

PRAGATI NEWSLETTER

Building Tomorrow's Leaders Today:
Strengthening Youth Participation in Gram Sabhas



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Building Tomorrow's Leaders Today: Strengthening Youth Participation in Gram Sabhas

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Dr. Anjan Kumar Bhanja, Associate Professor and Shri Vipul Ujwal, Director MoPR, with participants during the National Level ToT on Model Youth Gram Sabha

India's democratic spirit finds its deepest expression in its villages, where everyday life reflects the nation's culture, economic resilience, and collective ambition for progress. The nation's culture, economic strength, and shared hopes for progress. With over 6.64 lakh villages and most of the population living in rural areas, the growth of villages depends on active and strong Gram Sabhas. As a constitutional body under Article 243 A, the Gram Sabha enables every adult in the village to participate directly in local decision-making. It is the true form of grassroots democracy, where people talk about important issues, set development priorities, and hold Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) accountable. In this way, the Gram Sabha keeps alive the idea of democratic governance "of the people, by the people, and for the people," while promoting transparency, inclusion, and participatory planning.

Even with the central role of the Gram Sabha, youth participation remains limited. Many young people are unaware of its importance or lack exposure to meaningful engagement. This gap is significant because India has the world's largest youth population, and their involvement is essential for achieving

the vision of Viksit Bharat-2047. When youth take part in community discussions and decision-making, they strengthen the foundations of grassroots democracy and contribute to more inclusive and representative governance.

To address this, the Model Youth Gram Sabha (MYGS) has been introduced. Inspired by simulated assemblies, the MYGS provides students, especially those from Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalayas (JNVs) and Eklaya Model Residential Schools (EMRSs), with practical exposure to local governance. Through role-play, debate, and decision-making exercises, students experience real-world processes of discussion, consensus-building, and participatory planning. This experiential learning deepens their understanding of local self-governance while nurturing values of responsibility, cooperation and respect for democratic institutions. The 73rd Constitutional Amendment created a three-tier Panchayati Raj system at the village, block and district levels. By introducing young people to this framework through initiatives like the MYGS, the Ministry of Panchayati Raj

aims to build an informed generation that values democratic participation, constitutional ideals and collective progress. This initiative is closely connected with the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, which emphasises developing responsible citizens who respect constitutional values, follow their fundamental duties and feel a sense of belonging to the nation. NEP 2020 also focuses on helping students acquire the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary for sustainable development, human rights, and the overall well-being of society and the world.

Objectives of the Model Youth Gram Sabha

The Model Youth Gram Sabha (MYGS) employs participatory and experiential learning methods to help students understand the Panchayati Raj System while developing essential civic and leadership skills, including public speaking, critical thinking, and consensus-building. The initiative promotes accountability, transparency, and inclusion by involving youth in discussions on real community issues, thereby nurturing responsible citizens who actively contribute to democratic and developmental processes. Its key objectives include educating students about the Panchayati Raj System established under the 73rd Constitutional Amendment, encouraging their participation in Gram Sabhas and local governance, developing leadership qualities that strengthen Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) and helping students understand local development challenges at the grassroots level.

Vision of the Model Youth Gram Sabha

The Model Youth Gram Sabha (MYGS) aims to nurture empowered, responsible and empathetic young citizens who actively engage in democratic processes and contribute to inclusive national development. Its core vision focuses on promoting informed citizenship grounded in democratic and constitutional values, while instilling the spirit of inclusivity, consensus-building, justice, and equity.

The initiative aims to strengthen leadership, communication, participation, and critical-thinking skills among youth, while also enhancing their awareness of local governance structures and Localised Sustainable Development Goals (LSDGs). Ultimately, MYGS encourages young people to grow as socially responsible individuals committed to national unity, community well-being and sustainable development.

Model Youth Gram Sabha Module and National Level Master Trainer Programme

The Model Youth Gram Sabha (MYGS) Module has been designed to help schools conduct youth-led Gram Sabhas in a structured and effective manner. It provides clear guidance, facilitation tools and evaluation support to ensure meaningful student participation. The module includes the National Level Master Trainer (NLMT) Guide, which explains the Gram Sabha processes and the roles of facilitators. Using the MLJP (Meaning, Learning, Joy and Pride) principles, the guide offers step-by-step instructions to help teachers and trainers implement the MYGS smoothly and in an engaging manner. To strengthen the quality of MYGS implementation across states, a National Level Master Trainer Programme was organised at the National Institute of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj (NIRDPR), Hyderabad. A total of 90 National Level Master Trainers were developed from 60 State-level Senior Consultants and Consultants from the School of Excellence in Panchayati Raj (SoEPR), NIRDPR, and 30 faculty members from SIRD and SPRC. The first batch of the programme, held on 11th-12th September, was inaugurated by senior-level officials from the MoPR. The training was conducted under the School of Excellence in Panchayati Raj. This combined effort aims to expand the MYGS initiative nationwide by equipping teachers, trainers and practitioners with the knowledge and skills needed to guide students in understanding democratic processes and participating confidently in local governance.



Conducting a Model Gram Sabha

Following the National Level Master Trainer Programme conducted in each State/UT, an average of three training programmes were organised for teachers across India. Following this, trained teachers began conducting MYGS in their respective schools. During the MYGS, students take on real-world governance roles - some act as the Sarpanch/Pradhan, Ward Members, or Gram Sabha Presidents, while others represent Standing Committees, Panchayat functionaries such as the Panchayat Secretary or Village Panchayat Development Officer, and frontline workers, including ASHA, Anganwadi Worker, and Rozgar Sahayak. Students also portray line department officials from Rural Development, Health, and Women & Child Development. In addition, they represent various community groups to ensure that diverse concerns are voiced during the deliberations. Meeting preparation includes circulating the agenda and issuing notices at least ten days in advance. During the Gram Sabha, the Sarpanch leads discussions on previous resolutions, reviews progress, presents new proposals, and outlines the action plan. Students also learn key aspects of financial management, budget planning, available funds, proposed works, gaps in service delivery, and innovative approaches for



strengthening local revenue generation. Decisions are made through voting, followed by the drafting and closure of formal resolutions, and the meeting concludes.

