

PRAGATI NEWSLETTER



Where Farms Meet Factories: Tambati's Journey across Two Economies

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Where Farms Meet Factories: Tambati's Journey across Two Economies

Reflections from a 26-day field visit to Tambati, a peri-urban village in Raigad, Maharashtra

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The first morning in Tambati arrives on two sounds. One is the slow, familiar rhythm of cattle being led to what remains of the grazing commons. The other is the low, steady hum of trucks turning off the Mumbai-Pune corridor towards the industrial estates of Khopoli-Khalapur. Between these two sounds sits a village of 1,706 residents and 407 households, quietly negotiating one of the most consequential transitions a rural community in India can make, the shift from an agrarian identity to a peri-urban one.

For twenty-six days I lived inside that negotiation. What I carried back was not a checklist of problems, but a panorama I could not stop returning to: a pair of muddy boots, a wicker basket and a wall of fresh brickwork sitting side by side outside a home. Boots of the field. Bricks of the factory. Both belonging, without contradiction, to the same family.

A village at the hinge of two economies

Tambati sits in Khalapur taluka of

Raigad district, roughly 20–25 kilometres from Khopoli, well inside the industrial catchment of the Mumbai-Pune corridor. On paper, it is a Gram Panchayat; on the ground, it is something more interesting: a compact laboratory of what happens when a MIDC-driven industrial belt reaches the edge of a farming hamlet.

Development geographers have a word for exactly this landscape. Terry McGee called it “**desakota**” - from the Bahasa words for village (desa) and city (kota)- to describe zones where rural and urban economies do not replace each other but interpenetrate. Cecilia Tacoli later expanded this into the idea of the rural-urban continuum, arguing that peri-urban spaces should not be read as “half-rural” or “not-yet-urban” but as economies with their own logic, their own rhythms and their own vulnerabilities. Tambati fits that description almost too neatly. Around 40 per cent of its land is still under cultivation, such as paddy, potato, tomato, brinjal, leafy vegetables, pulses, small millets. Roughly 15 per cent is common property. The rest is a slow but visible turnover into residential plots, small factories and logistics yards. Only about a quarter of the cultivated area enjoys assured irrigation; the remaining 85 per cent leans on the monsoon. And yet, nobody I met spoke of the village as fading. If anything, Tambati felt busier than most peri-urban villages I had read about, because industrial proximity has not emptied it. It has re-employed it.

Reading Tambati through the Sustainable Livelihoods lens

The most useful way I found to organise what I was seeing was the

Sustainable Livelihoods Framework developed by Robert Chambers, Gordon Conway and later formalised by DFID. It reads any household through five capitals – natural, physical, financial, human and social – and asks how each is being built up or eroded.

In Tambati, the natural capital is under stress: shrinking cultivable land, a groundwater table falling as borewells multiply, grazing commons contracting by an estimated 40 to 50 per cent, soils tiring from continuous cropping. But the physical capital is quietly improving: nearly universal household electrification, a paved link to the state highway, individual toilets in about 80 per cent of homes, mobile coverage in almost every hand. Financial capital is diversifying – factory wages, SHG credit, PM-Kisan transfers, MAHATMA GANDHI NREGA days, PDS grain that acts as an implicit income. Human capital is rising: literacy at 84.8 per cent, female literacy at 74.36 per cent, and school enrolment high enough to change what a 12-year-old girl thinks she is allowed to want. And social capital – the fifth and, in Tambati, perhaps the most powerful – sits



inside the SHGs, the Panchayat and the everyday kinship that still absorbs shocks the state does not reach.

The story of the village, told this way, is not one of decline. It is a story of one capital compensating for another. Where the commons have thinned, financial and social capital have thickened. Where farm income has become uncertain, industrial wages and SHG credit have stepped in. Rural development schemes are the visible hand that keeps this substitution from becoming a rupture.

“When natural capital shrinks, a village survives only if human and social capital grow to meet it.

How rural development schemes are quietly rewriting daily life

Walk into any of the 407 households, and you will not see a single scheme working in isolation. You will see them stacked – the way a family stacks stainless steel tiffins for a long factory shift.

Mahatma Gandhi NREGA covers roughly 60 per cent of eligible households, and while payment delays remain a real concern, the guarantee itself keeps landless and marginal families afloat during agricultural lean months. The Public Distribution System

reaches almost every home; the monthly ration is often the reason a household can afford to send a child to school instead of to a construction site. Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana, Swachh Bharat Mission, PM-Kisan, Ayushman Bharat, the Mid-Day Meal, immunisation drives, ICDS – each shows up somewhere in a family’s story. Ration cards, Aadhaar and Ayushman cards sit together in the same steel cupboard as the factory ID.

The most striking convergence, however, is happening around women. Tambati has more than twenty active



self-help groups under the National Rural Livelihood Mission, and they cover an estimated 40 to 50 per cent of the village's women. Amartya Sen's capability approach argues that development is best understood not as an increase in income but as an expansion of the substantive freedoms – the capabilities – that people enjoy. Sitting in an SHG meeting in Tambati, I understood that argument in a way no textbook had managed to teach me.

Female literacy in Tambati stands at 74.36 per cent – and the Vice-Sarpanch is a woman. Numbers on paper; capability in practice.

Wicker Basket: what farming still carries

It would be easy, from the outside, to write agriculture off in a village like this. It would also be wrong. Rajesh Ganesh Dalvi, a farmer I spent an afternoon with, keeps ten buffaloes and cultivates his own land; his household earns between ₹35,000 and ₹45,000 a month from farm and dairy combined. His story is not unique. Small and marginal landholders still supply the potato, the leafy greens and the daily milk that move quietly into Khopoli's markets and local collection centres. Women manage most of the livestock; kitchen gardens and small orchards keep the family's plate diverse even when the season turns.

Frank Ellis's classic work on livelihood diversification argues that rural households in the developing world rarely rely on a single income stream; instead, they weave together a portfolio of farm, off-farm and non-farm activities to manage risk. Tambati is a living illustration of that argument. What surprised me was how ready these farmers were to try new things. During the immersion, I helped organise a hands-on demonstration on preparing low-cost organic manure using cow dung, dry leaves and kitchen waste, the kind of composting our

The register was never only about savings. It was about a tailoring machine bought on credit, a loan of two-and-a-half lakh rupees taken by a young mother to expand her stitching work at home, a discussion about a daughter's coaching class, a plan for a joint vegetable order for the weekly haat. What NRLM has quietly done here is not merely financial inclusion. It has widened the space of the possible.

grandmothers already knew. The response was immediate. Farmers who had been buying urea and DAP at rising prices began asking, on the very same evening, how quickly the compost would be ready and whether it could be prepared in smaller pits behind the house. The appetite for climate-resilient, low-input agriculture is already there. It only needs to be met halfway.

Boots and Bricks: what the factory has added

The industrial belt has not replaced farming in Tambati; it has cushioned it. Factory work in the nearby MIDC estates pays roughly ₹10,000 to ₹15,000 a month, and up to ₹30,000 for housekeeping and skilled roles, over about 26 working days. That single stable wage – often held by the husband while the wife runs a tailoring unit or joins an SHG enterprise – is what allows a family to weather a bad monsoon without falling into distress. It is also why the classical push-pull model of migration (Lee, Todaro) plays out only partially here: the "pull" of Khopoli's industry is real, but because it is available at commuting distance, it produces circular labour rather than long-distance out-migration. Tambati keeps its people. That, in itself, is a quiet policy success.



Vedika Valso, whom I met in her front room stitching kurtas between shifts, put it simply: her husband works in housekeeping in a nearby unit, she runs a tailoring machine financed through her SHG, and together they pull in ₹15,000 a month with a loan of ₹2.5 lakh sitting comfortably against their earnings. The dignity in her voice was not the dignity of struggle. It was the dignity of choice – a choice made possible by the quiet co-working of NRLM credit, a factory job within cycling distance, and a Panchayat that keeps the road paved.

Commons, and the Ostrom question

Not everything in Tambati is on an upward curve. The village's commons – its grazing lands, its seasonal streams, its ponds – have shrunk by an estimated 40 to 50 per cent in a generation, giving way to industrial and residential land use. Elinor Ostrom's Nobel-winning work on "Governing the Commons" showed that communities can manage shared resources sustainably when eight design principles are in place, including clearly defined boundaries, collective-choice rules, monitoring, and locally graduated sanctions. Tambati has the raw material for those principles – an

active Panchayat, informal rotational grazing norms, a living tradition of pond maintenance – but the industrial pressure sits outside the village's rule-making system. This is where the Community Action Plan I helped draft with the Panchayat leans hardest: on strengthening local commons governance, on pond desiltation and recharge, on formalising rotational grazing, and on institutionalising a grievance channel with the neighbouring industrial estates. Ostrom's insight, translated for Tambati, is simple: the commons can survive industrialisation, but only if the village is allowed to be a co-author of the rules.

