

PRAGATI NEWSLETTER



**From Sohapur to Punjab: How Migration, Paddy Straw Burning
and Mushroom Farming Can Rewrite India's Rural Story**

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From Sohapur to Punjab: How Migration, Paddy Straw Burning and Mushroom Farming Can Rewrite India's Rural Story

What if the answer to rural migration, crop-residue burning and livelihood insecurity lies in turning agricultural waste into opportunity? This story explores how paddy straw mushroom cultivation can transform migration into a pathway for entrepreneurship, sustainable livelihoods and rural development.

Mr Tushar Kaushik

PGDM-RM, NIRDPR

tusharkaushik2024@gmail.com



In Sohapur village of Ganjam district, Odisha, agriculture defines everyday life. Fields turn green during the monsoon, families work together during cultivation, and the harvest season briefly brings economic relief. Yet, this stability is temporary.

Most farmers cultivate paddy on small landholdings and are dependent almost entirely on rainfall. Irrigation facilities remain limited, and crop diversification is minimal. Once harvesting ends, employment opportunities decline sharply.

For months after harvest, the village experiences what locals describe as the silent season – a period when income stops, but household needs



continue. Savings diminish quickly. Agricultural earnings rarely sustain families throughout the year. Under such circumstances, migration becomes unavoidable.

Migration: The Annual Journey North

Every year, after the kharif harvest, groups of young men from Sohapur set out on a journey of nearly 1,500 kilometres to Punjab in search of work. Their journey reflects a much larger national pattern Odisha witnesses an estimated 1.5–2 million seasonal migrants each year, many of them from districts such as Ganjam, where migration has become an integral part of rural livelihoods. For these households, migration provides an



important source of income, helping families repay cultivation loans, finance children's education, meet household expenses, and cope with the agricultural lean season.

Yet, for most migrants, the opportunities remain confined to low-paid, physically demanding work on farms, construction sites, or brick kilns. Employment is often seasonal and uncertain, offering little scope for skill development or long-term economic mobility. Migration, therefore, sustains livelihoods—but seldom transforms them.

Punjab: Agricultural Success and an Environmental Crisis

When workers arrive in Punjab, they enter one of India's most productive agricultural systems. Here, mechanised harvesting dominates the rice-wheat cycle that supports national food security. But this efficiency produces an unintended consequence. After harvesting, enormous quantities of paddy straw remain across fields, and farmers must prepare land quickly for wheat sowing, leaving little time for residue management. Punjab generates nearly 18–20 million tonnes of paddy straw every year. As removal is expensive and markets are weak, burning becomes the fastest solution. Burning continues not out of negligence, but economic necessity. The following 7-year data highlights the scale.

Year	Straw Generated	Straw Burned	Fire Incidents
2016	22 MT	75–80%	~60,000
2018	23 MT	70–75%	~50,000
2020	24 MT	65–70%	~45,000
2023	26 MT	55–60%	33,719

From Punjab's Fields to Delhi's Smog

During October and November, winds carry pollutants across northern India, contributing heavily to Delhi's annual smog crisis. Scientific studies estimate that crop residue burning contributes to 14–35% of

Delhi's $PM_{2.5}$ pollution, with peak episodes exceeding 50% contribution. Hospitals report rising respiratory illness cases. Visibility declines, and economic activity slows. A farm-level decision becomes a national environmental emergency.



The smoke rising from burning fields travels far beyond Punjab



Mushroom Farming: Turning Waste into Opportunity



One simple intervention has the potential to bridge both challenges—paddy straw mushroom cultivation. Rather than burning paddy straw, migrant workers can convert it into a productive resource and build a sustainable livelihood around it. The model is both practical and economically viable, as paddy straw serves as the primary raw material, infrastructure requirements are minimal, the cultivation cycle is short at just 20–25 days, and the process generates substantial labour demand. Economic estimates indicate that a five-member migrant group managing five tonnes of paddy straw can earn a net income of nearly ₹2.95 lakh per cultivation cycle, translating to approximately ₹59,000 per worker within a month. The intervention therefore offers a viable pathway to reduce crop residue burning while creating dignified, income-generating opportunities for rural migrant workers. For them, employment expands across various processes associated with mushroom cultivation.

- **Straw collection** – Paddy residue is gathered from harvested fields, dried if necessary, and transported to temporary sheds where it is sorted and bundled for cultivation use.



- **Cultivation** – Collected straw is soaked, layered, inoculated with mushroom spawn, and arranged systematically inside sheds under controlled moisture and temperature conditions to initiate fungal growth.
- **Harvesting** – Within 20–25 days, mature mushrooms are carefully hand-picked in multiple flushes to maintain quality, hygiene, and continuous yield.
- **Packaging** – Freshly harvested mushrooms are cleaned, graded, weighed, and packed in ventilated, moisture-safe containers to preserve freshness and shelf life.
- **Marketing** – Packaged mushrooms are supplied directly to local markets, wholesale buyers, retailers, or food outlets through coordinated group-based sales channels to ensure timely distribution and fair pricing.

Thus, migration evolves from wage labour into entrepreneurship.

When Migrants Return Home

The real transformation begins when workers return to Sohapur, carrying

back not just wages but valuable skills and practical experience. Like Punjab, Ganjam also generates substantial quantities of paddy residue every year, much of which remains unused or is burned in the fields. Equipped with the knowledge acquired during their migration, returning workers can establish mushroom cultivation enterprises in their own villages, converting an underutilised.

potential to generate far-reaching agricultural by-product into a source of income. This creates a continuous livelihood cycle—entrepreneurship during migration in Punjab and enterprise development after returning to Sohapur. In this way, migration evolves from a temporary coping strategy into a powerful pathway for knowledge transfer, local entrepreneurship, and sustainable rural development.



A Shared Agricultural Reality

Factor	Punjab	Sohapur
Paddy cultivation	High	High
Straw availability	Excess	Moderate
Labour availability	Shortage	Surplus
Burning practice	Large-scale	Localised

Both regions face the same challenge—unmanaged agricultural residue—but under contrasting labour conditions. While Punjab struggles with labour shortages during the agricultural season, migrant-sending regions such as Sohapur have an abundant workforce seeking livelihood opportunities. Paddy straw mushroom

cultivation offers a practical way to connect these complementary realities.

The potential impact is significant. Punjab produces nearly 20 million tonnes of paddy straw each year. If even one per cent of this residue were diverted to mushroom cultivation, it could create thousands of livelihood

opportunities for migrant workers, reduce the intensity of stubble burning, lower air pollution, and stimulate rural entrepreneurship in migrants' home villages. Such a modest shift in resource use has the environmental, economic, and social benefits, demonstrating how a simple intervention can contribute to national development.

Rethinking Migration in India

Migration is often viewed solely as a manifestation of rural distress. However, evidence from Sohapur points to a different possibility. When supported by appropriate skills and opportunities, migration can become a powerful learning process, a mechanism for technology transfer, and a pathway for rural innovation. As workers acquire new knowledge at their destinations and apply it in their home villages, the benefits of migration extend far beyond wage earnings. By linking labour mobility with the productive use of local resources, development becomes circular rather

than fragmented, creating sustainable livelihoods while strengthening rural economies.