The MYGS initiative received strong participation from students across India. The registration details are presented below:

Table 1: Student Registration Metrics

Student Registration Metrics	Male Students	Female students
28106	13045	15061

Source: <https://meetingonline.gov.in/model-youth/homepage>

The scale of implementation can also be seen from the number of schools and nodal teachers involved in the programme:

Table 2: School & Teacher Participation Metrics

Schools On boarded	Nodal Teachers
821	1095

Source: <https://meetingonline.gov.in/model-youth/homepage>

Students assumed a wide variety of governance and service-delivery roles during the MYGS. The role- wise

participation is summarised below:

Table 3: Role-wise Participation in Model Youth Gram Sabha

Role	No of Students
Gram Sabha members	14685
Ward members	3085
SHG members	1009
NGO workers	841
ASHA worker	800
Aaganwadi	732
Krishi Sahayak	726
DDWS Representatives(WASH resource person)	715
Sarpanch	709
School Management Committee	707
Sachiv	609
Head Master	680
Rozgar Sahayak	643
Data Entry Operator	608
Sahayk Sachiv	605
Marginalised Group	489
Panchayat Development Officer	388

Source: <https://meetingonline.gov.in/model-youth/homepage>

In summary, the data show strong student participation and meaningful involvement in various Panchayat roles. The MYGS initiative is effectively nurturing informed, responsible, and active young citizens



AARDO–NIRDPR International Workshop-cum-Training on Land and Water Resource Management



Dr. G. Narendra Kumar, Director General, NIRDPR, along with Dr. Ravindra Gavali, Professor & Head, CNRMCC&DM, and participants of the AARDO–NIRDPR International Workshop-cum-Training Programme on Land and Water Resource Management

The Centre for Natural Resource Management, Climate Change and Disaster Mitigation (CNRMCCDM) at the National Institute of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj (NIRDPR), Hyderabad, organised an international Workshop-cum-Training Programme on “Land and Water Resource Management for Sustainable Development and Rural Livelihood” from 9th to 18th November 2025. The programme was conducted in collaboration with the African-Asian Rural Development Organisation (AARDO) and brought together participants from multiple member countries.

The workshop intended to deepen the understanding of integrated land and water resource management, a subject that holds immense significance for countries striving to strengthen rural livelihoods while addressing ecological challenges. Participants from Sri Lanka, Malaysia, Ghana, Egypt, Bangladesh, Morocco, and Oman joined Indian delegates, creating a vibrant platform for cross-country learning and exchange of practical insights.

Over the course of the training, resource persons from NIRDPR and invited experts delivered sessions covering watershed development, climate-resilient agricultural practices,

groundwater management, community-based natural resource planning, and technological interventions for sustainable land use. Field visits were also organised to demonstrate successful models of watershed development and community participation in resource governance. These interactions helped participants gain a first-hand understanding of implementation challenges and locally adapted solutions.

The international delegates actively shared experiences from their respective regions, highlighting both common concerns and diverse approaches in managing natural resources. Discussions centred around drought mitigation, soil health management, water-use efficiency, and the role of community institutions in sustaining development initiatives. The programme also facilitated a deeper appreciation of how land and water strategies directly influence rural livelihoods and long-term environmental stability.

It was noted that international learning platforms such as these contribute significantly to strengthening collaborative efforts across nations facing similar developmental concerns. They noted that the programme not only introduced participants to India’s experience in natural resource management but also created avenues for continued cooperation among AARDO member countries.

International Training Programme on the Role of Cooperative Institutions in Achieving Financial Inclusion



Dr Aryashree Debapriya, Associate Professor, CPGS&DE, with the participants of the International Training Programme on Role of Cooperative Institutions in Achieving Financial Inclusion

The National Institute of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj, (NIRDPR), in collaboration with the Centre for International Cooperation and Training in Agricultural Banking (CICTAB), Pune, organised an International Training Programme on “Role of Cooperative Institutions in Achieving Financial Inclusion” from 10th to 14th November 2025. The programme brought together participants from different countries and Indian states, creating a platform for shared learning on strengthening cooperative systems for inclusive financial growth.

The training focused on the pivotal role that cooperative institutions play in extending financial services to underserved communities, particularly in rural areas. The sessions covered cooperative governance, credit delivery mechanisms, digital financial services, and the role of cooperatives in supporting rural enterprises. Special attention was given to global experiences and emerging practices that contribute to effective financial inclusion.

Faculty members from NIRDPR, CICTAB, and invited experts led the discussions through thematic presentations, case studies, and interactive group work. Participants had the opportunity to reflect on challenges such as institutional capacity, governance gaps, and the need for transparent and accountable management systems within cooperatives. The deliberations also highlighted the importance of member participation and community trust as the foundation of successful cooperative institutions.

International delegates contributed their field perspectives, sharing examples of cooperative structures and financial inclusion strategies from their respective countries. Their insights enriched the learning experience and provided a comparative view of how cooperatives function in varied socio-economic contexts. Participants noted that the training helped them better understand the strengths and limitations of existing systems and the potential for innovation within cooperative frameworks.

National Workshop at NIRDPR Sets Direction for DAY-NRLM Vision 2.0 and AAP 2026–27



Shri T.K. Anil Kumar, Additional Secretary, Ministry of Rural Development lighting the lamp

The NRLM Resource Cell at NIRDPR, Development and Panchayati Raj, in partnership with the Rural Livelihoods Division of the Ministry of Rural Development, organised a four-day national workshop on the preparation of Integrated Annual Action Plans from 26 to 29 November 2025 at NIRDPR, Hyderabad. The workshop brought together senior officials, practitioners, and technical experts to align the upcoming five-year strategic vision (2026–31) with the Annual Action Plans of State Rural Livelihoods Missions (SRLMs).

Setting the Agenda

The workshop opened with remarks from Shri T.K. Anil Kumar, Additional Secretary, and Smt. Smriti Sharan, Joint Secretary, who spoke about the need to translate the priorities of DAY-NRLM Vision 2.0 into practical and measurable outcomes. They emphasised strengthening community institutions, improving inclusion and livelihood services, and enhancing digital systems. A key message was the importance of improving the quality of



Dr Vanishree Joseph Head, CGS&D, NIRDPR, welcoming, Smt. Smriti Sharan, Joint Secretary, MoRD, GoI

implementation, especially for vulnerable households, including migrant and nomadic communities.