Governance you can walk into



The Gram Panchayat of Tambati is not a distant office; it is a room where people walk in without appointments. Under the Panchayat Secretary and with a woman Vice-Sarpanch at the table, the Panchayat handles land records, welfare distribution, PDS oversight, water supply and disputes with a kind of everyday competence that is easy to miss because it never announces itself. Reserved seats have brought women and marginalised communities into decision-making. GPDP planning is being done annually.

Robert Putnam distinguished between two kinds of social capital: "bonding" capital, which holds a group together, and "bridging" capital, which links different groups to each other. Tambati is unusually rich in the first – SHGs, kinship networks, community

festivals, labour-sharing traditions. What the Panchayat is now beginning to build, deliberately, is bridging capital: between women's SHGs and government line departments, between farmers and peri-urban markets, between Panchayat governance and industrial CSR. The NCC-Panchayat cleanliness drive was, in that sense, more than a swachhata activity. It was a small rehearsal for the kind of institutional convergence Tambati will need at scale.

A conversation, not a survey

Some of the most memorable hours of the field visit were the ones I had not planned. A participatory games session with SHG women that I had scheduled

for forty minutes stretched to almost two hours. The women laughed, argued, teased each other's leadership styles, and then, without any prompting, began mapping their own priorities out loud – a shared cold storage for vegetables, a tailoring cluster large enough to take factory uniform orders, a digital literacy class for their daughters. This is what Robert Chambers meant by “putting the last first” and by Participatory Rural Appraisal as a method that transfers the pen from the researcher to the community. In that room I understood something my questionnaire could not have captured: SHGs in Tambati are no longer just financial collectives. They are becoming the village's most confident planning body.

“When women stopped waiting to be asked and started asking themselves – that was the moment the study wrote itself.”

What the schemes are really doing

Standing in Tambati, it becomes possible to see rural development not as a set of line items in a budget document but as a slow, steady act of scaffolding, the kind Lev Vygotsky described in an entirely different discipline, where a learner is supported just enough to reach the next step on her own. Schemes, at their best, do exactly that. They do not carry the village. They stand beside it.

Mahatma Gandhi NREGA is buying time for households between crops. PDS is keeping food inflation from cutting into education spending. PMAY has replaced katcha walls with pucca ones. Swachh Bharat has put toilets behind roughly four out of five homes. NRLM is turning women's savings into working capital. PMKVY and DDU-GKY hold the promise of moving youth from low-skill housekeeping into technical roles inside the same factories they already commute to. Ayushman Bharat and the sub-centre together mean a family no longer sells a buffalo to pay a hospital bill. PM-Kisan puts a modest but predictable transfer into the

farmer's account. The Mid-Day Meal keeps a child in school long enough to imagine a life beyond the shift gate.

None of these schemes is doing the whole job. Together, they are doing something that matters more: they are giving a peri-urban village enough of a floor to negotiate its own future, on its own terms. That, in Sen's language, is the difference between welfare and freedom.

What Tambati taught me

I came to Tambati as a student of rural management. I left with a much simpler idea: development is not something that happens to a village. It is something a village does with the tools it is given, and rural development schemes, at their best, are the tools, not the carpenter.

The schemes are the tools. The Panchayat is the workbench. The SHGs are the hands. The factory is the horizon. Tambati is walking, in its own steady rhythm, towards the vision of Viksit Bharat 2047. It is walking in boots. And it is walking through the mud.

Ms Rohini Bhajibhakare, IAS, Assumes Charge of DDG, NIRDPR



Ms Rohini Bhajibhakare, IAS, has assumed the charge of Deputy Director General, NIRDPR, on 4th August 2026. Having over 18 years of experience in public administration, she is currently serving as Joint Secretary in the Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India, contributing to policy formulation for sustainable and inclusive growth of rural India.

Ms Rohini has served in the Ministry of Education, Government of India, and in the southern State of Tamil Nadu across diverse sectors, including law and order management, urban and rural development, public health, education, women and child development, infrastructure, governance, agriculture, and climate action.

Ms Rohini is known for her people-centric and innovative approach to governance. She was featured in the National Geographic documentary, 'The Great Indian Election.' She is a recipient of several national awards, holds a Guinness World Record, and is a Chevening Fellow with a fellowship at the University of Oxford.

A computer science engineer by training, Ms Rohini became the first woman Collector (Head of District Administration) of Salem district in its 227-year history. Originally from a small village in Maharashtra, she is a polyglot who speaks six languages and is committed to advancing inclusive and effective public service.

ToT on Institutional Mechanism and Development of Gender Immersion Sites under DAY-NRLM



Participants and resource persons of the ToT on Institutional Mechanism and Development of Gender Immersion Sites under DAY-NRLM with Prof. Ravindra Gavali, NIRDPR

Building the institutional foundations for gender transformation

Gender mainstreaming under DAY-NRLM requires more than awareness of gender concepts; it requires functional institutions, capable functionaries and systematic processes that enable women's collectives to identify, articulate and act upon issues affecting their lives. Recognising this need, the DAY-NRLM Resource Cell, NIRDPR, in collaboration with the National Mission Management Unit (NMMU), organised two parallel batches of a Training of Trainers (ToT) on "Institutional Mechanism and Development of Gender Immersion Sites under DAY-NRLM" from 3 to 6 August 2026 at NIRDPR, Hyderabad. For participants' comfort and better understanding, one batch was facilitated in Hindi and the other in English. The training was attended by a total of 69 participants from 17 States and UTs.

The programme was designed as the second spell of a structured four-level capacity - building series on gender

interventions under DAY-NRLM. It followed the Level-I ToT on Gender Modules conducted from 18–22 May 2026, which brought together 64 participants from 17 States and focused on strengthening foundational understanding of gender concepts. The August ToT built on that foundation by moving from concepts to institutional architecture, issue-based action and the development of Gender Immersion Sites.

The ToT focused on strengthening participants' understanding of the institutional continuum – from the Gender Point Person (GPP) and GPP Collective to the Social Action Committee (SAC) at VO/CLF, Gender Forums at Gram Panchayat and block levels, and Gender Resource Centres (GRCs) – and on how these mechanisms can work together to respond to rights, entitlements and gender-based violence (GBV).

The training began by reconnecting participants with learning from the May Gender Modules ToT and reflecting on its application, good practices and challenges. Participants refreshed core



Participants in group discussion during a session of the ToT

gender concepts and explored social inclusion, Practical Gender Needs (PGN), Strategic Gender Interests (SGI) and the architecture of gender integration under DAY-NRLM. Through case studies, role plays and participatory mapping, they examined institutional mechanisms, rights and entitlements, power structures and issue-based action, including responses to GBV and strategies for strengthening Gender Forums. The sessions also focused on developing Gender Immersion Sites as intensive, time-bound and context-specific platforms for demonstrating gender-transformative approaches, with emphasis on functional institutional mechanisms, capacity building, convergence, gender funds, GRCs, case management and measurable indicators. A practical session on Equal MIS further strengthened participants' understanding of gender-related data, reporting and monitoring. Overall, the training emphasised translating gender learning into



A group presents during a session on institutional mechanisms and issue-based action

participatory action, stronger institutions and measurable change at the community level.

A key strength of the ToT was its strong emphasis on application and field implementation. Participants explored how institutional mechanisms, women's collectives and gender platforms can work together to identify issues, facilitate referrals, leverage convergence and promote collective action on rights, entitlements and GBV. The focus on Gender Immersion Sites provided a practical bridge between learning and implementation, equipping SRLM officials and Master Trainers to support gender-responsive practices at the block level through situational analysis, visioning, capacity building, convergence and monitoring. The programme is expected to strengthen functional gender institutions and enable the systematic development of Gender Immersion Sites as platforms for sustained and measurable gender transformation.

(Documented by: Rajeev Ranjan Singh, Mission Executive-SISD, DAY-NRLM Resource Cell)

NIRDPR Conducts Kaushal Pravesh Induction Training for Kerala SRLM Officers



Dr J. S. Reddy, School Head & Professor, CIARD, and DDU-GKY, with the participants of Kaushal Pravesh induction training programme

The DDU-GKY Resource Cell, National Institute of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj (NIRDPR), Hyderabad, organised Kaushal Pravesh – Induction Training for officers of the State Rural Livelihood Mission (SRLM), Kerala, from 4–6 August 2026. The programme was sponsored by Kudumbashree, Kerala, and aimed at strengthening the institutional capacities of SRLM functionaries for effective implementation of the Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Grameen Kaushalya Yojana (DDU-GKY).

