, Associate Professor & Head, CIAT&SJ; Mr Mohammed Khan, Senior Consultant, RTP-CIAT; and Mr G. Murli Krishna, Manager, AV, with participants of Training Programme on Mushroom Production Technology under Lakhpati Didi Initiative

The DAY-NRLM Resource Cell, National Institute of Rural Rural Raj (NIRDPR), Hyderabad, organised a four-day Training Programme on Mushroom Production Technology under the Lakhpati Didi Initiative from 02 to 05 March 2026 at the Rural Technology Park. The programme was conducted by the Centre for Innovations and Appropriate Technologies for Skills and Jobs (CIAT&SJ) with the objective of promoting sustainable livelihood opportunities for rural women through skill development and entrepreneurship.

The training programme focused on imparting both theoretical knowledge and hands-on practical skills in scientific mushroom cultivation. The sessions covered key aspects such as selection of suitable mushroom varieties, preparation of substrates, spawning techniques, crop management, pest and disease control, and post-harvest handling. Emphasis was also laid on low-cost technologies and locally adaptable practices to ensure scalability at the grassroots level.

As part of the programme, participants were provided practical

exposure at the Rural Technology Park, where they observed live demonstrations on bed preparation, inoculation, and maintenance of optimal growing conditions. The interactive sessions enabled participants to clarify their doubts and gain confidence in adopting mushroom cultivation as a viable income-generating activity.

The programme also highlighted the importance of value addition, packaging, and market linkages in enhancing profitability. Discussions were held on entrepreneurship development, access to institutional support, and convergence with ongoing government schemes to promote women-led enterprises under the Lakhpati Didi Initiative.

The training saw active participation from women from different regions, reflecting a strong interest in adopting innovative livelihood practices. The programme concluded with a feedback session, during which participants expressed satisfaction with the quality of the training and indicated their willingness to establish mushroom cultivation units in their respective areas.

Training Programme on Business Diversification Opportunities and Best Practices of PACCS



Dr Aryashree Debapriya, Associate Professor, CPGS & DE, and A. Parasuramudu, Library and Information Assistant, with participants during the Training Programme on Business Diversification Opportunities and Best Practices of PACCS

The National Institute of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj (NIRDPR), Hyderabad, organised a five-day training programme on “Business Diversification Opportunities and Best Practices of PACCS for Presidents/BODs and CEOs of PACCS and LAMPCS” from 16 to 20 March 2026 at the Institute. Sponsored by the Department of Cooperation, Government of Odisha, the programme aimed to strengthen the functional and managerial capacities of cooperative leaders in promoting sustainable and diversified business models.

The programme focused on the evolving role of Primary Agricultural Credit Cooperative Societies (PACCS) and Large Area Multi-Purpose Cooperative Societies (LAMPCS) in supporting rural economies beyond their traditional credit functions. Sessions highlighted the need for diversification into areas such as agri-business services, input supply, storage, processing, and marketing to enhance financial viability and member services.

Resource persons discussed a range of successful models and field experiences demonstrating how cooperatives have expanded their activities through innovative business strategies. Emphasis was laid on identifying locally relevant opportunities, strengthening governance structures, improving financial management practices, and ensuring accountability in cooperative functioning. The sessions also examined policy frameworks and institutional support mechanisms that facilitate diversification of cooperative activities.

The training programme incorporated interactive discussions, case studies, and experience-sharing sessions, enabling participants to analyse challenges and opportunities in their respective contexts. Participants engaged in deliberations on issues such as market access, infrastructure constraints, capacity gaps, and the need for professional management in cooperatives. Practical approaches to overcoming these challenges were discussed in detail.

Special sessions were devoted to understanding value addition, supply chain management, and market linkages, with a focus on enhancing the competitiveness of cooperative enterprises. Participants were also exposed to strategies for leveraging government schemes and financial instruments to support business expansion and sustainability.

The programme concluded with participants outlining potential diversification plans for their respective cooperatives, reflecting on the applicability of the concepts discussed.

Training Programme on Strengthening Agripreneurship and Value Chain Development: Role of Panchayats



Participants of the Training Programme on Strengthening Agripreneurship and Value Chain Development: Role of Panchayats posing for the photo

A two-day training programme on “Strengthening Agripreneurship and Value Chain Development: Role of Panchayats” was organised on 5–6 March 2026 at the National Institute of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj (NIRDPR), Hyderabad. The programme was conducted by the School of Excellence in Panchayati Raj (SoEPR) with the objective of strengthening the role of Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) in promoting agripreneurship and enhancing value chain development.

The programme focused on the role of Panchayats in facilitating an enabling ecosystem for agripreneurs by supporting production, aggregation, processing, and marketing activities. Sessions highlighted the importance of the convergence of schemes, institutional support, and local planning in strengthening agricultural value chains. Emphasis was laid on identifying opportunities for value addition and improving market access for rural producers.

Resource persons elaborated on various aspects of agripreneurship, including enterprise development,

access to finance, capacity building, and strengthening Farmer-Producer Organisations (FPOs). Discussions also covered best practices and successful models from different states, illustrating how Panchayats can play a proactive role in fostering local economic development.

The programme included interactive sessions and experience sharing, enabling participants to exchange ideas and learn from each other’s experiences. Participants discussed challenges in value chain development and explored strategies to address issues related to market linkages, infrastructure gaps, and institutional coordination.

The training witnessed participation from officials and practitioners associated with Panchayati Raj Institutions. The participants appreciated the programme for its practical insights and relevance to field-level implementation, and expressed their interest in applying the learnings to promote agripreneurship and strengthen value chains in their respective areas.