Participation

A total of 354 participants attended the workshop, including CEOs and State Mission Directors, members of the National Mission Management Unit, SRLM teams, thematic experts, and technical partners from 32 States and Union Territories. The mix of different roles and field experience helped create useful discussions that connected policy expectations with realities on the ground.

Key Discussions

The workshop covered several themes related to the next phase of DAY-NRLM:

- Strengthening SHGs and federations, and increasing SHG credit outreach
- Expanding financial inclusion through BC Sakhis, SAKSHAM centres, and enterprise credit.

- Taking forward gender initiatives such as Gender Resource Centres and Violence-Free Village efforts
- Scaling farm and non-farm livelihoods, including the push towards creating 3 crore Lakhpati Didis
- Improving MEL-MIS systems and resolving challenges related to the LokOS platform
- Ensuring better planning, budgeting, and real-time monitoring at the state and district levels

State Presentations

States presented their five-year strategies (2026-31) and AAPs for 2026-27. Andhra Pradesh, Jharkhand, Tripura, Kerala, Rajasthan, Karnataka, Haryana, Meghalaya, and Odisha shared approaches related to HR strengthening, digital services, enterprise promotion, climate resilience, and PRI convergence.

Discussions stressed the need for states to align their outcomes to a national indicator framework and ensure realistic budgets.

The Road Ahead

The workshop ended with a clear set of directions for DAY-NRLM's next phase. These include strengthening community institutions at all levels, improving digital and financial systems, building strong MEL-MIS structures, supporting field staff more effectively, and expanding livelihood opportunities through both farm and non-farm sectors.

Overall, the workshop provided a useful platform for states and national teams to work together in shaping DAY-NRLM Vision 2.0 and setting the foundation for the AAP 2026-27.



Participants and faculty members engaging in discussions during the National Workshop on Integrated Annual Action Plan



Senior officials from the Ministry of Rural Development along with NRLMRC resource persons and SRLM Representatives posing for a group photograph

Training Programme on Integrating WDC-PMKSY 2.0 with DAY-NRLM



Dr Surjit Vikraman, Associate Professor & Head, and Dr Nithya V. G., Assistant Professor, Centre for Agrarian Studies, along with participants of the Training Programme on Integrating WDC-PMKSY 2.0 with DAY-NRLM

The Centre for Agrarian Studies at the National Institute of Rural Development Panchayati Raj (NIRDPR), Hyderabad, in collaboration with the Department of Land Resources, Ministry of Rural Development, organised a five-day Training Programme on “Integrating WDC-PMKSY 2.0 with DAY-NRLM through Mobilization and Promotion of SHG-based Activities” from 24th to 28th November 2025. The programme aimed to strengthen the capacities of officials involved in watershed development and livelihood promotion by equipping them with strategies to effectively bring together the objectives of WDC-PMKSY 2.0 and DAY-NRLM.

The sessions highlighted the significance of convergence between watershed interventions and SHG-based livelihood activities to create sustainable income avenues for rural households. Participants were introduced to approaches for community mobilization, participatory planning, promotion of farm and non-farm enterprises, and strengthening SHG institutions to take up livelihood activities linked to watershed assets. Discussions also focused on

integrating value-addition opportunities, improving market access, and ensuring long-term sustainability of livelihood initiatives.

Through interactive exercises and case examples, participants explored practical methods for supporting SHG producers, designing livelihood plans, and establishing strong coordination between watershed committees and community organisations. The programme provided a platform for experience sharing, enabling participants from various states to learn from one another’s field insights and innovative practices.

The training concluded with reflections from the participants, who acknowledged that the convergence-focused approach will help enhance the impact of watershed projects and improve rural household incomes. They expressed confidence that the learning gained during the programme would support them in strengthening implementation processes in their respective regions.

National Level Workshop on SECURE 2.0 Held at NIRDPR



Dr V. Suresh Babu, Dr G V Krishna Lohi Das and Dr Anuradha Palla, Centre for Wage Employment & Livelihoods Faculty Members with participants of the SECURE 2.0 national workshop.

The National Institute of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj, (NIRDPR), organised a National Level Workshop on “Software for Estimate Calculation Using Rural Rates for Employment (SECURE 2.0) on November 10–11, 2025. The two-day programme brought together officials and practitioners from various states, providing a timely platform for strengthening technical capacities related to wage employment planning under rural development programmes.

The workshop aimed to enhance participants’ understanding of the upgraded SECURE 2.0 software, a crucial digital tool that supports transparent, efficient, and standardised estimate preparation. The sessions were meticulously designed to offer hands-on training, enabling participants to work directly with the interface, explore new features, and understand the workflow required for generating accurate estimates based on the rural schedule of rates.

Experts from CWEL and invited resource persons delivered detailed demonstrations, highlighting the operational improvements introduced in SECURE 2.0. The interactive format encouraged delegates to raise state-specific challenges, enabling fruitful discussions on practical solutions and best practices. The resource team also emphasised the critical role of digital systems in promoting accountability, timely sanctioning of works, and improved monitoring under Mahatma Gandhi NREGS and related programmes.

Participants appreciated the comprehensive training approach and the opportunity to engage with peers from diverse regions. Many noted that the knowledge gained during the sessions would directly support field-level implementation and enhance the quality of planning and execution at district and block levels. The collaborative environment fostered a rich exchange of experiences, further strengthening the collective understanding of technology-driven rural development processes.

Training Programmes on Micro Enterprise Development (MED) under Non-Farm Livelihoods



Dr. Vanishree Joseph, Dr. Jyoti Prakash Mohanty, and K. Venkateshwar Rao interacting with participants during the Micro Enterprise Development training at NIRDPR.

The DAY-NRLM Resource Cell, National Institute of Rural Development & Panchayati Raj (NIRDPR), Hyderabad organised three consecutive Training Programmes on Micro Enterprise Development (MED) under Non-Farm Livelihoods from 10–11 November, 17–19 November, and 20–22 November 2025. The programmes were designed to strengthen the capacities of community-level functionaries and officials involved in promoting sustainable micro-enterprises among rural households.