The three-day programme brought together the Chief Operating Officer (Skills), Kudumbashree, State Programme Managers and District Programme Managers, providing a platform for strengthening their understanding of programme implementation, sharing experiences and enhancing institutional preparedness for delivering quality skill development interventions for rural youth.

Shri Sudhakar Reddy, Director (Monitoring & Evaluation), NIRDPR, welcomed the participants at the inaugural session. Dr J. S. Reddy, Professor, NIRDPR and Executive Director, DDU-GKY Resource Cell, delivered the inaugural address and shared the vision of the programme. He emphasised the importance of

continuous capacity building instrengthening the delivery of quality skill development programmes and achieving sustainable livelihood outcomes for rural youth.

Exposure to Industry-Oriented Skill Development

As part of the programme, participants visited the GMR Skill Development Centre, Shamshabad, on the first day. The exposure visit provided an opportunity for the officers to understand industry-oriented skill training practices, with particular focus on training quality, placement outcomes and retention.

The visit enabled participants to observe field-level practices and gain practical insights into approaches that could be adapted to strengthen the implementation and effectiveness of skill development initiatives under DDU-GKY.

Strengthening the Skilling Ecosystem

The Kaushal Pravesh programme provided a valuable platform for interaction, knowledge sharing and institutional learning among Kerala SRLM functionaries. By combining orientation sessions with practical field exposure, the programme sought to strengthen the capacities of programme functionaries and promote a more effective and outcome-oriented approach to rural skill development.

Strengthening India–Nepal Cooperation through Capacity Building in Urban Governance



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

The DDU-GKY Resource Cell, National Institute of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj (NIRDPR), a 10-day training programme on Urban Governance for delegates from selected Urban Local Bodies of Nepal from 3–12 August 2026. The programme was sponsored by the Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, and formed part of the continuing development cooperation and close ties between India and Nepal.

The delegation comprised Mayors, Chairpersons, Acting Mayors and Municipal Members from four districts of Koshi Province– Ilam, Panchthar, Taplejung and Tehrathum. The programme provided an opportunity for the delegates to learn from Indian experiences and good practices

in urban governance and explore approaches that could be adapted to their respective local contexts.

Strengthening India – Nepal Development Cooperation

Speaking at the inaugural session, Shri Saketa Raja Musinipally, Deputy Secretary, Ministry of External Affairs, emphasised the strong partnership between India and Nepal and highlighted development cooperation as an important pillar of bilateral relations. He underscored the significance of capacity building, particularly in human resource development, with a focus on areas such as agriculture, horticulture and other subjects identified as relevant to the delegation.

He observed that the training programme would be productive and beneficial to both countries by facilitating the sharing of experiences and lessons. He also reaffirmed India's commitment to strengthening collaboration through focused training programmes and exchange of visits.

Dr S. Jyothis Sathyapalan, Professor, CPGS&DE, NIRDPR, delivered the special address. Dr Anjan Kumar Bhanja, Associate Professor & Head, CPRDP&SSD, NIRDPR, explained the design and objectives of the programme and invited the delegates to share their expectations from the training.

Learning from Good Practices in Urban Governance

During the interaction, the delegates expressed interest in understanding good practices adopted by Urban Local Bodies in areas including urban governance, localisation of Sustainable Development Goals (LSDGs), agriculture, horticulture, sewage management, urban waste management, eco-tourism, infrastructure and technology, among other relevant subjects.

Dr Bhanja explained that these areas had been incorporated into the training design and informed the

delegates that exposure visits to Hyderabad, Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu had been planned to provide first-hand exposure to innovative practices and institutional approaches.

The delegates expressed their interest in learning from these experiences and exploring the possibility of adapting and replicating relevant good practices in their respective areas.

Promoting Knowledge Exchange and Localised Solutions

The programme seeks to provide a platform for experience sharing, peer learning and exposure to practical approaches in urban governance. The interaction between Indian experts and Nepalese local government representatives is expected to facilitate a deeper understanding of effective planning, service delivery and sustainable urban development practices.

Shri K. Manoj Kumar, Registrar & Director (Administration), NIRDPR, highlighted the importance of urban governance and effective planning of the outstation exposure visits. Dr Pranab Kumar Ghosh, Assistant Registrar (T), NIRDPR, also attended the inaugural session and extended his greetings and best wishes to the participants.

Training on Herbal Cosmetic Products Making for SHGs and CRPs



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)

A five-day training programme on Herbal Cosmetic Products Making using Medicinal and Aromatic Herbs for Self-Help Groups (SHGs) and Community Resource Persons (CRPs) under the Lakhpati Didi Initiative was organised by the Centre for Innovations and Appropriate Technologies for Skills and Jobs, National Institute of Rural Development & Panchayati Raj (NIRDPR), Hyderabad, from 24–28 August 2026 at the Rural Technology Park, NIRDPR.

The programme focused on creating awareness and developing practical skills among SHG members and CRPs in the preparation of herbal cosmetic products using medicinal and aromatic herbs. The training aimed to promote the potential of locally available natural resources for livelihood generation and enterprise development.

Through practical-oriented learning, the participants were introduced to the possibilities of converting

medicinal and aromatic herbs into value-added cosmetic products. The programme also highlighted the scope for developing small-scale enterprises based on herbal products, particularly among rural women and SHG members.

The initiative forms part of the broader effort to promote skill development, entrepreneurship and sustainable livelihood opportunities under the Lakhpati Didi initiative. By equipping SHGs and CRPs with appropriate technical skills, such programmes can facilitate the development of income-generating activities and strengthen women-led rural enterprises.

The training at the Rural Technology Park provided participants with an opportunity to learn in an environment focused on appropriate technologies, skill development and rural enterprise promotion. The programme also underscored the importance of linking traditional knowledge and locally available resources with contemporary livelihood opportunities.

ToT Programme on Marketing Skills (Non-Farm) for CRP-EPs of Arunachal Pradesh SRLM at NIRDPR-NERC



Participants and faculty during the Training of Trainers (ToT) Programme on Marketing Skills (Non-Farm) for CRP-EPs of Arunachal Pradesh SRLM

Self-Help Groups (SHGs) play an important role in empowering rural women and contributing to the socio-economic development of their households and communities. Although SHGs are engaged in the production and marketing of various products, their limited scale of operations often constrains their market reach. Strengthening their marketing capabilities through training in branding, product design and packaging, value-chain development, pricing, e-marketing, social media, customer care, communication, and behavioural skills can help expand their market opportunities. Greater awareness of taxation and GST norms, along with continuous handholding support, is also essential for improving the growth and sustainability of SHG enterprises.

In this context, the CMPRPED, NIRDPR Delhi Branch organised a Training of Trainers (ToT) programme on Marketing Skills for Community Resource Persons–Enterprise Promotion (CRP-EPs) of Arunachal Pradesh SRLM from 29th to 31st July, 2026 at the NIRDPR-NERC in Guwahati. Thirty-one CRP-EPs of Arunachal Pradesh participated in the three-day residential programme.

The training programme aimed to develop CRP-EPs as Master Trainers to



Participants during their exposure visit to NEDFi Haat, Guwahati, to learn about its operational model and best practices in marketing and promotion of rural products

train rural SHG women entrepreneurs in marketing skills. The programme focused on identifying and understanding the key issues and challenges SHGs face in marketing their products, including branding, product design and packaging, value-chain development, pricing, sales communication, e-marketing, social media marketing, and taxation/GST-related matters. It also sought to impart the latest marketing skills required to address these challenges and strengthen the market outreach of SHG enterprises. In addition, the programme aimed to orient participants towards adopting effective marketing practices through exposure visits and practical learning.

The Training Programme was started with an opening remark given by Shri Chiranji Lal, Assistant Director (CMPRPED), NIRDPR Delhi Branch. Internal faculty members of NIRDPR, National Resource Persons (NRP) and external guest speaker, including Dr M.K. Srivastava, Assistant Professor, NIRDPR-NERC, Guwahati; Dr Ratna Bhuyan, Assistant Professor, NIRDPR-NERC; Mr Aswini Bhattacharya, NRP, Guwahati; Shri Chiranji Lal, Assistant Director, NIRDPR Delhi Branch; Shri Adarsh Agarwal, Chartered Accountant; Shri Sudhir Kumar Singh; and Shri Suresh Prasad, NIRDPR Delhi Branch, handled sessions, exposure visits, and other activities.