Training of Trainers on LokOS Application for eMTs – NRO, Telangana SERP



Participants of the ToT on GRC Strengthening, Case Management, and Legal Literacy under DAY-NRLM posing for a group photograph

The DAY-NRLM Resource Cell of the National Institute of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj (NIRDPR), Hyderabad, conducted a four-day Training of Trainers (ToT) programme on the LokOS Application for Enterprise Management Teams (eMTs) from 05 to 08 March 2026. The programme was organised in collaboration with NRO and Telangana SERP to strengthen the capacities of trainers in effectively utilising digital platforms for enterprise management.

The programme aimed at enhancing participants' understanding of the use of the LokOS application in supporting livelihood enterprises under the National Rural Livelihoods Mission (NRLM). Sessions covered key modules such as enterprise profiling, financial management, performance tracking, and reporting systems. Emphasis was placed on leveraging digital tools to improve transparency, efficiency, and real-time monitoring of enterprise activities.

Hands-on training formed a major component of the programme, enabling participants to work directly on the LokOS platform. Demonstrations and practical exercises were conducted to familiarise them with data entry

processes, validation protocols, and troubleshooting methods. The sessions were designed to be interactive, ensuring better comprehension and skill development.

The programme also included discussions on the role of Enterprise Management Teams (eMTs) in strengthening grassroots enterprises. Participants shared their field experiences and deliberated on challenges in adopting digital systems, including capacity constraints and coordination issues. Strategies to address these challenges and improve implementation were also discussed.

The programme saw active participation from officials and functionaries associated with Telangana SERP. In the concluding session, participants highlighted the usefulness of the training in strengthening their understanding of digital tools for enterprise management. They expressed confidence in applying the learnings in their respective areas and emphasised the need for continued capacity building to support effective implementation at the grassroots level.

Training of Trainers on Quality GPDP



Participants of the ToT Programme on Quality GPDP with Dr Anjan Kumar Bhanja, Associate Professor & Head, CPRDP & SSD, NIRDPR

The School of Excellence in Panchayati Raj (SoEPR), National Institute of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj (NIRDPR), Hyderabad, organised a three-day Training of Trainers (ToT) programme on Quality Gram Panchayat Development Plan (GPDP) from 11 to 13 March 2026 at the Institute. The programme aimed to strengthen trainers' capacities to facilitate the preparation of comprehensive, high-quality GPDPs in line with national guidelines.

The training programme focused on enhancing participants' understanding of participatory planning processes and on integrating sectoral priorities into GPDP. Sessions covered key components such as situational analysis, resource mapping, prioritisation of needs, and scheme convergence. Emphasis was placed on ensuring inclusiveness, transparency, and evidence-based planning at the Gram Panchayat level.

Resource persons discussed methodologies for improving the quality of GPDPs through effective

facilitation, use of data, and community engagement. The sessions also highlighted the importance of aligning GPDPs with Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and local development priorities. Practical insights were shared on addressing challenges in planning, implementation, and monitoring of GPDPs.

The programme included interactive sessions, group exercises, and case-based discussions to provide hands-on experience in preparing quality plans. Participants actively engaged in the exercises, which enabled them to better understand the nuances of participatory planning and the role of trainers in guiding the process at the grassroots level.

The programme concluded with participants outlining strategies for strengthening the GPDP process in their respective areas. They underscored the importance of continuous capacity building and institutional support to ensure that Gram Panchayat plans are realistic, inclusive, and responsive to local needs.

Training Programme on Business Diversification Opportunities and Best Practices of PACCS



Dr S. Jyothis, Professor & Head, CPGS & DE, along with Dr Aryashree Debapriya, Associate Professor, CPGS & DE, with participants of the Training Programme on Business Diversification Opportunities and Best Practices of PACCS and LAMPCS

The National Institute of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj (NIRDPR), Hyderabad, organised a five-day training programme on “Business Diversification Opportunities and Best Practices of PACCS for Presidents/BODs and CEOs of PACCS and LAMPCS” from 9 to 13 March 2026 at the Institute. The programme was sponsored by the Department of Cooperation, Government of Odisha, and aimed at strengthening the managerial and operational capacities of cooperative leaders.

The programme focused on exploring diversification opportunities for Primary Agricultural Credit Cooperative Societies (PACCS) and Large Area Multi-Purpose Cooperative Societies (LAMPCS) to enhance their sustainability and profitability. Sessions highlighted the evolving role of cooperatives in rural economies and the need to expand beyond traditional credit functions into diversified business activities.

Resource persons discussed various models of successful cooperative

enterprises, covering areas such as agri-business, input supply, value addition, storage, and marketing. Emphasis was placed on identifying locally relevant business opportunities, improving governance practices, and strengthening financial management within cooperatives. The sessions also provided insights into policy support and institutional mechanisms available for promoting cooperative enterprises.

The programme included interactive discussions and experience sharing, enabling participants to learn from best practices across different states. Participants deliberated on challenges faced by PACCS and LAMPCS in diversifying their activities and explored practical strategies to address these constraints.

The programme concluded with participants recognising the importance of adopting innovative business approaches to strengthen cooperative institutions. They expressed their intent to explore diversification opportunities in their respective societies and to apply the learnings in improving the performance and viability of PACCS and LAMPCS.

BDO Leadership Programme on Bringing Saturation in RD Programmes: Building Prosperous Blocks



Dr. Ravindra S. Gavali, Professor & Head, CNRM, CC & DM, and Dr. R. Aruna Jayamani, Assistant Professor, CGG&PA, with participants of the Training Programme on BDO Leadership for Bringing Saturation in RD Programmes: Building Prosperous Blocks

The National Institute of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj (NIRDPR), Hyderabad, organised a six-day training programme on “BDO Leadership for Bringing Saturation in RD Programmes: Building Prosperous Blocks” from 9 to 14 March 2026 at the Institute. The programme was designed to strengthen the leadership capacities of Block Development Officers (BDOs) in achieving saturation of rural development programmes and ensuring comprehensive development at the block level.