Across the three batches, a large number of participants from various districts took part, representing frontline staff who work closely with Self-Help Groups (SHGs) under DAY-NRLM. The sessions began with an introduction to the MED framework, emphasising the importance of facilitating transitions from subsistence activities to viable, income-generating enterprises. Participants were oriented on enterprise feasibility, business planning, risk assessment, costing and pricing, and market understanding.

Resource persons from NIRDPR led thematic discussions and hands-on exercises focusing on enterprise

identification across non-farm sectors, value-chain perspectives, and the need for consistent handholding support for SHG entrepreneurs. Participants analysed field-level challenges such as limited market access, low business exposure, and gaps in financial literacy. These discussions encouraged practical problem-solving and helped build clarity on the support mechanisms required for rural micro-enterprises to thrive.

Field experiences and case studies from different states were shared, highlighting successful micro-enterprises developed through DAY-NRLM. These examples showcased the importance of collective marketing, mentoring systems, product diversification, and adopting context-specific business models. The interactive learning environment enabled participants to share insights from their districts, enriching cross-learning and strengthening peer networks.

In each valedictory session, the faculty encouraged participants to apply their learning in real field situations and stressed the essential role of MED initiatives in improving rural household incomes. They reiterated the need for building supportive ecosystems to help community-level enterprises scale sustainably and contribute meaningfully to women's economic empowerment.

ToT on Institutional Mechanism and Gender Immersion Sites Held at NIRDPR



Dr. Jyoti Prakash Mohanty and Shri K. Venkateshwar Rao with participants of the gender-focused ToT posing for photo.

The DAY-NRLM Resource Cell of the National Institute of Rural Development & Panchayati Raj (NIRDPR), Hyderabad, conducted a three-day Training of Trainers (ToT) on Institutional Mechanism and Gender Immersion Sites from 10th to 12th November 2025. The programme was designed to strengthen the capacities of state and district-level functionaries engaged in promoting gender-sensitive institutional frameworks under DAY-NRLM.

Participants from multiple states took part in the training, representing various tiers of the rural livelihoods ecosystem. The sessions focused on deepening the understanding of community institutions, gender-responsive strategies, and the role of immersion sites in building practical perspectives. Emphasis was placed on how strengthened institutional platforms can advance women's participation, leadership, and decision-making in rural development processes.

Faculty members from NIRDPR conducted thematic sessions covering the evolution of community institutions, leadership roles of women,

and mechanisms for ensuring accountability and transparency. Through case discussions, group work, and interactive dialogue, the sessions highlighted the need to integrate gender concerns into all stages of planning and implementation within rural development programmes.

Participants engaged actively in the discussions, sharing both achievements and challenges from their regions. Many expressed that the programme offered clarity on strengthening institutional systems while also reinforcing the importance of sustained handholding of community organisations. The exchange of field insights enriched the overall learning environment and created space for cross-state collaboration.

During the valedictory session, senior faculty members reiterated NIRDPR's ongoing commitment to building strong, inclusive, and gender-sensitive community institutions. They underlined that such capacity-building programmes contribute significantly to improving the effectiveness of rural livelihoods interventions and ensuring that women's leadership is recognised and supported at every level.

Exposure Visit on Best Practices of Mahatma Gandhi NREGS for Karnataka Officials



CWEL faculty members with Karnataka Officials

The Centre for Wage Employment & Livelihoods (CWEL), National Institute of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj (NIRDPR), Hyderabad, organised a three-day exposure visit on the Best Practices of Mahatma Gandhi NREGS for officials from Karnataka from 12th to 14th November 2025. The programme was designed to provide participants with first-hand insights into successful implementation models and field innovations under Mahatma Gandhi NREGS.

The exposure visit aimed to help officials understand how effective planning, community participation, and strong institutional mechanisms can enhance the impact of Mahatma Gandhi NREGS at the grassroots level. The sessions began with an overview of national-level achievements and policy directions, followed by discussions on themes such as natural resource management, livelihood diversification, transparent wage systems, and convergence with other development programmes.

Participants were taken to selected field locations where Mahatma Gandhi

NREGS Initiatives have demonstrated measurable improvements in water conservation, land development, and rural infrastructure. Interactions with community members, field functionaries, and local leaders offered valuable perspectives on how collective efforts and continuous monitoring contribute to long-term sustainability.

The officials also had the opportunity to observe innovative practices, including the use of digital tools for monitoring, improved worksite management, and models that promote women's participation and leadership. These visits helped participants appreciate the practical challenges involved in implementation and the importance of strengthening support systems at the panchayat level.

Throughout the programme, discussions encouraged participants to reflect on lessons that could be adapted to their own districts in Karnataka. Many expressed that the exposure visit provided clarity on strategies that improve efficiency, transparency, and outcomes under Mahatma Gandhi NREGS.

ABP–Refresher Training Programme on Basic Infrastructure



Dr. R. Ramesh, Associate Professor & Head, Centre for Rural Infrastructure, along with participants of the ABP–Refresher Training Programme on Basic Infrastructure

The National Institute of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj (NIRDPR), Hyderabad, in collaboration with NITI Aayog, organised the ABP–Refresher Training Programme on “Basic Infrastructure” from 13th to 15th November 2025. The programme formed part of the Aspirational Blocks Programme (ABP) and focused on strengthening the capacities of officials responsible for planning and implementing core infrastructure projects at the block level.

The training brought together participants from various states, offering a platform to share experiences and discuss approaches to improving infrastructure in rural and aspirational areas. The sessions covered essential themes such as planning processes, quality standards, monitoring mechanisms, and the effective use of government schemes to support infrastructure development. Participants were oriented to practical strategies for addressing gaps in roads, water supply, sanitation, public buildings, and community assets.

Resource persons from NIRDPR and invited speakers led the discussions, highlighting the need for coordinated

planning, community participation, and timely execution of works. They emphasised the importance of realistic project design, transparent procurement procedures, and close monitoring to ensure that infrastructure investments lead to tangible improvements in service delivery.