After completion of sessions, an exposure visit to North Eastern Development Finance Corporation Ltd. (NEDFi) Haat was held on 31st July, 2026, to orient the participants about their operational model and best practices adopted by them.

The training was completed with an online feedback session taken by the officials of CMPRPED. The programme received positive feedback from the participants and speakers.



CRP-EPs participating in a classroom session on branding, product design, packaging, pricing, e-marketing and other marketing practices for SHG enterprises.

ToT for One-Month Social Audit Certificate Course



Participants and resource persons of the Training of Trainers (ToT) for the One-Month Social Audit Certificate Course for LCCs posing for a group photograph

The Centre for Social Audit, National Institute of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj (NIRDPR), Hyderabad, organised a Training of Trainers (ToT) for the One-Month Social Audit Certificate Course for LCCs from 17-26 August 2026 at NIRDPR, Hyderabad. The programme was conducted under the Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India.

The training brought together participants and resource persons for an intensive capacity-building programme aimed at preparing trainers for the proposed One-Month Social Audit Certificate Course. The ToT provided a structured platform for strengthening understanding of social audit and facilitating effective delivery of the certificate course.

The programme focused on building the capacities required for trainers to undertake systematic training in social audit and social accountability. The initiative seeks to support the development of a pool of trained personnel who can contribute to strengthening social audit processes and practices.

The programme also provided opportunities for interaction, knowledge sharing and exchange of experiences among participants and resource persons. Such engagement is expected to enrich the learning process and help trainers address practical aspects of social audit in their respective contexts.

The initiative forms part of NIRDPR's continuing efforts to strengthen social accountability, transparency and participatory governance through systematic capacity building. The Centre for Social Audit has been facilitating training and knowledge development in the area to support more effective social audit processes

The ToT marks an important step towards strengthening the institutional capacity for delivering the One-Month Social Audit Certificate Course for LCCs and promoting a wider pool of trained professionals equipped to support social audit and accountability mechanisms in rural development programmes.

Training on Sustainable Livestock Practices for Master CRPs from Himachal Pradesh



Dr Ravindra Gavali, Professor & School Head, NLRMRC, NIRDPR, and NLRMRC staff with participants of the Training Programme on Sustainable Livestock Practices for Master CRPs from HP-SRLM

A six-day Training Programme on Sustainable Livestock Practices for 25 Master Community Resource Persons (CRPs) from the Himachal Pradesh State Rural Livelihoods Mission (HP-SRLM) was conducted by the National Rural Livelihoods Mission Resource Cell (NLRMRC), National Institute of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj (NIRDPR), Hyderabad, from 4–9 August 2026.

The programme focused on strengthening the participants' practical knowledge of backyard poultry, goat and cattle management, with emphasis on sustainable and locally relevant practices that can be promoted at the community level. The training aimed to equip Master CRPs with the knowledge required to support rural households in adopting improved livestock management practices.

An important component of the programme was the practical orientation on Ethno-Veterinary Practices for backyard poultry, goats and cattle. Participants gained exposure to locally relevant approaches to livestock care and explored their applicability in community settings.

The programme also included a field-based learning visit to KVK CRIDA, providing participants with practical exposure to fodder varieties and sustainable livestock management practices. The field visit complemented the classroom sessions and enabled participants to relate technical knowledge to field-level applications.

The training brought together technical experts and practitioners to strengthen the capacities of Master CRPs as grassroots resource persons. The enhanced capacities are expected to enable participants to provide further support to rural households and promote livestock-based livelihood opportunities under the Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana–National Rural Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NRLM).

The programme was conducted under the overall guidance and leadership of Dr Ravindra Gavali, Professor & School Head, NLRMRC, NIRDPR. The initiative contributes to strengthening community-level capacities and promoting sustainable livestock practices and improved livelihood opportunities among rural households.

ToT Programme on Export Marketing of SHG Products at NIRDPR-NERC, Guwahati



Participants and resource persons of the Training of Trainers (ToT) Programme on Export Marketing of SHG Products posing for photo

Marketing products from Lakhpati Didis and self-help groups remains a persistent challenge, as most groups still depend on local markets or platforms such as SARAS Melas, with limited focus on scaling production or exploring global market opportunities. To bridge this gap, the Centre for Marketing and Promotion of Rural Products and Entrepreneurship Development (CMRPED), NIRDPR Delhi Branch, organised a five-day Training of Trainers (ToTs) Programme on Export Marketing of SHG Products from 03rd August to 07th August, 2026 at NIRDPR-NERC in Guwahati. The programme for the SRLM officials and potential SHGs of Assam, Haryana, Punjab, and Uttarakhand, as well as Uttar Pradesh SRLM, was designed to develop them as trainers to guide SHGs/PGs in their location for export marketing of their products.

The programme aimed to build a cadre of master trainers who can effectively transfer knowledge and skills related to export marketing to SHG members across their respective regions. By strengthening capacities in this area, participants will gain practical insights into global market access, enabling SHGs to expand beyond local markets and position their products more competitively at the international level.

Twenty-seven participants from five states participated in the five-day residential programme, which focused on key areas such as understanding export market & buyer requirements, export documentation & compliance, market access, digital marketing strategies, value chain management, logistics & supply chain management, product quality enhancement, market access, sales communication and buyer behaviour, etc. The programme aimed to develop a cadre of skilled resource persons who can guide SHGs in becoming export-ready, enabling them to expand into global markets, enhance income opportunities, and promote sustainable rural livelihoods through strong international market linkages.

The training programme started with a welcome note by Shri Chiranji Lal, Assistant Director (CMRPED), NIRDPR Delhi Branch. Shri M. K. Shrivastava, Assistant Professor, NIRDPR-NERC, also addressed the participants.

This was followed by sessions by various experts and resource persons, including Dr T. Vijaya Kumar, Associate Professor & Director (i/c), NERC-NIRDPR Guwahati; Dr M.K. Shrivastava, Assistant Professor NIRDPR-NERC Guwahati; Shri Chiranji Lal, Assistant Director, NIRDPR Delhi Branch;



Participants during their exposure visit to APEDA

Shri Sudhir Kumar Singh, Research & Training Officer, NIRDPR Delhi Branch; Dr Saju Adhikari, Business Development Manager, APEDA, Guwahati; Shri Harish Kesari, Consultant, DGFT, Guwahati; Shri Pankaj Bezbaruah, National Resource Person (NRP), NIRDPR; Shri Madhabananda Ray, National Resource Person (NRP), NIRDPR; Shri Manas Das, Marketing Expert, Resource Person; and Shri Adarsh Agarwal, Chartered Accountant, Guwahati.

After the completion of sessions, the participants were taken on an exposure visit to the Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export



Participants during an interactive session on export marketing

Development Authority (APEDA), Guwahati on 07th August, 2026, to orient them about their operational model and best practices adopted for export of products.

The programme was coordinated by Shri Chiranji Lal, Course Director, with the support of Shri Sudhir Kumar Singh, Research and Training Officer and Shri Suresh Prasad, NIRDPR Delhi Branch.

The training was completed with an online feedback session taken by the officials of CMPRPED, and the programme received positive feedback from the participants and esteemed speakers.



Resource person interacting with participants during the training programme



Participants presenting the outcomes of a group exercise during the ToT programme

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.

NIRDPR Students Participate in Campus Cleaning Drive



NIRDPR students, led by Dr R. Ramesh, Associate Professor, taking part in the cleaning drive

As part of the Swachh Bharat Programme, students of the PGDRDM and PGDM (RM) programmes at the National Institute of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj (NIRDPR), Hyderabad, organised a Campus Cleaning Drive on 17 August 2026. The drive was conducted from 7:00 am to 8:00 am, beginning at the Vindhachal Hostel.

The initiative was undertaken with the objective of promoting cleanliness and environmental responsibility among students and encouraging active participation in maintaining a clean and healthy institutional campus.

The drive was led by Dr Ramesh R., Associate Professor & Head, Centre for Rural Infrastructure, NIRDPR. Students from both programmes participated actively in the cleaning activity, demonstrating enthusiasm and a strong sense of collective responsibility.

During the one-hour drive, the students cleaned designated areas of

the campus and collected 15 bags of waste. Their participation reflected the importance of student-led initiatives in supporting institutional cleanliness and creating greater awareness about responsible waste management.

The activity provided an opportunity for students to translate the principles of cleanliness and environmental stewardship into practical action. It also reinforced the values of discipline, civic responsibility, teamwork and community participation that are integral to the spirit of the Swachh Bharat Mission.