The Larger Lesson

India's rural transformation may not always require massive investments. Sometimes, the most effective solutions are already embedded within existing agricultural systems, waiting to be recognised and harnessed. When surplus labour is connected with surplus biomass, new opportunities for sustainable livelihoods begin to emerge.

The story linking Sohapur and Punjab demonstrates how agricultural waste can be transformed into livelihood opportunities, how an environmental challenge can become a driver of rural enterprise, and how migration can evolve from a survival strategy into an engine of rural transformation. It is a compelling reminder that inclusive and sustainable development often begins by reimagining the value of resources and the potential of people.



Orientation Programme on Rural Governance for CEOs of Zilla Panchayats Conducted at NIRDPR



Dignitaries, including senior administrators and participants, of the Training Programme with Dr P. Kesava Rao, Associate Professor & Head, CGARD and CRTCN; Dr N. S. R. Prasad, Assistant Professor, CGARD; and Dr A. Simhachalam, Assistant Professor, CGARD, NIRDPR

The National Institute of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj (NIRDPR), Hyderabad, in association with the B.N. Yugandhar Centre for Rural Studies, Lal Bahadur Shastri National Academy of Administration (LBSNAA), Mussoorie, organised a five-day training programme on 'Orientation towards Rural Governance' for Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) of Zilla Parishads from 20-24 July 2026 at the NIRDPR campus, Hyderabad.

The programme was designed to strengthen the leadership, governance, service delivery, integrated planning, financial management and institutional capacities of CEOs of Zilla Parishads. It brought together field-based experiences, emerging governance practices and policy perspectives, with an emphasis on experiential learning, peer-to-peer knowledge exchange and exposure to innovative governance models.

Strengthening Leadership for Effective Rural Governance

The training focused on strengthening the leadership and administrative capabilities of CEOs to

enable them to effectively lead rural development and Panchayati Raj institutions. It sought to deepen their understanding of governance frameworks, institutional roles and administrative responsibilities, while equipping them to address service delivery challenges and improve last-mile implementation.

A key focus of the programme was integrated district-level planning and convergence of development schemes, including strategies for achieving saturation in key rural development programmes. The programme also emphasised inclusive and gender-responsive governance, social equity, financial management, institutional strengthening of Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs), and the use of technology and data-driven decision-making to improve governance outcomes.

Learning through Experience and Peer Exchange

The programme adopted a participatory and practice-oriented approach, combining interactive lectures and presentations by experienced practitioners and domain experts with case studies highlighting

best practices from high-performing districts. Panel discussions and peer-learning sessions enabled participants to share field experiences, reflect on practical challenges and learn from successful governance models across states.

The technical sessions covered a broad range of contemporary issues in rural governance. These included the Panchayat Advancement Index (PAI), Local Sustainable Development Goals (LSDGs), rural service delivery and agency functions of Panchayats, DAY-NRLM and rural livelihoods, Panchayat budgeting and fiscal autonomy, Jal Jeevan Mission, Gram Panchayat Development Plan (GPDP), integrated district planning, inclusive development and women-friendly Panchayats, natural resource management and watershed development, IT initiatives in Panchayati Raj, rural waste management and Swachh Bharat Mission, animal husbandry, fisheries and farmers' income, forest-Panchayat convergence, and district project formulation.

Rich Pool of Practitioners and Experts

The programme drew on the expertise of senior administrators, practitioners, academics and subject specialists from across the country. The resource persons included Shri Sushil Kumar Lohani, IAS, Additional Secretary, Ministry of Panchayati Raj; Shri S. M. Vijayanand, IAS (Retd.), Former Secretary, Ministry of Panchayati Raj; Shri Amarjeet Sinha, IAS (Retd.), Senior Fellow, Centre for Social and Economic Progress; Dr W. R. Reddy, IAS (Retd.), Former Director General, NIRDPR; Ms Vini Mahajan, IAS (Retd.), Former Secretary, Ministry of Jal Shakti; Shri Reddy Subrahmanyam, IAS (Retd.), Former Secretary, Government of India; and Ms Uma Mahadevan, IAS, Additional Chief Secretary, Government of Karnataka, among several other experts.

The resource team also included officials and experts from institutions such as AIIMS, the Ministry of Panchayati Raj, municipal administration, the Indian Chamber of Food and Agriculture, NIRDPR, the Centre for Good Governance, Transform Rural India, the School of Excellence in Panchayati Raj and the NRLM Resource Cell, among others.

Participation from Across the Country

The programme brought together 38 participants from 15 States and one Union Territory. The participants comprised seven IAS officers, 29 State Civil Services officers serving as Chief Executive Officers of Zilla Parishads, and two faculty members from Administrative Training Institutes.

The programme was inaugurated by Shri Sushil Kumar Lohani, IAS, Additional Secretary, Ministry of Panchayati Raj, Government of India. The valedictory session was chaired by Shri Sriram Taranikanti, IAS, Director, Lal Bahadur Shastri National Academy of Administration, Mussoorie. Dr P. Kesava Rao, Associate Professor & Head, CGARD, NIRDPR, delivered the welcome address on both occasions, while Dr A. Simhachalam, Assistant Professor, CGARD, NIRDPR, proposed the vote of thanks.

Towards Stronger and More Responsive PRIs

The programme created a platform for peer learning, exchange of good practices and collaborative reflection on the challenges confronting rural governance. The interaction among CEOs and experts enabled participants to examine practical approaches to strengthening Panchayati Raj Institutions, improving service delivery and accelerating sustainable development outcomes across rural areas.

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



Participants of the International Training Programme with Dr Anjan Kumar Bhanja, Associate Professor & Head, CPRDP&SSD; Shri Manoj Kumar, Registrar & Director (Administration) i/c; and Dr. Pranab Kumar Ghosh, Assistant Registrar (E) i/c, NIRDPR

The National Institute of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj, Hyderabad, Decentralised Planning and Social Service Delivery (CPRDP&SSD), organised an International Training Programme on Local Governance for the Elected Representatives of Sri Lanka from 20-29 July 2026 at the Institute campus.

The programme was designed to strengthen the leadership and governance capacities of elected representatives from Sri Lanka by providing exposure to India's decentralised governance system and best practices in local self-government. It served as a platform for knowledge exchange, enabling participants to understand innovative approaches to participatory planning, local administration, and community-driven development.

Technical sessions covered key themes such as the constitutional framework of Panchayati Raj, decentralised planning, Gram Panchayat Development Planning

(GPDP), financial management, delivery of public services, digital governance, localisation of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), social inclusion, and community participation. Resource persons highlighted successful models and field experiences that demonstrated the role of local governments in promoting accountable, transparent, and inclusive governance.

The programme also included interactive discussions, field visits, and experience-sharing sessions, allowing delegates to observe grassroots governance practices and exchange perspectives with Indian experts. The interactions fostered mutual learning and strengthened cooperation between India and Sri Lanka in the field of local governance and capacity development.

The programme is expected to enhance the institutional and leadership capabilities of the participants while further strengthening bilateral collaboration in promoting effective local governance and sustainable development.