Interactive sessions enabled participants to analyse field-level challenges and explore solutions that could be adapted to their local contexts. Many shared examples of innovative practices from their districts, ranging from improved worksite management to the use of digital tools for progress tracking. These exchanges enriched the learning environment and encouraged collaborative thinking.

In the concluding session, senior officials underscored the significance of strong infrastructure in achieving development outcomes across sectors such as education, health, and livelihoods. They appreciated the active involvement of participants and reaffirmed NIRDPR’s commitment to supporting states and districts in strengthening their implementation capacities under ABP.

ToT on the Establishment of GRCs and the Development of Gender Immersion Sites



Shri K. Venkateshwar Rao with participants during the Gender Resource Centre ToT at NIRDPR.

The DAY-NRLM Resource Cell of the National Institute of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj (NIRDPR), Hyderabad, conducted a three-day Training of Trainers (ToT) on Establishment of Gender Resource Centres (GRCs) and Development of Gender Immersion Sites from 17th to 19th November 2025. The programme aimed to strengthen the capacities of state and district-level officials involved in advancing gender-responsive institutional mechanisms under DAY-NRLM.

The training focused on equipping participants with the knowledge and tools required to set up and manage Gender Resource Centres, which serve as key platforms for promoting women's leadership, addressing gender-based issues, and deepening community engagement. Sessions also highlighted the significance of immersion sites as learning spaces where officials and community leaders can observe gender interventions in real-life contexts.

Faculty members from NIRDPR led detailed sessions covering concepts such as gender mainstreaming, institutional structures, grievance redressal mechanisms, and the role of

community institutions in ensuring gender equity. Through discussions, group exercises, and case illustrations, participants examined how well-functioning GRCs can support local women's collectives and strengthen DAY-NRLM's broader gender strategy.

Participants took part in open discussions, sharing examples from their districts and highlighting both achievements and challenges they encounter on the ground. These exchanges allowed the group to understand the nuances of implementing gender initiatives in diverse settings and helped build a stronger appreciation of community-led approaches. Many participants noted that the training broadened their perspective on how GRCs can serve as effective support centres for women's empowerment.

The programme concluded by encouraging the participants to take forward the learnings and strengthen gender-focused interventions in their respective states. They emphasised that building robust GRCs and active immersion sites will contribute significantly to more inclusive and responsive rural development efforts.

Exposure Visit on Best Practices of Mahatma Gandhi NREGS for Chhattisgarh Officials



Participants of the Mahatma Gandhi NREGS Exposure Visit with Dr Digambar A. Chimankar; Dr Sonal Mobar Roy and Dr Anuradha Palla , CWEL

The for Wage Employment & Livelihoods (CWEL) at the National Institute of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj (NIRDPR), Hyderabad, organised a three-day exposure visit on the Best Practices of Mahatma Gandhi NREGS for officials from Chhattisgarh (Batch-1) from 17th to 19th November 2025. The programme aimed at providing participants with a close look at effective implementation models and successful field practices under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme.

The exposure visit began with an overview of the programme's objectives and key achievements, followed by thematic sessions on planning processes, sustainable asset creation, use of digital tools, and measures to ensure transparency and timely wage payments. Faculty members highlighted how robust institutional arrangements and community participation contribute to improved outcomes in Mahatma Gandhi NREGS.

Participants were taken to selected field locations where noteworthy works under Mahatma Gandhi NREGS have been carried out. These visits helped them observe initiatives related to water conservation, land development, and rural infrastructure. Interactions with community members and field functionaries gave the officials an opportunity to understand local challenges, innovative approaches, and the impact of sustained community engagement.

The field exposure also showcased models where Mahatma Gandhi NREGS activities have contributed to enhancing livelihoods through convergence with agriculture, horticulture, and natural resource management programmes. Participants noted that the demonstration of practical examples, combined with discussions on policy aspects, helped them gain a clearer understanding of how high-quality Mahatma Gandhi NREGS implementation can support rural development in a holistic manner.

Training Programme on Post Procurement Management under WDC-PMKSY 2.0



Participants of the Training Programme on Post Procurement Management under WDC-PMKSY 2.0 posing for a group photo with Dr Ravindra Gavali, Professor & Head, CNRM, CCDM, NIRDPR

The Centre for Internal Audit in Rural Development (CIARD) at the National Institute of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj (NIRDPR) organised two three-day exposure visits on the Best Practices of Mahatma Gandhi NREGS for officials from Chhattisgarh (Batch-1: 17-19 November 2025) and for officials from various states (19-21 November 2025). The programmes aimed at providing participants with hands-on insights into effective implementation models and successful field practices under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (Mahatma Gandhi NREGS).

The exposure visits began with thematic sessions covering planning processes, sustainable asset creation, robust institutional arrangements, use of digital tools, and mechanisms to ensure transparency and timely wage payments. Faculty members emphasised how community participation, regular monitoring, and strong field-level coordination contribute to improved outcomes in Mahatma Gandhi NREGS.

Participants visited selected locations across Telangana where

notable Mahatma Gandhi NREGS works have been carried out. They observed initiatives related to water conservation structures, land development, plantations, and rural infrastructure. Field interactions with workers, panchayat representatives, and implementing staff enabled participants to understand local challenges, innovative solutions, and the operational strengths of Telangana's implementation model.

The exposure also highlighted convergence approaches where Mahatma Gandhi NREGS activities have strengthened livelihoods through integration with agriculture, horticulture, and natural resource management programmes. Participants noted that the combination of practical demonstrations, community interactions, and policy discussions gave them a clearer understanding of how high-quality Mahatma Gandhi NREGS implementation can support holistic rural development.

During the concluding session, senior faculty members underscored the need for strong post-procurement systems to ensure the effective utilisation of public funds and the creation of durable assets under WDC-PMKSY 2.0.

Engaging Men and Boys in Gender and Development

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Gender and development discourse in India and globally has historically centred on women and girls. This focus was necessary and corrective, given centuries of exclusion, invisibility, and structural discrimination. However, as feminist scholarship and practice have evolved, it has become increasingly clear that gender equality cannot be achieved by working with women alone. Gender is relational. It is produced, reproduced, and sustained through everyday interactions between women and men, girls and boys. Any serious attempt to dismantle patriarchy, therefore, requires the meaningful engagement of men and boys—not as gatekeepers or benevolent allies, but as accountable participants in the transformation of unequal power relations.