The campus cleaning drive demonstrated the commitment of the PGDRDM and PGDM (RM) students towards maintaining a cleaner and healthier campus. The initiative also highlighted the value of collective action in fostering a culture of cleanliness and environmental responsibility within the NIRDPR community.

NIRDPR Hosts Community Plantation Drive to Promote Environmental Stewardship



Participants, NIRDPR faculty and staff, and volunteers of the Sri Sathya Sai Seva Foundation during the community plantation drive

The National Institute of Rural Development & Panchayati Raj (NIRDPR), Hyderabad, hosted a community plantation drive organised by the Sri Sathya Sai Seva Foundation, Mehdiapatnam Samithi, bringing together members of the community, school students, NIRDPR students and staff in a collective effort towards environmental conservation.

The plantation initiative witnessed active participation from people across generations, reflecting the spirit of community engagement and shared responsibility for protecting and nurturing the environment. The participation of school children alongside senior members and the NIRDPR community added an intergenerational dimension to the programme and helped reinforce the importance of environmental awareness among younger generations.

As part of the drive, approximately 30 saplings of native and locally suitable tree species, including Bilva, Badam, Kadamba, Kanuga, Usiri and Water Apple, were planted on the NIRDPR campus. The selection of diverse tree species underscored the importance of promoting greenery

and supporting local ecological balance.

The participants were also briefed on the ecological significance of the tree species planted. Dr Ramesh Shaktivel, Associate Professor & Head, CMU; Dr R. Ramesh, Associate Professor & Head, CRI; Dr P. K. Ghosh, Assistant Registrar; Dr Prabhakar, Assistant Professor & Head, CPME; Mr Syamala Rao, Staff Member, NIRDPR, shared their perspectives on the environmental value of native species and the need for sustained care and protection of planted saplings.

A notable feature of the initiative was the personal involvement of participants in planting and taking ownership of individual saplings. Such participation not only transformed the plantation activity into a collective environmental effort but also encouraged a sense of responsibility for nurturing the trees beyond the day of planting.

The programme demonstrated how community participation and institutional engagement can come together to advance environmental stewardship.

THE VALUE OF A TREE

Estimated in 1979 and revised in 2011-12

Sl. No.	Ecosystem service / contribution	Estimated cost in 1979 (US\$)	Revised cost in 2011-12 (US\$)	Value at ₹95/US\$ (₹)
1	Oxygen production	31,250	10,500	9,97,500
2	Conversion to animal flesh and bone	3,000	3,000	2,85,000
3	Controlling soil erosion and soil fertility	31,250	10,000	9,50,000
4	Water recycling; control of humidity and air temperature	37,500	1,54,560	1,46,83,200
5	Shelter to birds, squirrels and insects, beneficial to ecology	31,250	1,29,700	1,23,21,500
6	Removal of SPM (Suspended Particulate Matter), carbon dioxide, sulphur dioxide, etc. from air	62,000	4,02,000	3,81,90,000
	TOTAL	1,96,250	7,09,760	6,74,27,200

NOTE: Rupee values have been recalculated using ₹95 per US\$1 (as of September 10, 2026).

Source: Adapted from the table provided.



Participants, NIRDPR faculty and staff, and volunteers of the Sri Sathya Sai Seva Foundation during the community plantation drive

NIRDPR Conducts Capacity Building Programme for BDOs



Dr R. Ramesh, Associate Professor & Head, Centre for Rural Infrastructure, with the participants during the capacity-building programme for BDOs

The National Institute of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj (NIRDPR), Hyderabad, organised a six-day Capacity Building Programme for Block Development Officers (BDOs) on “Bringing Saturation in Rural Development Programmes and Building Prosperous Blocks” from 3–8 August 2026 at NIRDPR, Hyderabad.

The programme aimed to strengthen the leadership, planning, management and governance capacities of BDOs for effective implementation of rural development programmes at the block level. It focused on programme convergence, saturation strategies, evidence-based planning, climate resilience, digital governance and sustainable livelihood promotion.

Strengthening BDO Leadership

The programme emphasised the need to transform BDOs from programme administrators into development leaders capable of driving inclusive and sustainable rural transformation. Sessions covered transformational leadership, rural

development planning, financial management, resource mobilisation, climate resilience, community-based livelihood promotion, digital governance and technology.

Participants also received hands-on exposure to the YUKTADARA Portal for GIS-based planning, strengthening their understanding of technology-enabled and evidence-based decision-making.

Learning through Practice

The training adopted participatory and experiential learning methods, including interactive discussions, case studies, role plays, group exercises, participant presentations and action planning. A field exposure visit provided participants with an opportunity to connect classroom learning with grassroots realities.

The programme enabled participants to reflect on field-level challenges and develop context-specific action plans for implementation in their respective blocks.

National Workshop on Accelerating Social Inclusion under DAY-NRLM



Participants and dignitaries of the National Workshop on Accelerating Social Inclusion under DAY-NRLM

Re-centring Social Inclusion as a core mission priority

The National Mission Management Unit (NMMU) of the Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana – National Rural Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NRLM), Ministry of Rural Development, in collaboration with the DAY-NRLM Resource Cell at NIRDPR, Hyderabad, organised a four-day National Workshop on Accelerating Social Inclusion under DAY-NRLM from 17 to 20 August 2026 at the S K Rau Conference Hall, NIRDPR, Hyderabad. The workshop brought together 68 participants from 24 States and Union Territories, along with representatives from NMMU, NIRDPR, National Resource Persons and Civil Society Organisations.

DAY-NRLM's Social Inclusion (SI) theme seeks to ensure that vulnerable communities – including Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs), persons with disabilities, the elderly, transgender persons and other excluded groups – are meaningfully included, with access to livelihoods, entitlements and institutional participation. With implementation uneven across States, the workshop was designed to re-centre SI as a core

priority and enable SRLMs to move from baseline diagnostics to customised, actionable interventions.

The workshop was inaugurated by Shri Amit Shukla, IFS, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Rural Development, who called for a shift from mobilisation-led inclusion to transformative and resilient inclusion, with emphasis on dignity, equal participation, access to opportunities, and leadership for vulnerable communities. Dr Ravindra S. Gavali, Professor and School Head, DAY-NRLM Resource Cell, NIRDPR, spoke on the need for clear, context-specific Social Inclusion strategies and stronger community institutions for convergence and support. Shri Om Prakash, National Mission Manager – SI, NMMU, MoRD and Dr Jyoti Prakash Mohanty, Deputy Project Director, DAY-NRLM Resource Cell, also addressed the gathering, underlining the importance of shared learning, structured approaches and actionable planning.

The first day laid the conceptual groundwork for the workshop through six sessions covering frameworks and field-tested models for inclusion.



The inaugural session of the National Workshop on Accelerating Social Inclusion under DAY-NRLM.

Shri D. Rajeshwar and Shri G. Bhargava presented the Belonging Path, moving beyond the mere presence of marginalised groups towards genuine inclusion. Smt. Deepa Rajkamal and Shri D. Rajeshwar introduced the SaptSutra framework for strengthening resilience among vulnerable groups, while Shri G. Bhargava presented the Survival-Growth-Development (S-G-D) framework as a holistic planning lens. Shri Elango of Elders for Elders Foundation (EFEF) shared its journey of building a large elder-focused federation, while Mr Akbar Mehruz Alam presented Sightsavers India's model for disability inclusion and livelihood promotion. Ms Kalki Subramaniam of Sahodari Foundation concluded the day by highlighting eighteen years of work empowering transgender and destitute women through education, livelihoods and advocacy, including the Trans Entrepreneurship Programme and CocoFriends artisan initiative developed with NIRDPR.

On the second day, participants were taken for exposure visits to SHGs working with PVTGs, persons with disabilities and elderly persons across Nagar Kurnool, Rangareddy and Yadadri districts of Telangana, grounding the workshop's classroom discussions on vulnerability, belonging and convergence in field realities.

(Documented by: Rajeev Ranjan Singh, Mission Executive-SISD, DAY-NRLM Resource Cell)



The inaugural session of the National Workshop on Accelerating Social Inclusion under DAY-NRLM.

The third day brought State Rural Livelihoods Missions and partner organisations together to share field-tested models.

PRADAN, Madhya Pradesh, shared its work with PVTG communities through regenerative agriculture and solar-powered irrigation, while TNSRLM highlighted the mobilisation of persons with disabilities through SHGs and the success of differently-abled entrepreneurs. BRLPS, Bihar (JEEViKA) presented its Elder Self-Help Group initiative for making DAY-NRLM more age-inclusive, and JSLPS, Jharkhand, demonstrated significant improvements in access to employment and social protection among PVTG households. The day concluded with a field-oriented vulnerability mapping tool presented by Shri G. Bhargava and Smt. Deepa Rajkamal, emphasising participatory, dignified and confidential identification of vulnerabilities to inform the Survival-Growth-Development (S-G-D) approach.