The programme focused on enhancing the role of BDOs in planning, implementation, and monitoring of rural development schemes. Sessions highlighted the importance of convergence of various flagship programmes, effective utilisation of resources, and strengthening institutional mechanisms to achieve saturation. Emphasis was laid on evidence-based planning, data-driven decision-making, and improving service delivery at the grassroots level.

Resource persons discussed strategies for improving programme

implementation through better coordination among departments, community participation, and accountability mechanisms. The sessions also covered best practices and successful models from different states, providing practical insights into achieving saturation in key development indicators. Discussions were held on addressing challenges such as coverage gaps, implementation delays, and capacity constraints.

The programme included interactive sessions and experience sharing, enabling participants to reflect on their field-level experiences and learn from one another. Participants deliberated on innovative approaches to strengthen block-level governance and improve outcomes in sectors such as livelihoods, infrastructure, and social development.

The programme concluded with a forward-looking discussion on translating leadership approaches into measurable outcomes at the block level. Participants outlined action points to strengthen convergence, improve last-mile delivery, and ensure inclusive coverage of schemes, indicating a clear orientation towards achieving saturation in rural development programmes.

Training Programme on Convergence of PMKSY 2.0 with Mahatma Gandhi NREGS



Dr Jyothis Sathyapalan, Professor & Head, CPGS & DE, and Dr Nithya V. G., Assistant Professor, CAS, addressing participants during the Training Programme on Convergence of PMKSY 2.0 with Mahatma Gandhi NREGS

The Centre for Agrarian Studies, National Institute of Rural Development, through its Centre for Agrarian Studies, organised a five-day Training Programme on “Convergence of PMKSY 2.0 with Mahatma Gandhi NREGS” from 23 to 27 February 2026. The programme was conducted in collaboration with the Department of Land Resources, Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India.

The programme was designed to strengthen institutional capacities for effective convergence between Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana (PMKSY 2.0) and Mahatma Gandhi NREGS, with a focus on integrated watershed management, sustainable natural resource development, and improved livelihood outcomes. Officials from various States participated in the training, representing departments associated with rural development, watershed programmes, and employment guarantee schemes.

The sessions covered key aspects of convergence planning, technical and

administrative coordination, preparation of integrated action plans, resource optimisation, and monitoring mechanisms. Emphasis was laid on aligning watershed development interventions with wage employment activities under MGNREGS to ensure durable asset creation, improved water conservation, soil health management, and enhanced agricultural productivity.

The programme featured expert lectures, thematic presentations, interactive discussions, and experience-sharing sessions that enabled participants to exchange field-level insights and best practices. Case studies highlighting successful convergence models were also discussed to facilitate replication across States.

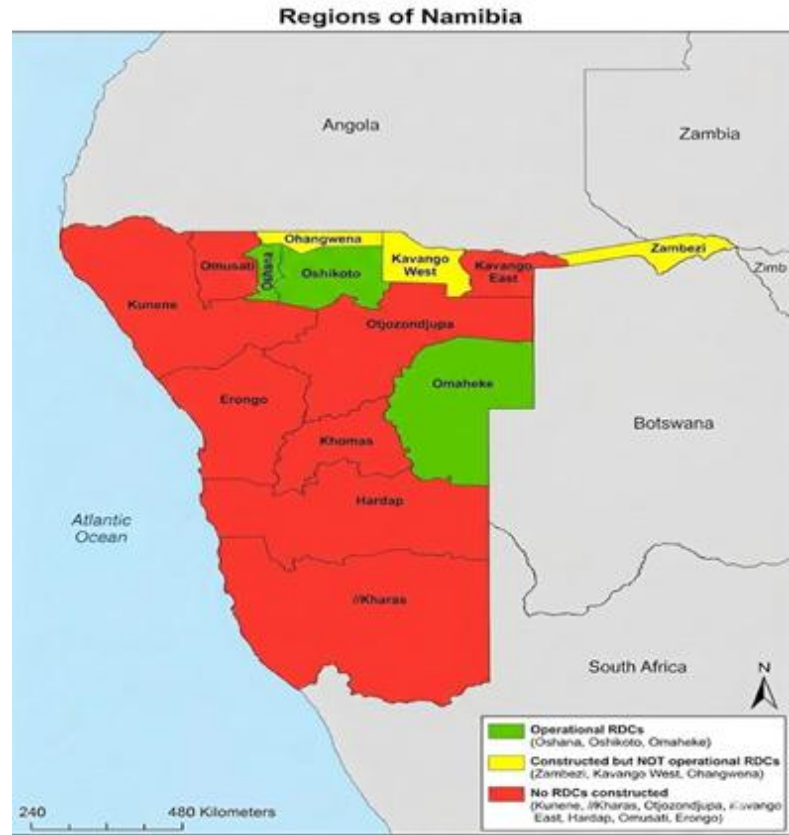
The training programme contributed to strengthening collaborative planning and promoting sustainable and inclusive rural transformation through effective convergence of flagship schemes.