Engaging men and boys in gender and development does not mean

shifting attention away from women's rights or diluting feminist agendas. Rather, it means acknowledging that patriarchy also scripts rigid, often harmful masculinities that affect men and boys themselves while simultaneously reinforcing women's subordination. Development interventions that fail to address these gender norms risk remaining superficial—treating symptoms rather than causes.

One of the most persistent myths in gender discourse is that men are either uninterested in or threatened by conversations on gender equality. In reality, men's responses to gender norms are complex and contradictory. Many men derive material and social privilege from patriarchy, but they also experience its emotional and psychological costs—pressure to be providers, suppression of vulnerability, stigma around care work, and narrow definitions of success and masculinity. Recognising this complexity is essential for designing engagement strategies that move beyond guilt or blame, towards reflection and responsibility.

In the context of development, men occupy critical positions as policymakers, administrators, frontline service providers, community leaders, and heads of households. Their attitudes and everyday decisions shape women's access to resources, mobility, education, health services, and political participation. For instance, women's participation in Self-Help Groups or livelihood programmes is influenced not only by programme design but also by husbands' and fathers' willingness to share domestic responsibilities and allow women's economic mobility. Without engaging men at the household and community level, even well-designed gender programmes struggle to achieve sustained impact.

Engaging boys is equally crucial. Gender norms are internalised early in life—through families, schools, peer groups, media, and religious institutions. Boys learn what it means to “be a man” long before adulthood: dominance over empathy, aggression over communication, control over care. Intervening at this formative stage offers a powerful opportunity to disrupt cycles of violence, discrimination, and entitlement. Schools, sports spaces, digital platforms, and youth collectives can become sites for critical reflection on consent, respect, emotional literacy, and shared responsibility.

Globally and in India, promising practices have emerged that demonstrate the transformative potential of engaging men and boys. Initiatives that promote positive masculinity—encouraging men as caregivers, equitable partners, and involved fathers—have shown improvements in women’s wellbeing, reduced domestic violence, and better outcomes for children. At the policy level, integrating men into gender-responsive planning—whether in health, nutrition, sanitation, or livelihoods—helps shift gender from being seen as a “women’s issue” to a development priority.

However, there are also real risks. Poorly designed interventions can re-centre men’s voices, marginalise women’s experiences, or frame men as “saviours” in the gender equality narrative. This reinforces the very hierarchies that feminist movements seek to dismantle. Engaging men and boys must therefore be grounded in feminist principles—centering women’s rights, listening to women’s voices, and holding men accountable for challenging inequality, not merely sympathising with it.

Another challenge lies in institutional resistance. Gender training is often perceived as “soft,” optional, or symbolic—particularly by male bureaucrats and technical professionals

professionals. Token sessions, jargon-heavy modules, or moralistic messaging fail to create meaningful change. What is required instead are experiential, reflective, and context-specific approaches that connect gender norms to everyday professional and personal realities—how decisions are made, whose labour is valued, whose voices are heard.

At the grassroots level, engaging men requires careful negotiation of local power dynamics. Community dialogue, peer-led discussions, and role-model approaches often work better than top-down messaging. Men are more likely to question norms when they see other men—respected peers, leaders, or practitioners—doing the same. Creating safe spaces for men to talk about fear, failure, and responsibility, without excusing violence or discrimination, is a delicate but necessary balance.

Ultimately, the goal of engaging men and boys is not harmony without conflict, but transformation with accountability. Gender equality is not about making men more comfortable; it is about redistributing power, resources, and opportunities in ways that are just and inclusive. This inevitably involves discomfort, unlearning, and resistance—but also the possibility of new, more humane ways of being.

For gender and development practitioners, the question is no longer whether men and boys should be engaged, but how. How can programmes challenge patriarchy without reinforcing it? How can institutions move from symbolic inclusion to structural change? How can boys grow up seeing care, equality, and respect as strengths rather than exceptions?

Engaging men and boys is not a detour from the gender equality agenda—it is one of its unfinished frontiers. Until masculinity itself becomes a site of transformation, the promise of gender justice will remain partial. True development, after all, is not only about changing policies and programmes, but about reshaping the everyday relationships through which power is lived, contested, and reimagined.

Orientation Programme on Rural Enterprises Held under Jai Jawan Kisan Initiative



Participants of the 'Jai Jawan Kisan' training programme with Dr. C. Kathiresan, Associate Professor & Head, CIAT&SJ, NIRDPR; Dr. S. Ramesh Sakthivel, Associate Professor & Head, CSR-PPP Centre ; Mohammad Khan, Senior Consultant, RTP and Dr. N. Balasubramani, Director (CCA), MANAGE

The Rural Technology Park of the National Institute of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj (NIRDPR), in collaboration with MANAGE, Hyderabad, organised a two-week Orientation Programme on Rural Enterprises under the Jai Jawan Kisan initiative from 10th to 21st November 2025. The programme was designed to familiarise serving defence personnel with opportunities in rural entrepreneurship and livelihood development, enabling them to explore viable avenues for post-service engagement.

The training brought together participants from various units of the armed forces, reflecting the growing interest among personnel in gaining practical knowledge about rural technologies, enterprise models, and income-generation prospects in the farm and non-farm sectors. The sessions introduced participants to rural value chains, small-scale processing units, sustainable agriculture practices, and enterprise opportunities that can be adapted to local contexts.

Resource persons from NIRDPR and MANAGE conducted demonstrations, field visits, and technical sessions

covering a wide range of topics such as agri-business models, food processing, rural crafts, renewable energy solutions, and community-based enterprises. Participants were also exposed to successful case studies showing how rural entrepreneurship can create both economic and social impact.

The programme encouraged active participation, with participants engaging in discussions on enterprise planning, market linkages, financial management, and available support schemes. Many expressed that the field exposure and hands-on demonstrations provided them with a clearer understanding of how rural enterprises operate and the skills required to manage them effectively.