On the concluding day, participants worked in State-wise groups to draft three-year Social Inclusion visions, with representatives from Assam, Bihar, Maharashtra, Telangana, Chhattisgarh and Tamil Nadu presenting their visions to the wider group and Shri Om Prakash, National Mission Manager – SI, NMMU, reviewed them.

Writershop on Training Module for Certificate Course on Social Accountability and Social Audit



Dr S. Jyothis, Professor & Head, CPGS&DE; Dr C. Dheeraja, Associate Professor & Head, Centre for Social Audit; and Dr Srinivas Sajja, Assistant Professor, Centre for Social Audit, with participants during the Writershop

The Centre for Social Audit, National Institute of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj (NIRDPR), Hyderabad, organised a two-day Writershop for the preparation of a Training Module for a One-Month Certificate Course on Social Accountability and Social Audit on 6-7 August 2026 at NIRDPR, Hyderabad.

The Writershop brought together experts and practitioners in the field of social accountability and social audit for intensive and collaborative deliberations on the proposed certificate course. The discussions focused on developing an appropriate course structure, identifying key thematic areas, refining the content and determining suitable learning components to ensure that the proposed programme is comprehensive, practical and relevant to the needs of stakeholders.

The participants deliberated on ways to integrate conceptual understanding with practical knowledge and field-based perspectives, enabling learners

to develop a better understanding of social accountability mechanisms and social audit processes. The exercise also sought to ensure that the training module is structured around clear learning objectives and provides an effective framework for capacity building.

The proposed One-Month Certificate Course on Social Accountability and Social Audit is envisaged as a capacity-building initiative to strengthen the knowledge and skills of stakeholders associated with social accountability and social audit. By promoting a deeper understanding of participatory processes and accountability mechanisms, the course aims to contribute to greater transparency, citizen participation and accountability in rural development programmes and governance processes.

The Writershop marked an important step towards developing a structured and practice-oriented certificate course that can support the effective institutionalisation of social accountability and social audit practices.

From a Defunct Loom to a Living Heritage How the Kunbi Saree Revival is Weaving New Livelihoods in Shiroda, Goa

Shri Ravi Naidu,
ME- IBCB, NRLM RC,
NIRDPR Hyderabad



A GSRLM/NRLM team visits a Shiroda handloomcentre, where Kunbi sarees are woven by local Self-Help Group artisans

A short walk through the wadas of Shiroda, on Goa's inland fringe, brings you to a sound that has almost disappeared from most Indian villages – the rhythmic clatter of the handloom. Behind unassuming doors, women sit at wooden frames, passing the shuttle back and forth to weave a saree that is unmistakably Goan: the red-and-checkered Kunbi saree, once worn only by the state's tribal women and now being reimagined as a symbol of Goa's cultural identity. A visit to these centres offers a glimpse into one of Goa's quieter but more remarkable rural development stories– the revival of the Shiroda Handloom Industrial Cooperative Society Limited, the state's oldest handloom cooperative.

A Cooperative Born in 1987 – and Nearly Lost

The Shiroda Handloom Industrial Cooperative Society Limited was

established in 1987 under the guidance of Hon'ble MLA Shri Subhash Shirodkar, with a clear objective: to promote traditional handloom weaving and create livelihood opportunities for women artisans. In its early years, a handful of women were trained in weaving, and a handloom centre came up at Anandwadi, Shiroda. But the momentum did not last. Handloom products struggled to compete with cheaper power-loom alternatives, demand within Goa remained limited, and production gradually ground to a halt. For years, the Society existed largely on paper – a cooperative without a craft.

2021: A Government Push Brings the Kunbi Saree Back

The turning point came in 2021, when Goa's Chief Minister, Dr Pramod Sawant, initiated a state-level effort to revive and preserve the Kunbi saree – a hand woven textile historically

associated with Goa's tribal communities, and increasingly at risk of dying out as lifestyles changed and production dwindled. The revival strategy leaned on a familiar rural-development model: train women, particularly members of self-help groups formed under the National Rural Livelihoods Mission (NRLM), in the craft, and let institutional support do the rest.

The Shiroda Society stepped in to anchor this effort locally. With support from the Department of Handicrafts, Government of Goa, it facilitated training for more than 100 women from Shiroda, most of them NRLM self-help group members. The first batch of training began on 2 October 2022 at Pazwada, Shiroda, and was followed by a series of programmes conducted across the villages surrounding it.

“An artisan can earn approximately Rs. 5,000 to Rs. 15,000 a month through handloom work alone.”



A cycle-wheel charkha, adapted for winding yarn onto bobbins ahead of weaving



The warping drum, where threads are laid out to set the saree's length and pattern

Behind Every Saree: The Tools of the Trade

Before a single thread is woven, it must be wound, measured and stretched taut on the loom's beam. At the Shiroda centres, this preparatory work is done on ingeniously adapted equipment – including a repurposed cycle-wheel charkha used for winding yarn onto bobbins, and a large wooden warping drum on which lengths of thread are laid out to the exact width and pattern of the saree to come. It is patient, unglamorous work, and it happens long before the shuttle ever crosses the loom.

Seven Centres, Seventy-Six Looms in Motion

That training has since translated into a functioning production network. The Society now runs seven handloom centres across Shiroda,

Bethora and Panchwadi, with approximately 76 artisans currently engaged in regular weaving—out of more than 100 women trained overall. Three additional centres have been proposed to the Department of Handicrafts and are under consideration; if approved, the Society would operate close to ten centres in total, extending both employment and production capacity further into the region.

How the Loom Turns into a Livelihood

The Society's working mechanism is deliberately simple and cyclical. Each centre operates under an appointed Centre In-charge, who coordinates the artisans working there. Every month, all the Centre In-charges meet to review production and progress, and submit reports along with the month's finished output. The Society procures these



Artisans at work on the checkered Kunbi weave, one of seven active handloom centres in the Shiroda cluster

finished products are sold directly from the artisans, and in the same cycle, supplies the yarn and other raw materials needed for the next month's weaving. Artisans are paid primarily for their labour and weaving charges—a structure that gives them direct, recurring income rather than a one-off payment.

A Sister-Concern Partnership: Asturi MCLF

In 2024, the Society's institutional footing strengthened further when Dr Gauri Shirodkar, Chairperson of the Asturi Model Cluster Level Federation (AsturiMCLF), was also elected Chairperson of the Shiroda Handloom Industrial Cooperative Society. The two organisations now function in close association, with Asturi MCLF supporting the Society particularly in branding, promotion and market linkage. This partnership has connected the handloom activity to the wider NRLM self-help group network, opening up more opportunities to showcase and sell the products through exhibitions and departmental programmes.

What Lies Ahead

Looking forward, the Society has identified several priorities to build on this revival:

- Professional consultancy for branding, packaging and marketing.
- Development of high-quality,



Two artisans working together at the loom, setting the weft on a fresh length of Kunbi cloth

contemporary and customised handloom products.

- Stronger market linkages through exhibitions, government departments, private organisations and institutional buyers.
- Positioning Kunbi sarees and other handloom products as premium heritage products of Goa.
- Expansion of production centres and inclusion of more women artisans.
- Deeper integration with NRLM self-help groups and livelihood initiatives.
- Exploring online and wider-market sales channels.

A Craft Rewoven

The story of the Shiroda Handloom Industrial Cooperative Society is, in many ways, the story of rural livelihood revival itself: a defunct institution, a targeted government push, convergence with the self-help group ecosystem, and a slow but steady rebuilding of both craft and confidence. Goa's oldest handloom cooperative, once silent, is today a growing network of production centres run largely by NRLM self-help group members. With the proposed expansion to about ten centres, professional branding support, and a widening market through Asturi MCLF, the Kunbi saree is being positioned not just as a heritage textile to be preserved, but as a commercially viable product that can sustain the women who weave it – thread by thread, centre by centre, across rural Goa.

Advancing Women-Led Enterprise Financing under DAY-NRLM

Ms. Y Atan Konyak,
Mission Executive, NRLM RC
NIRDPR-NERC



1st meeting with Mizoram Rural Bank (MRB), NRP- Tilak Das on the left, MRB officials on the Right

The DAY-NRLM SHG-Bank linkage model has successfully extended institutional finance to rural women, enabling savings, credit, and collective action. While SHGs have met consumption and basic credit needs, there is now a pressing demand to support enterprise development for sustainable livelihoods. Many women SHG members are moving towards entrepreneurship, but face barriers such as lack of credit history, collateral, financial documentation, and banks' reluctance to lend to informal enterprises.