NRLM-RC Deputy Director’s Namibia Visit Focuses on Strengthening Rural Development Centres



NRLM-RC Deputy Director’s Meeting with UNDP, Namibia

Namibia, located in southwestern Africa, is a country defined by its vast landscapes, low population density, and unique development challenges. Despite its rich natural resources and political stability, Namibia continues to face structural constraints in its rural economy, where large distances, scattered settlements, and limited market access hinder inclusive growth. Agriculture and livestock remain central to rural livelihoods, yet issues such as high input costs, post-harvest losses, and weak value chains continue to restrict income realisation for smallholders. In this context, the Republic of Namibia has placed strong emphasis on strengthening rural institutions, particularly Rural Development Centres (RDCs), to act as engines of localised economic development under its Sixth National Development Plan. It was within this broader development landscape that Dr Jyoti Prakash Mohanty, Deputy Director at the National Institute of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj (NIRDPR), undertook a deputation to Namibia from February to March 2026. The deputation to Namibia represents a significant step in advancing South-



South cooperation in rural development, bringing together institutional expertise and global partnerships to address systemic challenges in rural economies. Undertaken as part of a collaborative initiative between the National Institute of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj (NIRDPR), the African-Asian Rural Development Organization (AARDO), and the Government of Namibia, the mission aimed to develop a sustainable and scalable business model for Rural Development Centres (RDCs).

Field Assessment and Key Observations

The study was initiated with a series of high-level courtesy consultations aimed at aligning the Rural Development Centres (RDC) revitalisation agenda with global development frameworks and international cooperation opportunities. Early engagements with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the High

Commission of India in Namibia provided critical strategic direction to the assignment. Discussions with UNDP highlighted strong convergence with its programmatic focus on climate-resilient agriculture, green and inclusive economic growth, entrepreneurship development, and institutional strengthening. At the same time, key challenges such as weak community governance, limited water access, and institutional capacity gaps were identified as areas requiring targeted intervention. Parallel consultations with the High Commission of India underscored opportunities for capacity building through the ITEC programme, technical assistance, feasibility studies, and implementation of small-scale, high-impact community projects. These initial interactions not only grounded the mission within a broader ecosystem of development partnerships but also reinforced the need to reposition RDCs as integrated hubs for innovation, skills development, enterprise promotion, and climate-smart rural transformation.

The study adopted a comprehensive mixed-method approach, combining field visits, stakeholder consultations, focus group discussions, and institutional assessments across multiple regions, including Khomas, Omaheke, Oshana, Oshikoto, Ohangwena, Kavango West, and Zambezi. Engagements were held with government departments, regional councils, international organisations, traditional authorities, and local communities to ensure grounded insights into both systemic challenges and emerging opportunities.

A critical finding across all operational RDCs was the presence of significant “performance gaps” between intended objectives and actual service delivery. While centres such as Ongwediva demonstrated relatively strong performance in

hospitality services, particularly in catering operations, contributing substantially to revenue, other functional areas such as training, outreach, and technology development were underperforming. Demonstration units and workshops existed but were often poorly maintained, limiting their effectiveness as learning platforms.

At Okashana RDC, despite its strategic proximity to tourism hubs such as Etosha National Park, opportunities for tourism-driven growth remained underutilised due to outdated infrastructure, weak internet connectivity, and limited digital integration. Similarly, Ben Hur RDC showcased successful initiatives, such as poultry revolving funds and livestock vaccination programs, yet these efforts were severely constrained by acute human resource shortages, with vacancy rates exceeding 70 per cent in some centres.

Across all regions, a recurring challenge was the stagnation of innovation within Appropriate Technology (AT) units. Most centres continued to rely on outdated fabrication techniques with minimal introduction of new technologies over the past decade. Centralised production models further compounded inefficiencies by increasing transportation costs and limiting access for dispersed rural populations.

At the same time, the mission identified strong regional comparative advantages that remain largely untapped. Omaheke demonstrated significant potential in livestock value addition, Oshikoto emerged as a promising agricultural production hub, and Zambezi and Kavango West showed opportunities in high-value horticulture and timber-based industries, respectively. However, structural barriers such as fragmented market systems, high transaction costs, and weak aggregation mechanisms continue to suppress rural incomes and limit the commercial viability of RDC operations.



Meeting with Executive Director, Director, Deputy Director & Chief Development Planner, Ministry of Urban and Rural Development, Republic of Namibia.

Strategic Framework for Transformation

In response to these findings, the report proposes a paradigm shift from a supply-driven extension model to a demand-driven rural enterprise framework. At the core of this transformation is the repositioning of RDCs as integrated economic hubs that facilitate market access, enterprise development, and value addition.

A key recommendation is the development of RDCs as market aggregators, enabling the consolidation of produce from smallholder farmers to achieve economies of scale and improved bargaining power. This approach directly addresses one of the most critical bottlenecks in rural economies, limited market access and creates a pathway for enhanced income realisation.

The **hospitality sector**, already a primary revenue generator, is

identified as a critical pillar for financial sustainability. Modernisation through digital booking systems, infrastructure upgrades, and bundled service offerings can significantly enhance occupancy rates and revenue streams, particularly in tourism-linked regions.

The report further emphasises strategic diversification through the establishment of Agri-Malls, Custom Hiring Centres, and decentralised manufacturing units. Agri-Malls would provide access to quality inputs such as seeds and animal feed, while also facilitating aggregation and market linkages. Custom Hiring Centres would enable farmers to access machinery and equipment at affordable rates, thereby improving productivity and reducing capital constraints.

In addition, the introduction of **enterprise incubation programmes** is recommended to support youth and women in developing sustainable livelihoods. These programmes would provide training, technical support, and market linkage assistance in sectors such as agro-processing, tailoring, and fabrication.

A significant innovation proposed is the adoption of the **Community Resource Person (CRP) model**, inspired by successful rural development interventions in India. CRPs would act as the last-mile delivery agents, bridging the gap between RDCs and rural communities by facilitating outreach, training, and technology dissemination.