Capacity Building Programme on Livestock Management for CRPs under TGILP



Participants of the Training Programme on Livestock Management for CRPs under TGILP with Dr Ravindra S. Gavali, Professor & Head, CNRM, CCDM, NIRDPR

Recognising livestock as a sustainable pathway for enhancing rural incomes and nutritional security, the DAY-NRLM Resource Cell of the National Institute of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj (NIRDPR), Hyderabad, organised a four-day Capacity Building Programme on Livestock Management from 13–16 July 2026 for 65 Community Resource Persons (Coaches) from the tribal districts of Asifabad and Nagarkurnool under the Telangana Inclusive Livelihoods Programme (TGILP), Telangana SERP.

The programme aimed to strengthen the technical capacities of Community Resource Persons to promote livestock-based livelihoods among tribal households and support sustainable income generation at the grassroots. It focused on developing a cadre of trained coaches who can guide rural communities in adopting scientific livestock management practices

and strengthening livelihood interventions.

Technical sessions covered backyard poultry and goat rearing, including breeding management, disease prevention and vaccination, fodder development, climate-resilient livestock management practices, and micro-enterprise development. Participants were also oriented on data-driven micro-planning for livestock asset creation and management, enabling them to provide effective field-level support to rural households.

Through interactive sessions and practical learning, the programme equipped the participants with the knowledge and confidence to serve as community-level resource persons and promote improved livestock practices in their villages. The initiative is expected to contribute to enhanced nutritional security, increased household incomes, and sustainable livelihood opportunities for tribal communities under the TGILP framework.

Hands-on Training on Handmade Paper Products under Lakhpati Didi Initiative



Participants of the Hands-on Training with Dr. C. Kathiresan, Associate Professor & Head, Centre for Innovations and Appropriate Technologies for Skills and Jobs (CIAT&SJ)

The National Institute of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj (NIRDPR), Hyderabad, through its Centre for Innovations and Appropriate Technologies for Skills and Jobs (CIAT&SJ), organised a Hands-on Training on Conversion of Handmade Paper into Value-based Commercial Products for Self-Help Groups (SHGs) and Community Resource Persons (CRPs) under the Lakhpati Didi Initiative from 14–18 July 2026 at the Rural Technology Park (RTP), NIRDPR.

The programme aimed to promote sustainable livelihoods by equipping SHG members and CRPs with practical skills in converting handmade paper into marketable value-added products. It focused on enhancing entrepreneurial capabilities, encouraging eco-friendly production practices, and creating income-generating opportunities through innovative product development.

Participants received hands-on training in designing and producing a variety of hand made paper products, along with guidance on product

finishing, quality improvement, packaging, branding, costing, and marketing. The sessions also highlighted enterprise development, value addition, and business opportunities under the Lakhpati Didi initiative, enabling participants to explore sustainable micro-enterprises based on locally available resources.

The practical, skill-oriented training encouraged participants to develop commercially viable products while promoting environmentally sustainable practices. The programme also provided a platform for exchanging ideas, sharing experiences, and learning innovative approaches to rural entrepreneurship.

The initiative is expected to strengthen the capacities of SHGs and CRPs, support women-led enterprises, and contribute to livelihood diversification and enhanced income generation through sustainable, eco-friendly enterprises.

Training Programme on Business Diversification Opportunities and Best Practices of PACCSs



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

The Centre for PG Studies and Distance Education (CPSDE), National Institute of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj (NIRDPR) organised a Training Programme on Business Diversification Opportunities and Best Practices of Primary Agricultural Credit Cooperative Societies (PACCSs) for the Presidents, Board of Directors (BoDs), and CEOs of PACCSs and Large Area Multi-Purpose Cooperative Societies (LAMPCSs) from 29 June to 03 July 2026.

Sponsored by the Department of Cooperation, Government of Odisha, the programme aimed to strengthen the managerial, governance, and operational capacities of cooperative leaders while equipping them with strategies to diversify business activities and improve institutional sustainability.

The training focused on emerging opportunities in agri-business, value addition, member-centric services,

financial management, cooperative governance, and business planning. Resource persons highlighted successful models and best practices that enable cooperatives to expand their services, improve operational efficiency, and respond to changing market demands.

Interactive lectures, case studies, group discussions, and experience-sharing sessions enabled participants to exchange field experiences and explore practical approaches for strengthening cooperative enterprises. The programme also emphasised innovation, strategic planning, and improved service delivery to enhance the long-term viability and competitiveness of PACCSs and LAMPCSs.

The training is expected to contribute to building stronger and more resilient cooperative institutions capable of promoting inclusive rural development and supporting sustainable livelihoods in Odisha.

Induction Training for Newly Recruited Staff of SRLM



Participants of the Induction Training Programme with Dr Ravindra S. Gavali, Professor & Head, CNRM, CC&DM, and Director, DAY-NRLM Resource Cell; K. Venkateshwar Rao, Mission Manager; and R. Ravi Naidu, Mission Executive, DAY-NRLM Resource Cell, NIRDPR

The National Institute of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj (NIRDPR) through its DAY-NRLM Resource Cell, organised an Induction Training Programme for Newly Recruited Staff of State Rural Livelihood Missions (SRLMs) from 14-22 July 2026 at the Institute campus.

The programme was designed to equip newly recruited SRLM personnel with a comprehensive understanding of the Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana-National Rural Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NRLM), its institutional framework, implementation strategies, and key thematic interventions. It aimed to strengthen participants' capacities for effective programme implementation and community mobilisation at the grassroots level.

The training covered core components of DAY-NRLM, including institution building, financial inclusion, livelihoods promotion, social inclusion,

capacity building, monitoring and Sessions also focused on the roles and responsibilities of SRLM functionaries, participatory planning, and best practices in promoting sustainable rural livelihoods through Self-Help Groups (SHGs) and their federations.

Interactive lectures, group exercises, case studies, and experience-sharing sessions provided participants with practical insights into programme implementation and field-level challenges. The programme facilitated peer learning and encouraged participants to adopt innovative and community-centric approaches for strengthening rural livelihoods.

The induction programme is expected to build a strong foundation for newly recruited SRLM staff, enabling them to contribute effectively to the implementation of DAY-NRLM and the promotion of inclusive and sustainable rural development across states.

Training Programme on BDO Leadership for Building Prosperous Blocks



Participants of the Training Programme on BDO with Dr Partha Pratim Sahu, Associate Professor & Head i/c, CEDFI and CGGPA; Dr P. Kesava Rao, Associate Professor & Head, (CGARD) and (CRTCN) ; Dr Nithya V. G., Assistant Professor, CAS; and Dr Surjit Vikraman, Associate Professor & Head, CAS, NIRDPR

The National Institute of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj (NIRDPR), Hyderabad, through its Centre for Entrepreneurship Development and Financial Inclusion (CEDFI), organised a Training Programme on BDO Leadership for Bringing Saturation in Rural Development Programmes: Building Prosperous Blocks from 06–11 July 2026 at the Institute campus.

The programme aimed to strengthen the leadership and managerial capacities of Block Development Officers (BDOs) to ensure effective implementation and saturation of rural development programmes at the block level. It focused on equipping participants with practical knowledge and leadership skills to enhance programme convergence, improve service delivery, and promote inclusive and sustainable rural development.