To address this, DAY-NRLM has launched a women-led enterprise financing initiative. Accordingly, NRLMRC of NIRDPR has been supporting this initiative through capacity building of the SRLM's staff across the states.

During the current financial year (2026-2027), the Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD) introduced the Online Individual Enterprise Loan Application (IELA) platform to streamline enterprise financing, ensuring efficiency, accountability, and in alignment with the Digital India vision.

In line with this, NRLM-RC, NIRDPR-NERC, has deputed NRPs (National Resource Persons) to support the SRLM in conducting State-level Bankers'



State Level Bankers Orientation on 11 August, 2026

Orientation and follow-up meetings with SRLMs and bankers for strategic planning.

In NE states, such programmes were conducted in Meghalaya and Mizoram during August, 2026. As a result, a landmark achievement was made in onboarding Mizoram Rural Bank (MRB) onto the IELA platform—making it the first SBI-sponsored rural bank in the country to be integrated into the system. This breakthrough sets a precedent for other states, showcasing the transformative potential of digital platforms in advancing financial inclusion.

Mean while, Meghalaya Rural Bank has established an understanding of the process, though formal onboarding into the online system is still pending. To bridge this gap, NRPs were deputed to the state, facilitating dialogue between MRB (Meghalaya Rural Bank) and MSRLS (Meghalaya State Rural Livelihood Society). As a result, an agreement was reached whereby MRB will accept individual loan applications from MSRLS members, even prior to full integration with IELA.

Together, these initiatives underscore the contribution of NRLM RC and NIRDPR-NERC in bridging policy with practice, fostering innovation in financial linkages, and laying the groundwork for scalable models of rural entrepreneurship support across the North Eastern region.

From Passion to Prosperity: Sume Sharma's Journey from Homemaker to Lakhpati Didi

How an SHG, traditional skills and the support of ASRLM helped a rural woman build a thriving enterprise while preserving her cultural heritage

Ms Sangita R. Barthakur,
Mission Manager, NRLM RC
NIRDPR-NERC, Guwahati

In 2015, Sume Sharma began her entrepreneurial journey with two skills close to her heart—candle making and traditional Manipuri handloom weaving. What started as a personal passion gradually evolved into a sustainable livelihood, enabling her to contribute significantly to her family's financial well-being.

A homemaker from Sri Bhumi, Sume's transformation gained momentum when she joined the Nabapallab Self-Help Group (SHG) in 2018. Her association with the SHG opened doors to training, financial support and opportunities that helped her turn her skills into a viable enterprise.

From Skills to Enterprise

Sume developed her candle-making skills through training from Pidilite, while her mother introduced her to the art of weaving traditional Manipuri handloom products. However, access to finance and markets remained a challenge.

Through the support of Assam State Rural Livelihoods Mission (ASRLM), Sume was able to overcome these barriers. Financial assistance through the Revolving Fund and Community Investment Fund, along with capacity-building and technical training, enabled her to invest in weaving machines, procure raw materials and improve the quality of her products.

She also received ₹25,000 under KAMS (Kanaklata Mahila Sabalakaran Yojna) and subsequently accessed a



bank loan of ₹1.50 lakh, providing the capital required to gradually scale up her enterprise.

Building a Sustainable Livelihood

With improved skills, better equipment and access to finance, Sume expanded her product range to include handcrafted candles and traditional Manipuri handloom items. Her products are now marketed locally and during festive occasions such as Durga Puja and Diwali, reaching customers across Barak Valley and beyond.

Her enterprise has grown to generate an annual income of approximately ₹2.25lakh, earning her the recognition of 'Lakhpati Didi'.

For Sume, however, the achievement represents much more than an income milestone. It is a symbol of confidence, independence and the ability to create opportunities through her own skills and determination.

"Becoming a Lakhpati Didi is more than an achievement; it is a testament to what women can accomplish when skills, finance and community support come together."



Lighting Homes, Preserving Heritage

Sume's enterprise represents a unique blend of livelihood promotion and cultural preservation. While her candle-making venture brings contemporary products to the market, her handloom work keeps traditional Manipuri craftsmanship alive.

She has learned to adapt her production and marketing strategies to seasonal demand and festive markets. Looking ahead, Sume aspires to further expand her enterprise and establish a business outlet at Dullavcherra Bazar, creating greater visibility and access to customers.

Inspiring Other Women

Sume's journey from a homemaker living in poverty to a financially independent entrepreneur demonstrates



the transformative potential of self-help groups and community - based livelihood interventions.

Her story illustrates how access to skills, finance, institutional support, technology and markets can enable rural women to move beyond subsistence livelihoods and build sustainable enterprises.

Today, Sume is not only strengthening her own family's financial security but is also becoming an inspiration for other women in her community. Her journey sends a powerful message:

When women have the opportunity, resources and confidence to pursue their dreams, they can transform not only their own lives but also their families and communities.

***(This article is written using inputs provided by Ms Nitu Das,
DFE-SMBCB, Sri Bhumi)***

NIRDPR Celebrates 80th Independence Day



The National Institute of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj (NIRDPR), Hyderabad, celebrated the 80th Independence Day of India on 15 August 2026 with patriotic fervour and enthusiasm. The celebration brought together faculty members, staff, students and participants of various training programmes, reflecting a shared spirit of national pride and commitment to the country's development journey.

In the absence of Ms Rohini R. Bhajibhakare, IAS, Deputy Director General, NIRDPR, the National Flag was hoisted by Prof. Jyothis Sathyapalan, Professor & Head, Centre for PG Studies and Distance Education (CPGS&DE), NIRDPR.

Towards Viksit Bharat @2047

The NIRDPR community was encouraged to work collectively with cooperation, professionalism,

dedication and enthusiasm towards greater institutional self-sustenance and strengthening the Institute as a Centre of Excellence.

The message also reiterated the importance of NIRDPR's continued contribution to the national vision of Viksit Bharat @2047, particularly through its efforts in capacity building, knowledge generation and dissemination, and support to rural development initiatives.

The Independence Day celebration provided an opportunity for the NIRDPR community to reaffirm its collective commitment to rural transformation, institutional excellence and nation-building, while drawing inspiration from the country's development aspirations and its journey towards a more inclusive and prosperous India.

Leading Alone, Leading Change: Gram Pradhan Shobha Devi

The story of struggle, service and leadership of a woman elected representative from a hill village in Uttarakhand

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Broken Dreams, Unbroken Resolve

As a child, Shobha Devi wanted to study further and join the Indian Army. But because of her family's limited financial means, she, like the other girls around her, could study only up to the tenth standard. Poverty, social pressure and tradition led to her marriage at a young age, cutting short her dream of further education and a career in the armed forces. Today, seeing her abilities and the way she carries out her work, her own parents regret having married her off so young and not having let her study further.

A Husband's Moral Support, a Leadership Carried Alone

Shobha Devi's two sons live away from home for their studies, and her husband works in Mumbai to support the family financially. Shobha Devi herself says that her husband supports her fully in a moral sense, and that it is he who gave her the freedom and courage to work for society – even though he is not physically present in the village and is not able to share the burden of the household or Panchayat work in any other way. The home, the care of her mother-in-law, the tending of cows and goats, farming on a small and fragmented landholding, and the entire functioning of the Panchayat are managed by Shobha Devi alone. Amid these responsibilities, she also took on the role of Gram Pradhan, and she runs the Panchayat's affairs by her own judgement, free of anyone's pressure. Working as a woman representative within the male-dominated social structure around her brings its own fresh difficulties every day, yet she does not step back. She is also a



Shobha Devi personally maintains the accounts and records of the Gram Panchayat. (Source: Padma Award nomination document, personal collection)

The story of Shobha Devi, Pradhan of Gram Panchayat Judalyu in Nainidanda block of Pauri Garhwal district, Uttarakhand, is an example for the many women who lead the development of their area in remote hill villages while also carrying the full weight of family, animal husbandry and farming. To support the family, her husband has moved to Mumbai in search of work. In his physical absence from the village, and with only his moral support to rely on, Shobha Devi leads the Panchayat entirely on her own, proving that where there is willpower and morale, meaningful change is possible even with limited resources.

PashuSakhi is with a self-help group under the State Rural Livelihood Mission (SRLM), and she leads the village's Mangal Samuh, using funds contributed by the group to arrange treatment for those in need and the sick.