Meeting With Rural Farmers and Regional Council Team

Implementation Roadmap and Institutional Strengthening

The transformation of RDCs requires a phased and structured implementation approach. In the short term, priorities include filling critical staff vacancies, restructuring organisational frameworks, activating quick-win enterprises such as tailoring units, and introducing digital systems for financial management and service delivery.

Medium-term strategies focus on establishing Agri-Malls, strengthening public-private-community partnerships, and leveraging collaborations with technical institutions for innovation and capacity building. In the long term, the vision is to scale renewable energy solutions, develop export-oriented value chains, and achieve full operational sustainability.

Institutional strengthening emerges as a critical enabler of this transformation. The current staffing deficits severely limit the ability of RDCs to transition from maintenance-oriented operations to innovation-driven growth. Addressing these gaps through targeted recruitment, skill development, and partnerships with vocational training institutions is essential.

Furthermore, the introduction of transparent financial systems, standardised operational frameworks, and robust monitoring mechanisms will enhance accountability and efficiency. Risk mitigation strategies,

including digital accounting, infrastructure resilience, and formal market agreements, are also integral to ensuring long-term sustainability.

Conclusion and Way Forward

The transformation of Namibia’s Rural Development Centres represents a strategic opportunity to redefine rural development as a driver of economic growth rather than a recipient of subsidies. By leveraging regional strengths, promoting innovation, and adopting a market-oriented approach, RDCs can evolve into catalytic “nerve centres” of rural economies.

The proposed business model envisions a future where community empowerment itself becomes a revenue-generating mechanism, creating a circular rural economy in which increased productivity drives demand for services, thereby sustaining the institutions that support it. Achieving grant independence within a ten-year horizon is both ambitious and attainable, provided there is committed implementation, strong institutional leadership, and sustained multi-stakeholder collaboration.

With continued support from national and international partners, and a clear focus on innovation, inclusivity, and sustainability, RDCs in Namibia are well-positioned to lead the next phase of rural transformation, one that is resilient, self-sustaining, and deeply rooted in the aspirations of its people.



Meeting With Rural Farmers and Regional Council Team



Workshop for Consolidation of the Field Observations

Workshop on Participatory Methods in Panchayati Raj Capacity Building and Training



Dr Anjan Kumar Bhanja, Associate Professor & Head, CPRDP & SSD, NIRDPR with participants during the Workshop on Participatory Methods in Panchayati Raj Capacity Building and Training

The School of Excellence in Panchayati Raj (SoEPR), National Institute of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj (NIRDPR), Hyderabad, organised a two-day workshop on “Participatory Methods in Panchayati Raj Capacity Building and Training” on March 10–11, 2026 at the Institute. The workshop aimed to strengthen participatory approaches in capacity building processes and enhance the effectiveness of training methodologies in Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs).

The workshop focused on the importance of participatory methods in promoting inclusive decision-making and improving the quality of local governance. Sessions highlighted tools and techniques that facilitate community engagement, active participation, and collective problem-solving. Emphasis was laid on integrating participatory learning approaches into training programmes for PRI representatives and functionaries.

Resource persons elaborated on various participatory methodologies, including group exercises, experiential learning techniques, and field-based approaches. The sessions also explored the role of facilitators in creating an enabling environment for participation and ensuring that diverse voices, especially those of marginalised groups, are effectively included in the decision-making process.

The workshop provided a platform for interactive learning, where participants engaged in group discussions, simulations, and practical exercises. These activities enabled participants to experience participatory methods firsthand and understand their application in real-life training and capacity-building contexts.

The workshop concluded with participants reflecting on the applicability of participatory approaches in their respective domains. They emphasised the need to adapt training methodologies to local contexts and expressed their commitment to incorporating participatory practices in future capacity-building initiatives within Panchayati Raj systems.

Workshop on Village Adhyan: Identifying Proposals for Community Engagement Projects



Dr R. Ramesh, Associate Professor & Head, CRI, NIRDPR, with participants of Workshop on Village Adhyan: Proposal for the Next Cycle of Community Engagement Projects

The Centre for Rural Infrastructure (CRI) at NIRDPR serves as a Subject Expert Group (SEG) under the Unnat Bharat Abhiyan (UBA). As part of its mandate, the UBA-SEG at NIRDPR focuses on capacity building, developing strategies for convergence, and supporting the implementation of various government schemes.

Under its capacity-building initiatives, NIRDPR-SEG has recently developed a series of Village Adhyan Toolkits. This set of seven toolkits provides practical tools and structured guidance for conducting village studies and strengthening community engagement.

In this context, a two-day workshop titled “Village Adhyan: Proposal for the Next Cycle of Community Engagement Projects” was organized on 17th and 18th March 2026 at the NIRDPR campus. The programme was attended by the Regional Coordinating Institutions (RCIs), Subject Expert Groups (SEGs), and Participating Institutions (PIs).

The workshop featured a range of thematic sessions, including:

- Overview of the Village Adhyan Toolkit Series
- Project Proposal Writing Canvas and the use of AI tools
- Indian Innovations: Technical, Managerial, and Social



Dr C. Kathiresan, Associate Professor & Head, CIAT&SJ, presenting prizes to participants for best back-home plans during the Village Adhyan Workshop at NIRDPR

- Rural Livelihoods and Entrepreneurship
- Creating Model Villages
- Smart Villages for Vikshit Bharat 2047
- No-cost and low-cost activities for impactful outcomes
- Key government schemes and programmes relevant to rural development

A practical demonstration session was also conducted on important web portals that UBA coordinators need to be familiar with, particularly LSDGs, Panchayat Advancement Index (PAI), Gram Panchayat Development Plan (GPDP), Mission Antyodaya, and e-Gramswaraj.