In the closing interaction, participants reflected on the insights gained during orientation and shared how the exposure to rural enterprise models had broadened their understanding of post-service opportunities. Many appreciated the practical sessions and field-based learning, noting that the programme offered a clear pathway for exploring meaningful engagements in rural development

Writershop on Finalising Training Module and Design for Capacity-Building Programme Held at NIRDPR



Dr G. Narendra Kumar, Director General, NIRDPR, along with NIRDPR faculty members and participants of the writershop on finalising the Training Module and Training Design for the Capacity-Building Programme of Block Development Officers

The National Institute of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj, (NIRDPR), Hyderabad, organised a two-day writershop on finalising the Training Module and Training Design for the Capacity-Building Programme of Block Development Officers (s) on 24–25 November 2025. The writershop brought together domain experts, practitioners, and faculty members to refine the structure and content of the upcoming national-level training.

The objective of the writershop was to ensure that the training design is comprehensive, relevant, and aligned with the emerging needs of s who play a pivotal role in the implementation of rural development programmes. Participants worked collectively to review draft modules, identify critical thematic areas, and streamline the training flow to enhance learning outcomes.

Discussions covered a wide range of topics, including programme planning, financial management, reporting systems, community mobilisation, and the

use of digital tools in administrative processes. The group also took stock of field-level challenges faced by BDOs and incorporated practical elements into the training structure to better address those gaps.

The collaborative format of the writershop enabled participants to contribute their varied experiences and perspectives. This helped enrich the content and ensure that the final module reflects both policy priorities and ground realities. The focus remained on designing a training programme that would equip BDOs to manage development responsibilities more effectively and with greater confidence.

The two-day exercise concluded with the final consolidation of the training outline and action points for the next phase of preparation. A group photograph marked the close of the writershop, capturing the collective participation of contributors who worked together to shape the forthcoming BDO Capacity-Building Programme.

NIRDPR Hosts Delegation Visit of Dresden Technical University Professor for Future Collaboration



Prof. Thomas Koehler from Dresden Technical University, with Dr G. Narendra Kumar, Director General, NIRDPR, and faculty members of the Institute, during his visit to explore academic and research collaborations

The National Institute of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj, (NIRDPR), hosted Prof. Thomas Koehler, Director and Professor at Dresden Technical University, Saxon State, Germany, on 17 November 2025. The visit was aimed at exploring potential collaborations in the areas of rural development, digital innovation, applied research, and academic exchange between the two institutions.

During his visit, Prof. Koehler engaged in detailed discussions with the core team of NIRDPR on possible avenues for joint initiatives and long-term institutional partnerships. These discussions covered themes such as the integration of digital technologies in rural development programmes, opportunities for collaborative research, and the design of exchange programmes for faculty and learners.

Prof. Koehler also interacted with faculty members from various Centres at NIRDPR, gaining insights into the institute's ongoing projects training programmes, and field-level

initiatives. His interactions highlighted the scope for cross-learning between the two institutions, particularly in adopting innovative models and technology-enabled approaches for rural transformation.

As part of the visit, Prof. Koehler toured key facilities at the NIRDPR campus, which offered him a closer look at the institute's applied research infrastructure, training systems, and demonstration units. The visit also included a formal meeting with the Director General, NIRDPR, Dr G. Narendra Kumar, IAS, during which both sides discussed areas of strategic interest and the potential for expanding Indo-German cooperation in rural development.

The visit concluded with a shared commitment to explore future collaborations, joint research activities, and academic exchanges that would benefit both institutions and contribute to advancing rural development practices. The engagement marked an important step toward strengthening international cooperation through knowledge sharing and innovation-led initiatives.

Four-Day Training Programme on Mastering Content Creation with Artificial Intelligence



The DAY-NRLM Resource Cell and the Centre for PG Studies (CPGS) at the National Institute of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj (NIRDPR), Hyderabad, conducted a four-day pilot programme on Documentation and Content Creation Using AI for Rural Development practitioners. The programme aimed at strengthening the capacities of field functionaries to document success stories, enhance visibility, and support branding of Self-Help Group (SHG) enterprises under DAY-NRLM.

The initiative addressed a critical gap in rural development—insufficient documentation of the transformational journeys of SHG women who have built livelihoods and community leadership through NRLM. The programme emphasised that many inspiring stories of resilience, entrepreneurship, and social change remain undocumented due to limited technical capacities at the grassroots.

During the training, participants were introduced to practical methods for developing content and visual materials using user-friendly Altools. Demonstrations covered creating product visuals, simple

brand elements, basic mobile photography, and narrative storytelling techniques. The sessions focused on enabling SHG members and field staff to prepare marketing materials, product catalogs, and enterprise branding with minimal resources.

Hands-on exercises formed a key part of the programme, giving participants the opportunity to work directly with AI tools for drafting, editing, photography enhancement, catalogue creation, and storytelling. Using field-level examples such as branding for SHG products—including ragi powder, herbal soaps, and homemade snacks—the sessions demonstrated how digital tools can help rural women present their enterprises with greater clarity and professionalism. The training was facilitated by Mr. Sunil Prabhakar, Consultant, Mathrubhumi Online, Kozhikode, Kerala, who guided participants through practical demonstrations, best practices in digital communication, and ethical, culturally sensitive approaches to AI-assisted content creation.

The programme concluded with participants sharing their experiences, key learnings, and the potential applications of these tools in their field contexts. Certificates were issued to all participants.

A Beacon of Hope in Rural Education: The Story of MPPS & ZPH School, Yelluru

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Honoring a Legacy: School History

As a postgraduate student at NIRDPR, I was assigned Yelluru at a village in Nagarkurnool district, Telangana, as part of the induction field visit. This opportunity allowed me to explore the village firsthand, where I discovered the Mandal Parishad Primary School & Zilla Parishad High School (MPPS & ZPHS) and its remarkable facilities. I felt genuinely surprised and happy to witness such progressive education in a rural government school, inspiring me to document and share its story.