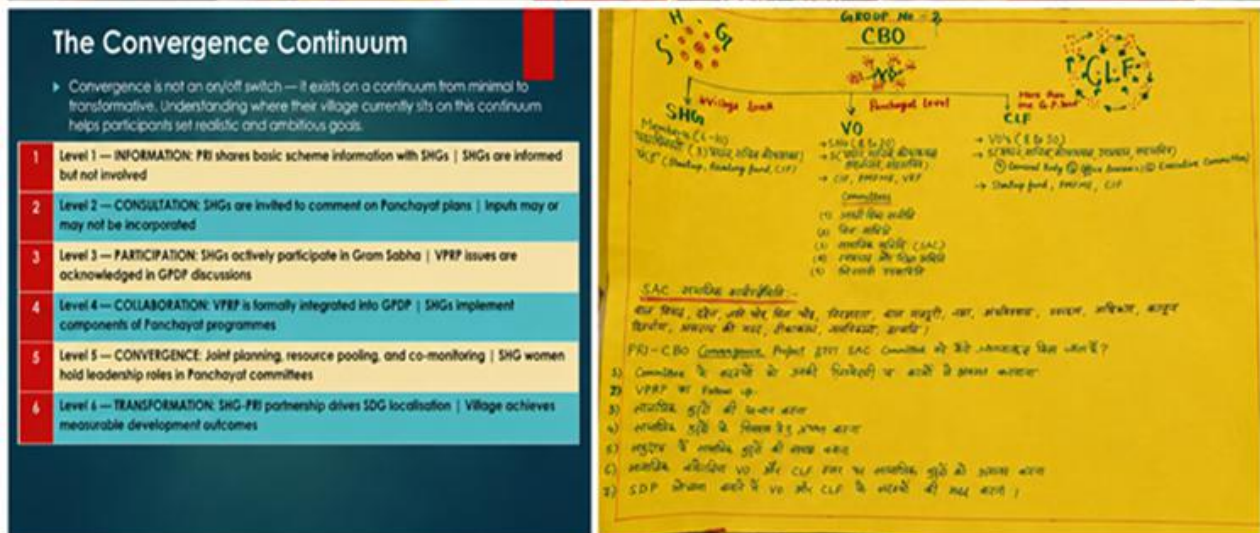
Technical sessions covered key themes including leadership and change management, convergence of flagship rural development

programmes, evidence-based block planning, financial management, digital governance, geospatial applications, entrepreneurship promotion, financial inclusion, agrarian development, and institutional coordination. Resource persons also shared successful field experiences and best practices to support effective planning and implementation at the grassroots.

The programme featured interactive lectures, case studies, group discussions, and experience-sharing sessions, enabling participants to exchange ideas and explore innovative approaches for strengthening governance and accelerating development outcomes at the block level.

The programme was coordinated by Dr Ruchira Bhattacharya, Assistant Professor, CSR, PPP & Training, Research and Consultancy (Delhi Branch); and Dr Partha Pratim Sahu, Associate Professor & Head i/c, CEDFI and CGGPA, NIRDPR.

Training on Strengthening PRI – SHG Convergence at HPSIRD, Shimla



Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) and Self Help Groups (SHGs) are two of the strongest pillars of grassroots democracy and community-led development in rural India. While PRIs hold the constitutional mandate for local governance and decentralised planning, SHGs nurtured under National Rural Livelihoods Mission and its state counterparts have built deep social capital, collective agency and last-mile reach in villages. Yet, in practice, these two institutions often work parallel rather than in partnership, limiting the impact of both. To address this gap, NRLM Resource Centre (NRLM-RC) of National Institute of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj (NIRDPR), has designed a three-day residential training on ‘Strengthening PRI-SHG Convergence.’ A series of

training has been conducted in different states of India, and the clientele were district and block-level SRLM officials.

As part of this initiative, the NIRDPR, under its NRLM Resource Centre, organised a three-day training on PRI-SHG Convergence from July 2 to 4, 2026, at Himachal Pradesh State Institute of Rural Development (HPSIRD), Shimla. Dr S. K. Sathyaprabha, Assistant Professor, Centre for Panchayati Raj, Decentralised Planning and Social Service Delivery, NIRDPR, served as the Training Programme Director.

The training was designed to strengthen the understanding and practice of convergence between Panchayati Raj Institutions and SHGs in rural development.



The programme aimed to build a shared understanding of the roles, structures and mandates of PRIs and SHGs, along with the policy framework supporting their convergence. It also focused on equipping participants with practical skills to localise the Sustainable Development Goals within Gram Panchayat plans and strengthening their capacity to prepare, present and integrate Gram Panchayat Development Plans (GPDs) and Village Poverty Reduction Plans (VPRPs).

Another key objective of this training was to deepen women's participation and voice of SHG members in the Gram Sabha through demonstrated models. The programme further enabled participants to translate their learning into village-specific, field-ready action plans with clearly defined timelines and responsibilities.

The core sessions covered were regarding the nature and scope of PRI-SHG convergence, localisation of the Sustainable Development Goals, and the role of SHGs as agents of change in local development. Participants were Gram Panchayat Development Plan, the significance of SHG participation

in Gram Sabha and the integration of VPRPs in GPDs. Case-model presentations were used to demonstrate successful practices for strengthening SHG participation in Gram Panchayat development. The training also included sessions on implementation of VPRPs in Gram Sabha, preparation of Village Panchayat-wise action plans and presentation of customised action plans prepared by participants. Dr S. K. Sathyaprabha, Programme Director, NIRDPR; Sh. Ravinder Kumar, Core Faculty (SW&CD), HPSIRD; Ms Nirmla Chauhan, SPM-SD, HPSRLM, and officials of HPSRLM handled the above sessions.

The training was evaluated by participants' feedback through the Training Management Portal, and it received an overall evaluation score of 94 per cent, covering all major components of training, including training programme design, speakers, knowledge enhancement, skill development and attitudinal change. The high evaluation score reflected participants' positive response to the content, methodology and overall effectiveness of the training programme.

NCVET recognises NIRDPR as Awarding Body (Dual)



Dr. Jyothis Sathyapalan, Professor & Head, CPGS&DE, and Dr. Sandhya Gopakumaran, Director, Training and Development, DDU-GKY Resource Cell, NIRDPR, with NCVET officials during the agreement signing ceremony recognising NIRDPR as an Awarding Body (Dual)

The National Institute of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj (NIRDPR), Hyderabad, achieved a significant milestone with its recognition as an Awarding Body (Dual) by the National Council for Vocational Education and Training (NCVET). An agreement to this effect was signed on 21 July 2026 in New Delhi, enabling NIRDPR to assess, certify, and award qualifications for learners undergoing training in its campuses and fully managed training centres for approved and adopted qualifications.