The workshop concluded with participants presenting their “back-home plans,” outlining actionable strategies for implementing learnings in their service villages. Prizes were also awarded for the best presentations.

Workshop on Training Needs Assessment for Strengthening Service Delivery at the Grassroots



Participants with Dr Anjan Kumar Bhanja, Associate Professor & Head, CPRDP & SSD, during the Workshop on Strengthening Service Delivery at the Grassroots Level

A Training Needs Assessment (TNA) Workshop for strengthening Service Delivery at Grass root levels was conducted by the School of Excellence in Panchayati Raj (SoEPR) from 17th to 18th March 2026 at NIRDPR, Hyderabad. The workshop brought together officials, practitioners, elected representatives, and experts to collectively refine approaches for improving service delivery systems.

The primary objective of the workshop was to discuss, brainstorm, and deliberate on the various core services provided at the Gram Panchayat level across different states.

In the inaugural session, Dr A.K. Bhanja, Associate Professor and Head, CPRDP&SSD, emphasised the importance of effective service delivery at the grassroots level to enhance ease of living and ensure transparency. He also opined that Training Need Analysis is needed to identify gaps in knowledge, skills, and attitudes (KSA) among Panchayat

functionaries understand challenges in delivering core services and identify performance gaps in service delivery.

He requested that the experts develop an effective TNA framework for service delivery during the two-day workshop, actively involving themselves and leveraging their expertise.

The workshop began with participants being divided into small, heterogeneous groups comprising elected representatives (ERs), officials from the Panchayati Raj Department, and consultants. The group discussions were actively guided and facilitated by Dr Rajan, Ex-Associate Professor, KILA, Mr Prabir Bose, Partner, Vikalp Kriya, Goa, and Mr Shibabrata Kar, Former Consultant, MoPR, who helped steer the conversations in a focused manner.

Within the groups, participants engaged in detailed deliberations on the expected standards of service delivery by Panchayats vis-à-vis the current ground reality. The discussions focused on identifying the gaps between the desired and existing

situations, followed by a causal analysis to understand the underlying reasons for these gaps.

At the outset, the house collectively agreed on a set of priority service areas that would form the core focus of the TNA. These included:

1. Sanitation & Public Health
2. Certificates, Permits, and Licenses
3. Welfare Schemes (MGNREGS - Job Cards, PDS, pensions, etc.)
4. Property-related services (SVAMITVA, mutation)
5. Maintenance of basic assets (roads, water supply connections, minor drainage, street lighting)

Building on these focus areas, the workshop adopted a structured approach to develop a comprehensive TNA framework. Participants further

deliberated on the appropriate methodology and tools required for conducting the assessment effectively. Attention was also given to identifying the States, Districts, Blocks, and Gram Panchayats to be covered under the TNA exercise, ensuring a representative and practical scope for implementation.

The workshop concluded with a clear roadmap for future action. This would be followed by the finalisation and consolidation of the TNA tools, paving the way for a systematic and evidence-based approach to strengthening service delivery at the grassroots level. The workshop was coordinated by Dr Mohisuddin, Dr Sumit Meshram, Dr J. Saravanan and Ms K. Vidyullatha, Consultants of SoEPR.



NIRDPR Delhi Branch Organises Two-Day Writeshop-cum-Workshop on Preparation of Case Studies, Success Stories, Short Films and Documentation



Participants with Dr Partha Pratim Sahu, Associate Professor & Head (i/c), CEDFI & CGG&PA, and Dr Ruchira Bhattacharya, Assistant Professor, CSR, PPP, PA (Delhi Branch), during the National-level Writeshop-cum-Workshop on Documentation under PMKSY-WDC 2.0 at NIRDPR Delhi Branch.

A two-day national-level writeshop-cum-workshop was conducted on 24-25 March 2026 at the Delhi Branch of the National Institute of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj (NIRDPR), with the support of the Department of Land Resources (DoLR), MoRD, Government of India. The workshop focused on strengthening the documentation ecosystem under the Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana - Watershed Development Component (WDC) 2.0.

The primary objective of the workshop was to develop a structured and comprehensive Training of Trainers (ToT) module on effective documentation methodologies for stakeholders engaged in watershed development programmes. The workshop brought together 31 participants from diverse institutional backgrounds, including academia, government agencies, think tanks, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), and civil society organisations (CSOs). Participants represented leading institutions such as NITI Aayog, Jawaharlal Nehru University, Delhi University, Jamia Milia Islamia, and other prominent research and training

institutions, including NCAER, TERI, NIUA, ISST, CWDS ensuring a multidisciplinary and practice-oriented

The workshop was designed as a participatory and outcome-oriented engagement combining expert-led sessions with collaborative group work. The structure comprised thematic sessions on Day I followed by intensive group-based design exercises on Day II. The inaugural session introduced participants to the PMKSY-WDC 2.0 framework and emphasized the critical importance of systematic documentation for capturing field-level impacts and informing policy learning. Three thematic areas were covered in the discussions: i) Types of Documentation - Case Studies and Success Stories ii) Writing Case Studies and Success Stories from Watershed Projects and iii) Leveraging Print and Digital Media for Dissemination. Each session included expert presentations followed by open-house discussions, enabling participants to critically engage with both conceptual and practical aspects of documentation.

The second day focused on translating conceptual insights into actionable

outputs through structured group work. Participants were divided into thematic groups and tasked with designing components of a five-day ToT programme.

Key activities included:

- Development of session-wise training plans for the proposed ToT.
- Identification of core content areas and modules.
- Designing training methodologies and pedagogical tools.

- Compilation of case material and documentation resources.
- Identification of a pool of resource persons.