Development Works in the Panchayat

Under Shobha Devi's leadership, the Panchayat has carried out tree plantation, interlocking road construction, land levelling and the installation of solar lights, among other works. With the support of the departments concerned under the Jal Jeevan Mission, several works have also been undertaken to improve the drinking water supply in the village. Whether the matter concerns the Panchayat or any other department, she remains constantly ready to serve the people of her area, reaching out directly to the concerned officials and staff whenever help is needed. She personally oversees all of the Panchayat's work and accounts with complete transparency. For the illiterate, the helpless and the elderly of the village, she is the sole point of contact, and people come to her with every kind of problem.

From Wildlife Conflict to Climate Change Shobha Devi faces no shortage of challenges either. Climate change is

deepening the conflict between humans and wild animals. Tigers carry off pet dogs, cows and goats, putting livestock-based livelihoods constantly at risk. Wild boars destroy standing crops, and monkeys damage fruit-bearing trees. Because the terrain is hilly, landholdings are small and scattered, making farming even harder. Excess rainfall, drought and soil erosion are further problems the village faces on an ongoing basis. Despite all this, Shobha Devi does not give up and keeps looking for solutions within the resources available to her.

Efforts to Check Migration and Bring Social Change

Migration from hill villages is a major problem, and to help check it, Shobha Devi is working to promote homestays so that people can find a means of livelihood while still living in the village. Alongside this, she is active in reducing school dropout rates and in countering the sense of inferiority that surrounds the birth of a daughter in society. She also makes her own efforts to conserve traditional water sources. She is the only woman representative in the entire block who carries out her representative duties directly, on her own strength, without her husband's physical presence, and while at work she looks after both women and men labourers equally.



Shobha Devi personally supervising interlocking road construction work. (Source: Padma Award nomination document, personal collection)



Shobha Devi and the women of the village engaged in tree plantation work. (Source: Padma Award nomination document, personal collection)

Connecting Through Technology and Social Media

Besides caring for her home, her animals and her family, and handling the Panchayat's work, Shobha Devi is also well connected with technology. She maintains an active presence on social media and regularly shares the activities of her village and Panchayat through Facebook, Instagram and YouTube. Her work is discussed far beyond her own village, and several local news channels have covered her work and interviewed her. This combination of technology and grassroots work makes her a modern, approachable public representative.

The Need for Recognition and Training

Shobha Devi looks ahead to her

remaining four-year term with a clear commitment to inclusive village development, determined to carry every villager along. Recognising the need to strengthen her own capacities, she seeks greater opportunities for training and learning to discharge her responsibilities more effectively. Her journey underscores the importance of recognising, supporting and nurturing grassroots women leaders, whose experiences can inspire others to participate confidently in local governance. Shobha Devi's story demonstrates that women's leadership in Panchayati Raj is not merely an opportunity for representation, but a powerful foundation for inclusive and holistic village development.

(This article has been prepared on the basis of the nomination document submitted by Shobha Devi for the Padma Award (2026) and information available on her public social media accounts (Instagram, YouTube and Facebook). All photographs have been taken from the said nomination document.)

Guardians of the Forest: How Communities are Protecting Odisha's Commons

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In the villages adjoining the forests of Keonjhar district in Odisha, life begins with the first light of day. Women walk into the forest carrying baskets to collect Mahua flowers, tendu leaves, mushrooms, bamboo, and medicinal plants. Farmers take their cattle to common grazing lands, while children get ready for school. For these tribal families, the forest is much more than a place filled with trees. It provides food, income, medicine, fuel, and a way of life that has been passed down through generations.

During my internship with the Foundation for Ecological Security (FES), I visited three tribal Panchayats of Jatra, Gonasika, and Bagderi. Spending time in these villages helped me understand how closely people's lives are connected with forests, ponds, grazing lands, and other shared natural resources. These resources support farming, livestock, and household needs, but they are also facing increasing pressure because of changing livelihoods, poor management, and environmental degradation.

The people living in these villages have protected nature for generations. They know when Mahua flowers should be collected, which medicinal plants

can cure common illnesses, and why sacred groves should never be disturbed. Their knowledge is based on years of experience and has helped conserve these landscapes long before modern conservation programmes began.

However, this relationship between people and nature is becoming more difficult to maintain.

During my field visits, I observed that several village ponds had become heavily silted, reducing water availability during the summer months. Some grazing lands had shrunk because of encroachment, while a few forest patches showed signs of excessive extraction of fuelwood and forest produce. These changes directly affect agriculture, livestock, and household income, making many rural families more vulnerable during difficult seasons.

Managing these shared resources has also become more challenging. Institutions such as Gram Panchayats, Forest Committees, Pani Panchayats, and Biodiversity Management Committees have important responsibilities, but they often work independently with limited coordination. During discussions with villagers, it became clear that traditional systems of managing forests

are gradually becoming weaker because of migration, changing lifestyles, and declining participation by younger generations. As a result, people continue to depend on forests and common lands, but the institutions responsible for protecting them are not always able to respond effectively.

Forest-based livelihoods face another important challenge. Families collect Mahua flowers, tendu leaves, mushrooms, wild fruits, bamboo, and medicinal plants to supplement their income. Yet most of these products are sold immediately after collection because the storage or processing facilities in the villages are limited.

During a conversation at a village meeting, a women's self-help group (SHG) member explained the practical problems faced by many forest-dependent families across the region. "Although my family collects a good quantity of Mahua flowers every season, we are forced to sell them on the same day because we have no proper storage space. Local traders are aware of our situation, and they exploit us by offering very low prices of ten. If we had a place to store them safely, we could wait for a better price and earn much more," she said.

Despite these difficulties, I also witnessed many inspiring examples of collective action. Villagers regularly participated in plantation drives, protected sacred forest patches, and discussed natural resource management during Gram Sabha meetings. Women SHGs were taking greater responsibility in livelihood activities, while local youth actively participated in awareness campaigns and conservation efforts. These initiatives showed that people are willing to protect their environment when they receive the right support and opportunities.

During the study, I could explore several practical solutions that can improve the quality of life in these

villages. Simple measures such as Mahua collection nets, drying platforms, storage facilities, and better market linkages can significantly increase the income of forest collectors. Processing forest products locally instead of selling them in raw form would help families earn better prices while creating employment opportunities within the village.

Equally important is strengthening cooperation among village institutions. Gram Sabhas, Panchayats, Forest Committees, and Self-Help Groups should work together to prepare common plans for restoring ponds, protecting forests, improving grazing lands, and promoting sustainable livelihoods. Development programmes should also respect traditional ecological knowledge and combine it with scientific planning so that conservation efforts remain both practical and community-led.

My field experience taught me that forests are not simply natural resources waiting to be managed. They are living ecosystems that support millions of people and preserve generations of knowledge, culture, and traditions. Sustainable conservation is possible only when the people who depend on these resources are recognised as equal partners in protecting them.

My time in Jatra, Gonasika, and Bagderi taught me that the future of Odisha's forests depends as much on its people as on its trees. When villagers are trusted, supported, and involved in decision-making, conservation becomes more than an environmental goal—it becomes a way of improving lives. Protecting the commons is not only about saving forests, ponds, and grazing lands, but also about securing the future of the people who have cared for them for generations. Their knowledge, commitment, and collective effort remain the strongest foundation for building a greener and more sustainable future.

NIRDPR Welcomes New Batches of PGDRDM and PGDM (RM)



Newly admitted students of PGDRDM Batch-24 and PGDM (RM) Batch-9 with faculty members and staff of CPGS&DE during the Induction Programme

The Centre for PG Studies & Distance Education (CPGS&DE), National Institute of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj (NIRDPR), Hyderabad, organised the Induction Programme for PGDRDM Batch-24 (2026–2027) and PGDM (RM) Batch-9 (2026–2028), formally welcoming a new cohort of students aspiring to contribute to the fields of rural development and management.

The induction programme provided the newly admitted students with an overview of NIRDPR's academic programmes, institutional vision and its role as a premier national institution for research, training and capacity building in rural development. The programme also familiarised students with the academic environment, institutional systems and learning opportunities available during their programmes.

The programme served as a platform for students to interact with the faculty

members and staff of CPGS&DE, enabling them to gain a better understanding of the Centre's interdisciplinary academic and research environment. The interactions also introduced students to the collaborative learning ecosystem at NIRDPR and the importance of integrating academic knowledge with practical perspectives in addressing contemporary rural development challenges.

Interactive sessions provided insights into academic expectations, research opportunities, field engagement and interdisciplinary learning, helping the students understand the broader scope of their respective programmes. The sessions encouraged students to actively engage with diverse perspectives and develop the knowledge, skills and professional competencies required for meaningful contributions to rural transformation.

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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