The agreement signing ceremony was chaired by Shri Niranjana Kumar Sudhansu, Additional Secretary, Ministry of Skill Development & Entrepreneurship and Executive Member, NCVET. The event was attended by senior officials of NCVET, including Lt. Col. Vikram Singh Bhati, Director (Recognition) and Lt. Col. Saurabh S. Bisht, Director (Monitoring). NIRDPR was represented by Dr. Jyothis Sathyapalan, Professor & Head, Centre for PG Studies and Distance Education (CPGS&DE),

and Dr. Sandhya Gopakumaran, Director, Training and Development, DDU-GKY Resource Cell.

As part of the initial rollout, NCVET has approved two qualifications developed by NIRDPR: Industrial General Pest Management Technician and a Micro Credential on the Generation and Mobilisation of Own Source Revenue by Panchayats. The Institute plans to introduce additional NCVET-approved programmes focusing on industry-relevant skills for rural youth, entrepreneurship-oriented courses for Self-Help Groups (SHGs), and professional skill development programmes for functionaries working in Rural Development and Panchayati Raj.

The recognition reinforces NIRDPR's role as a national institution for capacity building and skill development, further strengthening its contribution to creating a skilled workforce and promoting sustainable rural development through quality vocational education.

Working Group Discussion on Digital Finance 2.0 under DAY-NRLM Held at NIRDPR



Participants of the Working Group Discussion on Digital Finance posing for group photo

The National Institute of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj (NIRDPR), Hyderabad, through its DAY-NRLM Resource Cell, organised a Working Group Discussion on Digital Finance 2.0 under Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana–National Rural Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NRLM) from 22–24 July 2026 at the Institute campus.

The three-day consultation brought together senior officials, financial inclusion experts, banking professionals, technology partners, and representatives from DAY-NRLM to deliberate on strengthening the next phase of digital financial inclusion for Self-Help Groups (SHGs) and their federations. The programme served as a platform to review the progress of digital finance initiatives, identify implementation challenges, and develop strategies for scaling up technology-enabled financial services across the DAY-NRLM ecosystem.

Technical sessions focused on key aspects of Digital Finance 2.0, including digital payment systems, financial inclusion, SHG-bank linkage, digital credit, financial literacy, digital record management, data-driven decision-making, and technology-

-enabled service delivery. Participants also discussed innovative digital solutions for improving access to formal financial services, enhancing transparency and accountability, and strengthening the financial resilience of community institutions.

The discussions featured technical presentations, thematic working sessions, and collaborative group exercises, enabling participants to exchange experiences, review best practices from different States, and formulate practical recommendations for strengthening digital finance interventions under DAY-NRLM. Emphasis was placed on promoting secure, inclusive, and user-friendly digital financial ecosystems that support sustainable livelihoods and women-led community institutions.

The consultation concluded with a set of actionable recommendations aimed at strengthening policy implementation, improving digital financial infrastructure, and accelerating the adoption of Digital Finance 2.0 to enhance the efficiency, transparency, and sustainability of DAY-NRLM interventions across the country.

Leadership Development Programme for Elected Representatives from the Republic of Maldives



(Above) Participants of the programme posing for a photo; (Below) S Jyothis, Professor & Head, CPGS&DE; Dr Anjan Kumar Bhanja, Associate Professor & Head, CPRDP&SSD; and Dr Pranab Kumar Ghosh, Assistant Registrar (E) i/c, NIRDPR, interacting with the participants

The National Institute of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj (NIRDPR), Hyderabad, organised a 14-day Leadership Development Programme for Elected Representatives of the Island Councils of the Republic of Maldives from 21 June to 6 July 2026. The programme was organised by the Centre for Panchayati Raj, Decentralised Planning and Social Service Delivery (CPRDP & SSD), NIRDPR, as part of the ongoing institutional cooperation between India and Maldives.

The programme was conducted under the framework of the Memorandum of Understanding signed between NIRDPR and the Local Government Authority (LGA), Republic of Maldives, on 2 August 2022, under the aegis of the Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India. The MoU envisages capacity-building programmes for elected

representatives and officials of Atoll Councils, City Councils, Island Councils and the LGA during 2022–2026.

A total of 26 elected representatives from Island Councils of Gaafu Alifu, Gaafu Dhaalu and Laamu Atolls participated in the programme. The participants included Council Presidents, Vice Presidents and Council Members. The programme provided a platform for peer learning, experience sharing and strengthening leadership capacities in decentralised governance, participatory planning and sustainable local development.

The programme covered a range of themes including decentralised governance, leadership development, localisation of Sustainable Development Goals, participatory planning, fisheries development, rural technology, solid



waste management, horticulture, renewable energy, project management, climate change adaptation and women's empowerment. Faculty members and experts from NIRDPR, government institutions, universities and partner organisations contributed to the programme through technical sessions, interactive learning and field-based exposure.

Exposure to Grassroots Governance in Andhra Pradesh

A key component of the programme was a four-day study tour to Andhra Pradesh, which provided participants with first-hand exposure to India's decentralised governance system, participatory planning processes and rural development initiatives. The study tour enabled the delegates to interact with elected representatives, government officials, community institutions and local stakeholders and understand the functioning of Panchayati Raj Institutions at the grassroots level.

At Guntupalli Gram Panchayat in Ibrahimpatnam Mandal, NTR District, the participants observed the preparation and implementation of the Gram Panchayat Development Plan (GPDP) and participated in interactions with Panchayat representatives and functionaries. They also attended Gram Sabha, Mahila Sabha and Bal Sabha meetings, gaining insights into participatory decision-making, inclusive governance and community engagement. Interactions with Self-Help Groups,

local NGOs and government officials further highlighted the contribution of community institutions to women's empowerment, livelihoods and social development.

The study tour also included visits to the Jupudi Solid Waste Management Centre, RISE Centre, a Government School, Butterfly Park, Kondapalli Toy Cluster and Kondapalli Fort, besides an interaction with the District Collector and district officials of NTR District. The exposure showcased practices in solid waste management, education, environmental conservation, heritage preservation and district administration.

The programme also included exposure visits to institutions such as INCOIS and the Fruit Research Station of Sri Konda Laxman Telangana Horticultural University, along with other learning and cultural visits documented in the programme's photo gallery.

Overall, the programme strengthened the participants' understanding of decentralised governance and provided practical knowledge, leadership skills and innovative approaches that could be adapted to strengthen local governance and sustainable development initiatives in the Maldives. The programme was directed by Dr Anjan Kumar Bhanja, Associate Professor & Head, CPRDP & SSD, NIRDPR, and coordinated by Mr Arunraj Mali, Training Manager, and Ms A Sirisha, Project Training Manager.

Faculty Development Programme (FDP) Batch VII



*Participants of the FDP – Batch VII with Dr. C. Kathiresan,
Associate Professor & Head, CIAT&SJ*

The National Institute of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj (NIRDPR), Hyderabad, through its School of Excellence in Panchayati Raj (SoEPR), organised the Faculty Development Programme (FDP) – Batch VII from 29 June to 03 July 2026 at the Institute campus.

The programme was designed to strengthen the academic, training, research, and facilitation capacities of faculty members and professionals associated with Panchayati Raj Institutions, State Institutes of Rural Development, Extension Training Centres, and other rural development organisations. It aimed to enhance participants' understanding of decentralised governance, participatory planning, and innovative approaches to capacity building in rural development.