Established in 1956, the MPPS & ZPH School in Yelluru village has over six decades of history as a cornerstone of rural education. Over the years, it has transitioned from a modest primary school into a well-established composite institution serving nearly 300 students across multiple grades. Its resilience and gradual expansion underscore a profound commitment to educational access and equity for local children.

What Makes It Special: Standing Apart from Private Schools

MPPS & ZPH School distinguishes itself from many private institutions in several key ways:

- **Inclusive Access:** The school provides completely free education, uniforms, midday meals, and learning materials, ensuring that no student is left behind due to financial barriers. This contrasts with private schools, where fees can limit access.

- **Holistic Support:** The midday meal scheme, along with an emphasis on nutrition, provides children with a healthy foundation for learning. The nutrition timetable, properly displayed on the wall, is a simple but innovative strategy rarely found in private schools.

- **Modernisation with Equity:** While many rural schools struggle to introduce technology, MPPS & ZPH Yelluru has fully integrated digital classrooms—giving students the advantages of modern education without the extra fees private schools often charge for similar facilities.

- **Community and Safety:** CCTV surveillance across campus fosters a safe and reassuring environment—a feature often lacking in rural private schools.

- **Holistic Development:** Unlike private schools that sometimes focus heavily on academics and competition, MPPS & ZPH encourage participation in sports, games, and cultural activities, nurturing well-rounded individuals and fostering teamwork and creativity.



Voices from the Campus

Principal, Mr S. Laxmi:

“Every child in Yelluru deserves the chance to dream big and receive quality education regardless of their family’s background. Our goal is to open doors, not close them. The pride is in seeing our students grow confident in academics, sports, and life itself.”

Hari Prasad, Class 10 Student:

“Digital classes made learning much more exciting! I never thought I’d use a computer so easily. The teachers help us with everything, and there’s always something happening—whether it’s a game, a festival, or a cultural program.”

Radha, Class 7 Student:

“The midday meal is my favourite part! We see the menu on the blackboard and learn about healthy food. I feel safe at school and love taking part in dance and drawing competitions.”

Revenue Sources for the Extra Facilities

Government schools, such as MPPS & ZPH School in Yelluru, fund extra facilities, including digital classrooms, CCTV surveillance, and enhanced Mid-Day Meal schemes, primarily through state and central government allocations rather than independent revenue. These include annual education budgets, composite school grants, and specific schemes without fees or private fundraising. No direct school-generated revenue, such as tuition, exists, as operations rely on public funds disbursed through district educational officers.

Key Funding Mechanisms

● **State Education Budget:** Telangana allocates over Rs. 24,000 crore annually for school infrastructure, including digital upgrades and basic facilities across rural government schools. Funds cover repairs, equipment, and modernisation in districts like Nagarkurnool.

● **Mid-Day Meal Scheme (PM Poshan):**

The central and state governments provide dedicated funds, such as Rs. 54 crore released in 2025, for cooking costs, eggs, and nutrition programmes in government schools. This supports the school’s visible nutrient-focused menu.

● **Samagra Shiksha Scheme:**

Central grants fund smart/digital classrooms in rural areas, with Rs. 2.4 lakh non-recurring per setup (for items like interactive boards and laptops) plus recurring support. Over 4,200 such classrooms have been approved in Telangana.

● **Composite School & Sports Grants:**

Annual releases (for instance, Rs. 42 crore in recent years) are made to school management committees for maintenance, sports, and additional items such as CCTV, often via district planning committees.

● **District-Specific Funds:**

Nagarkurnool schools access District Mineral Trust (DMFT) grants for infrastructure additions, alongside Zilla Parishad allocations for security and development.

Distinctive Public Funding Model

Unlike private schools that rely on fees, these facilities are funded by both non-recurring and recurring public grants, ensuring equity. Local bodies manage disbursement, prioritising underserved rural areas like Yelluru.

A Model for Rural India

The story of MPPS & ZPH School, Yelluru, is a testament to how government schools can surpass expectations and set benchmarks that even private schools strive to meet. Through inclusive, innovative, and nurturing practices, it remains a true beacon of hope and transformation for rural education in Telangana.

NIRDPR Observes Mass Singing of “Vande Mataram” as Part of 150th Anniversary Celebrations

The National Institute of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj, (NIRDPR) observed the 150th anniversary of the National Song “Vande Mataram” on 7 November 2025 as part of the nationwide commemoration initiated by the Government of India. The celebration formed a key component of the year-long national programme dedicated to honouring the historic legacy and cultural significance of the song, which has inspired generations since its first appearance in 1875.

The observance brought together faculty members, officers, staff, and trainees for a reflective and patriotic gathering on campus. As part of the observance, the full version of the national song was collectively rendered by the gathering, echoing the government’s directive to highlight its historical, cultural, and emotional importance. The collective singing created an atmosphere of solemn respect, reinforcing the values of national pride and shared identity that the song embodies.



NIRDPR’s observance underscored the Institute’s commitment to celebrating India’s cultural heritage and to participating in national initiatives that promote unity and civic awareness. The programme concluded with a reaffirmation of the values symbolised by “Vande Mataram,” and a shared resolve to uphold the spirit of national harmony and collective progress.

NIRDPR Commemorates Constitution Day with Institute-Wide Pledge Ceremony



The National Institute of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj, observed Constitution Day on 26 October 2025 at the Ambedkar Block, reaffirming its commitment to the foundational values and guiding spirit of the Indian Constitution. The observance served as a reminder of the principles that shape India’s democratic governance and the responsibilities shared by every citizen.

The ceremony commenced with the reading of the Preamble in English by Dr Jyothis Sathyapalan, Professor & Head, CPGS&DE, and Professor, CNRMCC&DM. Her reading highlighted the timeless vision of justice, liberty,

equality, and fraternity enshrined in the Constitution. Following this, the Hindi pledge was administered by Shri Manoj Kumar, Registrar & Director (Admin) i/c, emphasising the duties and values every individual must uphold in public life.

The event saw the active participation of officers, faculty members, PGDRDM students, and staff, who gathered to collectively honour the spirit of the Constitution. The observance reflected NIRDPR’s ongoing commitment to fostering constitutional awareness, promoting democratic ideals, and integrating these principles into its academic, administrative, and community-oriented activities.

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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