The group discussions were interactive and participatory, allowing participants to draw upon their institutional experiences and sectoral expertise. Each group presented its outputs in a plenary session, followed by feedback and consolidation discussions.



Groups presenting its outputs in a plenary session

The workshop achieved several significant outcomes:

1. Draft Framework for a Five-Day ToT Programme

A comprehensive structure for the ToT was developed, including session sequencing, thematic coverage, and pedagogical approaches.

2. Development of Training Content and Modules

Participants contributed to the creation of preliminary modules covering documentation techniques, storytelling, media engagement, and digital dissemination.

3. Standardisation of Documentation Practices

The workshop facilitated a shared understanding of quality standards in case study writing and success story documentation, including methodological rigour and ethical considerations. Also, emphasis on visual storytelling and short films marked a shift towards dynamic and accessible forms of documentation.

4. Compilation of Knowledge Resources

Initial efforts were made to collate caselets and digital resources to support the ToT.

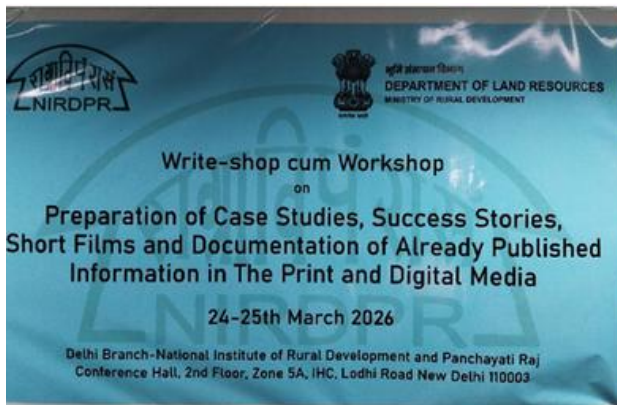
The closing session focused on consolidating the proceedings and outlining the next steps. Key recommendations include:

- Finalisation and pilot testing of the five-day ToT module
- Development of standardised templates and guidelines for documentation
- Continued engagement with the expert network for scaling up training efforts

The workshop concluded with a strong consensus on the importance of sustained collaboration between government institutions, academia, and civil society to enhance the quality and impact of documentation in rural development programmes. The two-day writeshop-cum-workshop successfully,

created a platform for interdisciplinary dialogue and collaborative design, resulting in tangible outputs aligned with the objectives of the DoLR and NIRDPR. The workshop has laid a robust foundation for strengthening documentation practices within watershed development initiatives under PMKSY-WDC 2.0. The outcomes of the workshop are expected to significantly contribute to improved documentation and the effective dissemination of field-level innovations in rural development.

The workshop was coordinated by Dr. Partha Pratim Sahu, Associate Professor and Head CEDFI, NIRD-PR Hyderabad and Dr. Ruchira Bhattacharya, Assistant Professor and Head, NIRD-PR Delhi Branch.





NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT AND PANCHAYATI RAJ
(Ministry of Rural Development, Govt. of India)
Rajendranagar, Hyderabad – 500 030

ADMISSION NOTIFICATION

POST GRADUATE DIPLOMA IN RURAL DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT (PGDRDM) 2026-27 BATCH-24
ONE YEAR FULL-TIME RESIDENTIAL PROGRAMME

National Institute of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj (NIRDPR) is a premier national center of excellence in rural development. It builds capacities of the rural development functionaries, elected representatives, academicians and young students through interactive research activities. Being NIRDPR faculty comprises experienced academicians and development practitioners. For more details about the Institute and the PGDRDM programme, please visit Website (<http://www.nirdpr.org.in/pgdrdm.aspx>).

NIRDPR announces a One-year full-time 'Post Graduate Diploma in Rural Development Management (PGDRDM)' with an aim to create a committed and competent cadre of rural development professionals in the country. The programme seeks to impart management techniques that will enhance the understanding of the paradigm and practice of rural development.

ELIGIBILITY:

- Minimum 50% marks (45% marks for SC/ST and PWD candidates) or equivalent in Graduation.
- Students who are in the final year and expect to complete all the requirements before 15th July 2026, may also apply.

SELECTION PROCESS: Shortlisted candidates based on their graduation marks shall be called for group discussion and personal interview for final selection.

The candidate should apply through online from in web portal i.e. www.nirdpr.org.in/pgdrdm.aspx. Shortlisted candidates will be called for Group Discussion and Personal Interviews for final selection of the programme.

PROGRAMME DURATION: One year

COURSE FEE: Rs.2,53,000/- per annum

Board and Lodging: The board and lodging expenses will be Rs.1,22,430/- per annum. Accommodation will be given to the students in the NIRDPR Hostel.

Caution Deposit: A refundable Caution Deposit of Rs.10,000 is to be paid along with the First Trimester Fee.

Seat Registration Fee: Upon selection, a non-refundable Seat Registration Fee of Rs. 20,000 should be paid by the students. This amount will be adjusted against the First Trimester Fee.

SCHOLARSHIPS:

- Few meritorious students will be eligible for NIRDPR's Scholarship based on their performance during the trimester examination as per the NIRDPR Policy. The North Eastern Council, Shillong, will be approached for giving fellowships to economically backward students of North Eastern states.

RESERVATION: Reservations for the students of the SC/ST/OBC (Non-creamy layer) EWS and Persons with Disability (PWD) will be made as per the Government of India norms.

PLACEMENT: NIRDPR will make efforts for placement, but does not guarantee the same. Institute has a track record of 100% placement across the batches till today.

HOW TO APPLY:

Applications are to be submitted online only at www.nirdpr.org.in/pgdrdm.aspx.