The sessions covered a wide range of themes, including Panchayati Raj governance, Gram Panchayat Development Planning (GPDP), localisation of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs),

participatory training methodologies, leadership development, and institutional strengthening. Resource persons shared policy perspectives, best practices, and field experiences to equip participants with practical knowledge for improving training effectiveness and governance outcomes.

The programme also emphasised learner-centric training approaches, communication and facilitation skills, and the use of experiential learning techniques. Interactive discussions, case studies, group exercises, and experience-sharing sessions enabled participants to exchange ideas and strengthen their professional competencies.

The FDP is expected to contribute to developing a skilled pool of faculty members and trainers capable of delivering high-quality capacity-building programmes and supporting effective governance and sustainable rural development initiatives across the country.

Consultation Workshop on Disaster Preparedness at the Gram Panchayat Level



Participants of the Consultation Workshop on Disaster Preparedness with Dr. Ravindra S. Gavali, Professor & Head, Centre for Natural Resource Management, Climate Change and Disaster Mitigation (CNRM, CC&DM), NIRDPR

The School of Excellence in Panchayati Raj (SoEPR), NIRDPR, organised a Consultation Workshop on Disaster Preparedness at the Gram Panchayat Level from 7–8 July 2026 at the Institute campus.

The workshop brought together experts, practitioners, government officials, and representatives from Panchayati Raj Institutions to deliberate on strengthening disaster preparedness and resilience at the grassroots level. It aimed to develop practical strategies for integrating disaster risk reduction into Gram Panchayat planning and improving local preparedness for natural and human-induced disasters.

Technical sessions focused on disaster risk assessment, community-based disaster preparedness, climate resilience, institutional coordination,

emergency response mechanisms, and the role of Gram Panchayats in disaster management. Participants also discussed the integration of disaster preparedness measures into Gram Panchayat Development Plans (GPDs), emphasising convergence among line departments, local institutions, and community organisations.

Interactive discussions, group consultations, and experience-sharing sessions enabled participants to exchange best practices and identify practical approaches for enhancing local resilience. The workshop also facilitated deliberations on strengthening institutional capacities, promoting community participation, and developing context-specific strategies for effective disaster preparedness at the village level.

Validation Workshop on National Handbook for Participatory Methods in Panchayati Raj Training and Capacity Building



Participants of the Validation Workshop with Dr S. Jyothis, Professor & Head, CPGS&DE

The National Institute of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj (NIRDPR), Hyderabad, through its School of Excellence in Panchayati Raj (SoEPR), organised a Validation Workshop for the National Handbook for Participatory Methods in Panchayati Raj Training and Capacity Building on 16-17 July 2026 at the Institute campus.

The two-day workshop brought together faculty members, training professionals, subject experts, and practitioners to review and validate the draft handbook aimed at strengthening participatory approaches in Panchayati Raj capacity-building programmes. The workshop provided a platform for incorporating expert inputs to ensure that the handbook is practical, comprehensive, and relevant to the evolving needs of Panchayati Raj Institutions.

The deliberations focused on participatory training methodologies, adult learning principles, facilitation techniques, experiential learning,

community engagement, and the effective use of participatory tools intraining elected representatives and functionaries of Panchayati Raj Institutions. Participants also discussed ways to make training programmes more learner-centric, inclusive, and responsive to local governance challenges.

Interactive discussions, technical presentations, and group consultations enabled participants to examine the handbook chapter by chapter and recommend improvements based on field experiences and emerging best practices. The workshop concluded with a consolidated set of recommendations to further refine the handbook before its finalisation.

The validated handbook is expected to serve as a valuable resource for trainers and capacity-building institutions across the country, contributing to more effective, participatory, and outcome-oriented training programmes for Panchayati Raj Institutions.

2-Day Module Validation Workshop on Poverty-Free and Enhanced Livelihood Panchayat



Participants of the 2-Day Module Validation Workshop with Dr R. Chinnadurai, Associate Professor, CPRDP&SSD, and Tandra Mondal, Assistant Professor, SoEPR, NIRDPR

The National Institute of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj (NIRDPR), Hyderabad, through its School of Excellence in Panchayati Raj (SoEPR), organised a 2-Day Module Validation Workshop on Theme 1 – Poverty-Free and Enhanced Livelihood Panchayat from 15–16 July 2026 at the Institute campus.

The workshop was organised to review and validate the training module developed under the Localisation of Sustainable Development Goals (LSDGs) framework, with a focus on strengthening the capacity of Panchayati Raj Institutions to achieve the goal of a Poverty-Free and Enhanced Livelihood Panchayat. It brought together subject experts, faculty members, practitioners, and representatives from various institutions to provide technical inputs for refining the module.

The deliberations focused on poverty alleviation strategies, sustainable livelihood promotion, convergence of rural development programmes, social inclusion, community participation, and strengthening the role of Gram Panchayats in planning and

implementing livelihood-focused interventions. Participants also discussed integrating successful field practices, government flagship programmes, and evidence-based approaches into the training module to make it practical and relevant for grassroots functionaries.

Technical presentations, thematic discussions, group exercises, and experience-sharing sessions enabled participants to critically review the content, training methodology, and learning outcomes of the module. Suggestions were made to improve its structure, contextual relevance, participatory learning components, and usability for capacity-building programmes across States.

The workshop concluded with a consolidated set of recommendations for finalising the module, which is expected to serve as a comprehensive training resource for strengthening the capacities of Panchayati Raj Institutions in promoting poverty reduction, livelihood enhancement, and sustainable rural development.

Workshop on Fellowship-Based Capacity Building Programme for Elected Women Representatives



Participants of the Workshop on Fellowship-Based Capacity Building Programme for Elected Women Representatives with Dr Anjan Kumar Bhanja, Associate Professor & Head, CPRDP&SSD, and Deeksha, Assistant Professor, SoEPR, NIRDPR

Strengthening the leadership and governance capabilities of elected women representatives through an innovative fellowship-based learning model was the focus of a two-day workshop organised by the National Institute of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj (NIRDPR), Hyderabad, through its School of Excellence in Panchayati Raj (SoEPR) on 30 June and 1 July 2026 at the Institute campus.

The workshop brought together faculty members, researchers, subject experts, and programme coordinators to deliberate on the design and implementation of a structured fellowship programme aimed at empowering women representatives in Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs). The deliberations focused on developing a comprehensive capacity-building framework that would enable women leaders to strengthen their leadership skills, enhance institutional effectiveness, and play a more proactive role in grassroots governance and local development.

Technical sessions covered key aspects of fellowship design, competency-based training, mentoring and handholding mechanisms, field immersion, action

learning, and documentation of best practices. Participants also discussed approaches for integrating gender-responsive leadership, participatory governance, digital learning resources, peer learning networks, and evidence-based planning into the fellowship framework to make the programme practical, scalable, and responsive to local governance needs.

Interactive discussions, group exercises, and experience-sharing sessions enabled participants to review the proposed curriculum, identify critical competencies for elected women representatives, and suggest improvements to the fellowship structure, training methodology, and monitoring framework. The workshop also highlighted the importance of continuous mentoring and institutional support in enabling women representatives to effectively discharge their leadership responsibilities.

