

Empowered Committee Reviews Proposals to Accelerate Growth of Women-led Rural Enterprises

प्रविष्टि तिथि: 22 AUG 2026 9:53AM by PIB Delhi

The Empowered Committee of the Ministry of Rural Development, chaired by the Secretary (Rural Development), Shri Rohit Kansal, today considered proposals under the **Non-Farm Livelihoods (NFL) component of DAY-NRLM** to strengthen and scale up women-led rural enterprises and create a pathway for small-scale SHG enterprises to graduate into **higher-order, growth-oriented businesses**.



Shri Amit Shukla, Joint Secretary (Rural Livelihoods), and Ms. Swati Sharma, Joint Secretary (Rural Livelihoods), were also present at the meeting. The discussions focused on accelerating entrepreneurship-led livelihood opportunities for rural women and contributing to the national goal of making **6 crore Lakhpati Didis**.

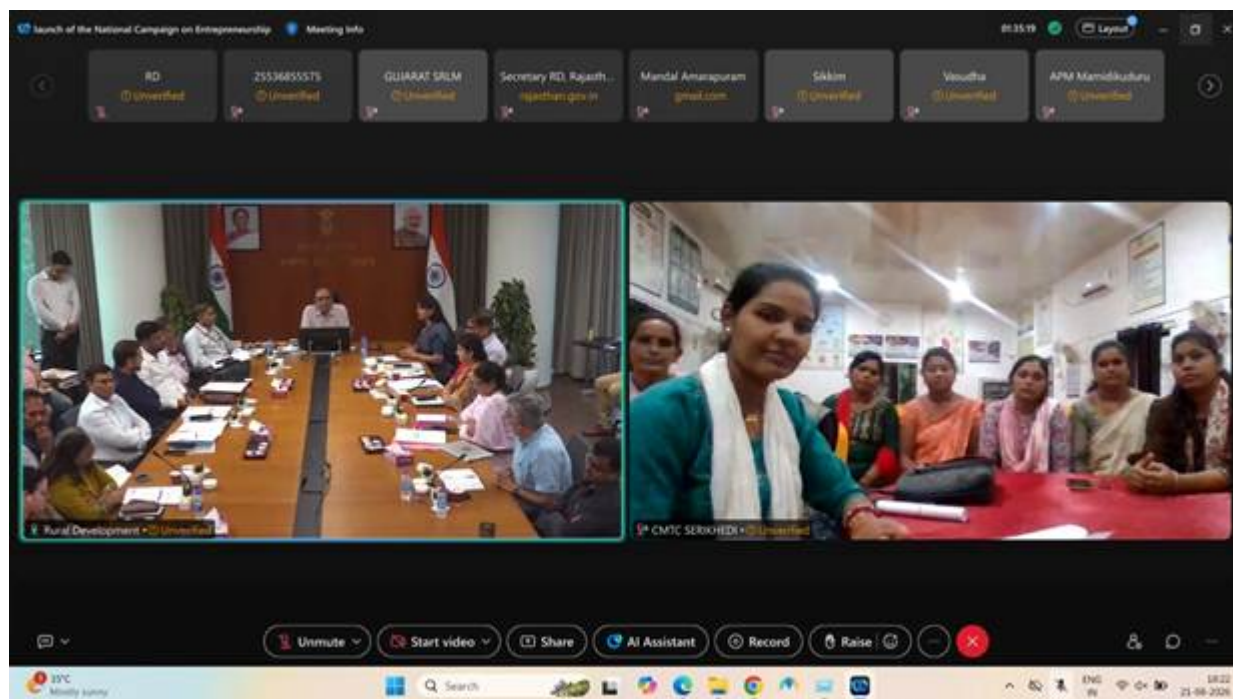


The Committee considered **four new Incubator proposals from Bihar, Jammu & Kashmir, Uttar Pradesh and Gujarat**, with **IIT Patna, IIM Jammu, IIM Lucknow and IIT Gandhinagar**, respectively, as the proposed incubator partners. The proposals were presented by the Principal Secretaries/Secretaries of the respective States, along with the State Mission Directors/CEOs of the SRLMs and representatives of the proposed incubator institutions. Together, the four programmes are proposed to support **600+ high-potential rural enterprises** through structured interventions in business strategy, mentoring, financial planning, formalisation, technology adoption, market access and access to finance.



The Incubator Sub-Scheme builds on the experience of **four completed incubator programmes in Assam, Bihar, West Bengal and Karnataka**, which supported **over 600 SHG enterprises**. The programme has since expanded significantly, with **14 incubator programmes currently operational**

across 13 States, supporting around 2,100 rural SHG enterprises through partnerships with premier business and academic institutions including IIMs, IITs and leading incubation institutions. The earlier programmes demonstrated tangible outcomes, including revenue growth, improved business formalisation and additional employment generation.



The new incubators will focus on sectors such as **food and agri-processing, textiles and handicrafts, manufacturing, retail and services, tourism-linked activities, digital enterprises and other locally relevant growth sectors**. A key feature is a **transparent, merit-based Challenge Fund** for selection of enterprises with strong growth potential, along with dedicated State Incubation Cells to institutionalise enterprise support within the State Rural Livelihoods Missions.

The Committee also considered proposals for expansion of the **Start-up Village Entrepreneurship Programme (SVEP) in West Bengal and Goa**, aimed at further strengthening the rural non-farm entrepreneurship ecosystem and enabling more SHG members to establish and grow sustainable enterprises.

These initiatives reinforce the Government's commitment to **women-led economic development and the Lakhpati Didi initiative**, by enabling rural women entrepreneurs to progress from subsistence-level businesses to enterprises with higher turnover, stronger market linkages, improved access to finance and greater employment potential.

The Empowered Committee emphasised **innovation, institutional partnerships, convergence, digital adoption, market access and outcome-based monitoring**, with the objective of creating a robust national ecosystem for incubation and sustained growth of women-led rural enterprises under DAY-NRLM.

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(रिलीज़ आईडी: 2302239) आगंतुक पटल : 958

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