Before applying the candidates must have the following in hand:

- Application fee of Rs.400/- (Rs.200/- for SC/ST, EWS and PWD candidates) has to be made through Online only.
- Application form will be available on www.nirdpr.org.in/pgdrdm.aspx
- Valid and active personal Email-Id, Mobile Number for verification and future correspondence
- Last date for online submission is 15-05-2026. Applications received after the last date shall not be accepted.**
- NIRDPR reserves the right to make any changes to the Management Programme, its design/content and the process of selection, depending upon the exigencies without assigning any reasons whatsoever.

For further information in this regard, contact:

Coordinator (Admissions)

Centre for PG Studies and Distance Education
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Rajendranagar, Hyderabad-500030, India
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Web: <http://www.nirdpr.org.in/pgdrdm.aspx>



Scan Me

New Institutions On-Boarded to Expand the Network of UBA Institutions

Dr R Ramesh

Associate Professor
UBA Coordinator
NIRDPR, Hyderabad



Participants with Dr. R. Ramesh, Associate Professor & Head, CRI, and Dr. Lakhan Singh, Assistant Professor, CHR, during the Orientation Workshop for newly on boarded UBA Institutions at NIRDPR, Hyderabad.

NIRDPR as Regional Coordinating Institute (RCI) on-boarded new institutions to expand the network of UBA Institutions. With the existing 41 institutions and nine more currently enrolled, we have nearly 50 institutions that are mentored by NIRDPR on outreach activities.

In this context, a workshop was conducted on 6th March 2026 at the NIRDPR campus exclusively for the newly on-boarded UBA Institutions. It was, in fact, a kind of orientation on what the mission of UBA is; what activities can be taken up under UBA; why UBA is entirely different from NSS; how to identify and resolve rural problems; how the students benefit; how the villagers benefit, etc., were discussed during the workshop. Success stories and case studies from existing PIs were presented to illustrate practical approaches and outcomes. A total of 24 UBA Coordinators /Co-coordinators from

various institutions attended this workshop.

The initiative was designed to promote scientific temper and move beyond textbook learning by offering hands-on exposure to core concepts in Physics, Chemistry, Biology, and Mathematics.

As the newly joined PIs are from Pharmacy, Engineering, and Arts colleges, special emphasis was placed on rural development approaches relevant to these disciplines. Additionally, a session was conducted to familiarise participants with various rural development schemes.

The workshop concluded with a group discussion, where participants explored methods to identify local issues. The discussion emphasised enabling students to analyse problems and develop practical, community-oriented solutions that would benefit rural areas.

Science on Wheels Sparks Curiosity in Rural Classrooms

Dr. Jhansi Lakshmi
UBA Coordinator
R.B.V.R.R. Women's College



Students observing the demonstrations enthusiastically

A bus full of scientific models, simple materials turned into powerful experiments, and a school courtyard buzzing with curiosity—this was the transformation witnessed at Zilla Parishad High School (ZPHS), Veerareddy Palli in Yadadri district, Telangana, on 6 February 2026.

In a vibrant outreach effort under the Unnat Bharat Abhiyan (UBA), the UBA Cell of R.B.V.R.R. Women's College, Hyderabad, in collaboration with the Dr K. V. Rao Scientific Society, brought a Mobile Science Lab to the school, engaging 75 students from Classes VI to X and 8 teachers in an immersive learning experience. What made the programme particularly compelling was not just the demonstrations, but the active involvement of students—many of whom stepped forward to perform experiments and explain models themselves.

The initiative was designed to promote scientific temper and move beyond textbook learning by offering hands-on exposure to core concepts in Physics, Chemistry, Biology, and Mathematics.

Highlights of Activities

- **Mathematics:** Geoboards (circular and square) to



Explaining Chromatography with Colored pens and chromatography paper

demonstrate geometric concepts and coordinate geometry; algebraic identities brought to life through visual derivations.

- **Biology:**

Chromatography experiments using colours and filter paper to illustrate separation techniques.

- **Chemistry:**

Invisible ink experiments demonstrating principles of acids and bases.

- **Physics:**

Static electricity using balloons; sound experiments with simple materials; convection using tea bags; demonstrations on atmospheric pressure, laws of motion, friction, and conservation of momentum.



Students enthusiastically volunteered to build Da Vinci Bridge after watching the science teachers

A particularly engaging activity was the construction of the Da Vinci Bridge using sticks, combining principles of physics and engineering.



Students enthusiastically volunteered to build Da Vinci Bridge after watching the science teachers

The Mobile Science Lab acted as both a classroom and a catalyst—bridging theory with practice, and curiosity with confidence. Activities were conducted both inside the lab and in open spaces, making science visible, tangible, and engaging. The presence of 10 student volunteers further enriched the experience, as peer learning complemented expert guidance.

The programme was also marked by strong community participation. The local Sarpanch graced the occasion and actively engaged with the demonstrations, underscoring the importance of community involvement in nurturing scientific awareness among rural students.

The programme provided meaningful exposure to scientific principles through inquiry-based learning, effectively bridging the gap between theory and practice. It also strengthened institutional collaboration while showcasing how mobile science interventions can ignite interest in STEM among rural students. Led by Dr Jhansi Lakshmi, UBA Coordinator of R.B.V.R.R. Women's College, along with Dr Ratna Kolluri and Ms Kavitha Ponnala from the Dr K. V. Rao Scientific Society, and supported by the Headmaster, Mr Satyam and school teachers, the initiative exemplified effective collaboration between academia and the community.

By transforming a regular school day into an interactive science experience, this initiative demonstrated how mobile, hands-on learning interventions can ignite curiosity, deepen understanding, and inspire rural students to see science not as a subject, but as an exciting way to explore the world around them.

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

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