The workshop helped validate the fellowship framework and refine its design through expert deliberations. The recommendations will support the development of a practical capacity-building model for strengthening the leadership of elected women representatives.

Building Enterprise Ecosystems: Insights from the DAY-NRLM Field Immersion in Vizianagaram

Dr Jyoti Prakash Mohanty, DPD, NRLM-RC

Mr Ashutosh Dhami, YP, NRLM-RC



Understanding Rural Entrepreneurship beyond Individual Enterprises Village Where the Story Begins – Sohapur, Ganjam

As part of its ongoing efforts to document and understand successful models of rural enterprise promotion under the Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana-National Rural Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NRLM), a two-day field immersion was undertaken in Vizianagaram district of Andhra Pradesh on 14-15 July 2026. The field visit was led by Dr Jyoti Prakash Mohanty, Deputy Director, NRLM-RC, National Institute of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj, along with Mr. Ashutosh Dhami, Young Professional, NRLM-RC, in collaboration with Shri Srinivas Pani, PD, DRDA; Shri Raju Kumar S., DPM Livelihoods; and Shri L. Satyanarayana, APM, DRDA, Vizianagaram.

The objective of the immersion was not merely to document successful enterprises but to understand the enterprise ecosystem that enables rural women entrepreneurs to establish, sustain and scale their businesses. The visit covered interactions with self-help groups (SHGs), Village Organisations (VOs),

Mandal Samakhyas (MS), Zilla Samakhya (ZS), Community Resource Persons (CRPs) and women entrepreneurs across Vizianagaram district. Enterprises visited included food processing, dairy, manufacturing, handicrafts, embroidery, wood carving and service-based businesses, offering a comprehensive perspective on livelihood promotion under DAY-NRLM.

Enterprise Ecosystems: The Backbone of Sustainable Rural Livelihoods

One of the most important learnings from the field immersion was that successful enterprises do not emerge in isolation. Every thriving enterprise observed during the visit was supported by a robust institutional ecosystem comprising SHGs, Village Organisations, Mandal Samakhyas, Community Resource Persons, banks, DRDA functionaries and various government support mechanisms.

The journey of each entrepreneur began with social mobilisation through SHGs, followed by enterprise identification, skill development, access to finance, continuous handholding, bookkeeping support, market exposure and business mentoring. This integrated approach ensures that entrepreneurs receive sustained support throughout the lifecycle of their enterprises rather than merely obtaining access to credit.

The field visit clearly demonstrated that community institutions under DAY-NRLM have evolved beyond financial platforms into institutions of enterprise development, enabling women to transform from borrowers into entrepreneurs, employers and local business leaders.



Building Local Economies through Circular Enterprise Models

The enterprises visited across Vizianagaram reflected an important principle of sustainable rural development from the creation of local production systems serving local markets.

Most enterprises procure raw materials from nearby areas, employ local workers, manufacture products within the community and supply goods to neighbouring markets. This circulation of economic activity creates a circular rural economy, where income generated by one enterprise supports several other economic activities within the locality.

Such decentralised production systems reduce transportation costs, minimise leakages of rural income and generate multiplier effects that strengthen village economies. Rather than depending exclusively on distant urban markets, these enterprises have successfully built resilient business models rooted in local demand.

Local Demand Driving Rural Manufacturing

A remarkable aspect of the Vizianagaram model is the manner in

opportunities based on the economic and cultural characteristics of their region.

The Camphor Manufacturing Unit is an excellent example. The enterprise manufactures camphor tablets used extensively for religious rituals and household purposes. Owing to the presence of the historic Sri Rama Temple at Ramatheertham and several other temples across the district, the entrepreneur enjoys a steady and reliable local market. The enterprise has successfully converted a traditional product into a commercially viable business while planning further expansion through improved packaging and value addition with support under the Prime Minister's Employment Generation Programme (PMEGP).

Similarly, enterprises such as the Cold Press Oil Unit, Tea Time Unit, Maggam Work Unit, Wood Carving Unit, Embroidery Unit and Bakery Enterprise have aligned production with regional demand while creating employment opportunities within their own communities.

Financial Inclusion: The Foundation of Enterprise Growth

The field immersion highlighted that



enterprise success under DAY-NRLM is which entrepreneurs have identified driven by multiple credit pathways rather than dependence on a single source of finance. To support enterprise growth and expansion, the entrepreneurs progressively leveraged a combination of financial resources, including internal lending, the Community Investment Fund (CIF), Streenidhi, the SHG-Bank Linkage Programme, commercial bank loans, MUDRA, the Prime Minister's Employment Generation Programme (PMEGP), and other government-supported credit schemes. This diversified financial ecosystem enables entrepreneurs to graduate from micro-level businesses to commercially sustainable enterprises. Rather than replacing one another, these financial instruments complement each other at different stages of enterprise development.

Larger Investments Creating Larger Employment Opportunities

An important observation during the field visit was the clear relationship between higher institutional investment and increased employment generation. Enterprises that had received larger formal credit were able to invest in better machinery, improve production capacity, diversify product portfolios and access wider markets. Consequently, these enterprises generated significantly more employment opportunities for rural youth and women.

The Sweet and Bakery Enterprise, for



example, has evolved from a small household business into a regional enterprise employing 15 rural women and youth, while marketing products across Vizianagaram, Visakhapatnam and Srikakulam districts. The entrepreneur attributes this growth to timely support received through SHG Bank Linkage, Streenidhi and institutional handholding under DAY-NRLM.

These experiences reinforce the importance of providing adequate ticket-size financing for enterprises with growth potential, as larger investments directly translate into increased production, better productivity and higher employment.

Community Institutions: Catalysts of Rural Enterprise Development

Beyond financial assistance, the visit underscored the crucial role of community institutions in ensuring enterprise sustainability. Entrepreneurs consistently highlighted the support received from Community Resource Persons, Village Organisations, Mandal Samakhya, Block Mission Management Units and District Mission Management Units in enterprise identification, business planning, bookkeeping, branding, market linkage, exhibitions, capacity building and mentoring. These institutional mechanisms have significantly reduced business risks while enabling women entrepreneurs to confidently manage expanding enterprises.



Contributing to the Vision of Make in India and Atmanirbhar Bharat

The enterprises observed during the field immersion represent more than livelihood activities, they contribute meaningfully to the national vision of Make in India and Atmanirbhar Bharat.

Whether producing bakery products, cold-pressed edible oils, camphor tablets, embroidered products or handcrafted wooden items, these enterprises demonstrate how decentralized rural manufacturing can strengthen domestic production while preserving traditional knowledge and generating employment.

Key Takeaways and the Way Forward

The Vizianagaram field immersion reaffirmed that sustainable rural development cannot be achieved through isolated interventions. Instead, it requires a comprehensive ecosystem where community institutions, financial inclusion, enterprise promotion, market access, capacity building and continuous mentoring function in harmony.

The experiences documented during the visit clearly demonstrate that when rural women are supported through strong community institutions and diversified financial instruments such as PMEGP, Streenidhi, CIF, SHG-Bank Linkage and commercial banking, they are capable of building enterprises that not only improve household incomes but also generate employment, strengthen local value chains and stimulate rural economic growth.

The enterprise ecosystem observed in Vizianagaram provides a compelling model for replication across other States under DAY-NRLM. It illustrates that the future of rural livelihoods lies in creating integrated enterprise ecosystems that transform women entrepreneurs into drivers of local economic development, contributing simultaneously to inclusive growth, Make in India, Atmanirbhar Bharat and sustainable rural prosperity.

The case studies documented during this field visit will be incorporated into the development of the CRP-EP Certification Workbook.

NIRDPR and World Skill Centre Join Hands to Build a New Paradigm for Rural Skilling and Entrepreneurship

Shri Ravi Naidu, ME, IBCB
Dr Jyoti Prakash Mohanty, DPD, NRLM-RC



The NRLM Resource Cell at National Institute of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj (NIRDPR), Hyderabad, has initiated a significant collaboration with the World Skill Centre (WSC), Bhubaneswar, marking an important step towards integrating world-class skill development with sustainable rural livelihood promotion under the Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana – National Rural Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NRLM).

The collaboration combines NIRDPR's extensive experience in rural development, institutional capacity building and livelihood promotion with WSC's globally benchmarked skill development ecosystem. Together, the two institutions aim to create scalable models that equip rural communities, self-help group (SHG) members, rural youth and community institutions with market-relevant skills, entrepreneurship capabilities and sustainable livelihood opportunities.

Learning through Practice: Off-Campus Capacity Building at WSC

Even before formalising a long-term roadmap, the collaboration translated into action through an off-campus capacity-building initiative for accountants from Tripura. The first

batch of Accounts personnel underwent an Orientation-cum-Exposure Programme at the World Skill Centre from 20–24 July 2026, offering the participants first-hand experience to internationally benchmarked training facilities, modern skill ecosystems and innovative learning methodologies.

Building on the encouraging response, a second batch was organised from 27–31 July 2026, reaffirming the commitment of both institutions to provide high-quality exposure-based learning experiences for SRLM officials. The programme demonstrated how exposure to advanced skilling ecosystems can strengthen institutional capacities and inspire replication of best practices within State Rural Livelihood Missions.

During the programme, participants interacted with ongoing trainees at WSC, including those from other livelihood initiatives, enabling valuable peer learning and exchange of experiences. Such interactions enriched participants' understanding of industry-oriented skill development and highlighted the importance of linking technical competencies with sustainable livelihoods.



A Shared Vision for Rural Transformation

The institutional discussions held at the World Skill Centre highlighted a common vision: creating livelihood opportunities that are sustainable, scalable and capable of generating lasting economic impact for rural households.

Rather than focusing solely on skill development, both institutions recognised that successful rural enterprises require an integrated ecosystem comprising technical training, entrepreneurship development, mentoring, incubation, financial literacy, access to institutional finance, branding, digital marketing and market linkages. This holistic approach aligns closely with the objectives of DAY-NRLM, where enterprise sustainability is considered as important as enterprise creation itself.

Leveraging Complementary Institutional Strengths

The World Skill Centre offers internationally benchmarked infrastructure across expertise in various sectors, providing trainees with industry-standard learning environments. NIRDPR, on the other hand, brings decades of expertise in rural development, community institution strengthening, capacity building, research and policy support.

The proposed collaboration seeks to harness these complementary strengths rather than creating parallel



systems. Through this partnership, technical excellence will be combined with community-based livelihood approaches, enabling rural communities to benefit from globally relevant skills while remaining rooted in local economic opportunities.

Beyond Training: Building Rural Enterprises

A key outcome of the discussions was the shared understanding that training should ultimately translate into entrepreneurship and employment. Both institutions proposed collaborative interventions covering capacity building for State Rural Livelihoods Mission (SRLM) functionaries, State Resource Persons, Community Resource Persons, and Self-Help Group (SHG) members.

The proposed partnership also envisages joint Training of Trainers (ToT) programmes, Entrepreneurship Development Programmes (EDPs), business planning and enterprise management, financial literacy and institutional credit linkage, digital business promotion and e-commerce, business incubation and mentoring, as well as branding, marketing, and value-chain integration to strengthen rural enterprises. These interventions are intended to support rural entrepreneurs throughout their enterprise journey—from acquiring skills to establishing viable businesses and accessing markets.

Developing Proof-of-Concept Models

Recognising the importance of



-based scaling, both institutions agreed to initially develop small Proof-of-Concept (PoC) models in carefully selected sectors.

These pilots will demonstrate complete enterprise ecosystems covering production, quality assurance, branding, business mentoring and market linkage. Successful models will be systematically documented to enable replication by State Rural Livelihood Missions across the country under DAY-NRLM.

Learning from Existing Success Stories

During interactions at WSC, the NIRDPR team observed SEWA-sponsored candidates undergoing self-employment-oriented training. Their socio-economic profile closely resembled that of SHG members supported under DAY-NRLM, providing a practical demonstration that similar models could effectively benefit rural women entrepreneurs across India.

This observation reinforced confidence that internationally benchmarked skill development can be successfully adapted to rural livelihood programmes when complemented with institutional support, mentoring and community-based implementation.

Roadmap for Future Collaboration

The discussions concluded with several strategic decisions designed to transform the collaboration into a long-term institutional partnership. These include identifying priority sectors for

collaborative pilots, establishing a joint working group to prepare a concept note, designing integrated capacity-building programmes, exploring joint certification mechanisms, documenting successful pilots and developing a national replication framework for adoption by State Rural Livelihood Missions.

Looking Ahead

The emerging partnership between NIRDPR and the World Skill Centre represents more than an institutional collaboration—it signifies a shared commitment to redefining rural skilling by integrating technical excellence with entrepreneurship, community institutions and livelihood promotion.

The successful conduct of the Tripura off-campus programme has already demonstrated the potential of this collaboration in strengthening institutional capacities through experiential learning. As future initiatives unfold, the partnership is expected to contribute significantly to creating skilled rural entrepreneurs, promoting sustainable enterprises and supporting inclusive rural growth across India.

By combining global standards in skill development with grassroots livelihood institutions, NIRDPR and the World Skill Centre are laying the foundation for a new model of rural capacity building—one that moves beyond training to create resilient enterprises, empowered communities and sustainable economic opportunities for rural India.

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

राष्ट्रीय ग्रामीण विकास एवं
पंचायती राज संस्थान

**NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF RURAL
DEVELOPMENT AND PANCHAYATI RAJ**
MINISTRY OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT, GOVERNMENT OF INDIA

SHRI T.K. ANIL KUMAR, IAS, DIRECTOR GENERAL, NIRDPR

**ASSISTANT EDITORS: KRISHNA RAJ K. S
APARNA V. R**

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**JYOTHIS SATHYAPALAN, PROFESSOR AND HEAD, CPGS & DE
ON BEHALF OF NIRDPR, RAJENDRANAGAR,
HYDERABAD- 500 030**

RAJENDRANAGAR, HYDERABAD - 500 030
PHONE: (040) 24008473, FAX: (040) 24008473
E-MAIL: CDC.NIRD@GOV.IN, WEBSITE: WWW.NIRDPR.ORG.IN



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