

Rural Development Ministry holds national level rural training centres meet

Secretary Rural Development calls for a modernising courses, AI-Enabled Digital Transformation, Improving credit linkages

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A two-day National Level Review Meeting of Rural Self Employment Training Institutes (RSETI) Stakeholders was organised by the **Ministry of Rural Development** at Shillong, Meghalaya. The meeting is being organised in association with the Government of Meghalaya and the National Academy of RSETI (NAR). RSETI is a flagship programme implemented through a three-way partnership between the Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD), State/UT Governments and sponsoring Banks, with a mandate to establish an RSETI in every district.



The meeting brought together senior officials of the Ministry, State Governments, State Rural Livelihood Missions (SRLMs), sponsoring banks, NAR and RSETI functionaries from across the country to review physical and financial progress at the mid-point of the financial year and chart a strategy for the remaining two quarters.



In his address, Shri Rohit Kansal, Secretary, described RSETI as a unique institutional model that brings together the Central Government, State Governments and the banking sector. He highlighted that, under this model, banks are directly involved not only in training and equipping rural youth but also in providing credit to enable them to establish sustainable livelihoods. He emphasised that the RSETI approach goes beyond conventional credit linkage and priority-sector lending, by creating an integrated ecosystem in which training, handholding, entrepreneurship and access to credit are brought together to support sustainable livelihood outcomes.

Noting the programme's national footprint of 647 RSETIs covering 634 districts since its inception in January 2009, the Secretary said around 64 lakh persons have been trained, about 72% settled, but the satisfying fact is that 46 lakhs of women in about 72% of total trained beneficiaries. He emphasised that training is a means to the end, and that the ultimate objective is sustainable livelihoods through wage employment, entrepreneurship or self-employment. He urged the sponsoring banks and SRLMs to undertake a detailed analysis of the credit-linkage gap among the remaining beneficiaries, including whether the gap is attributable to lack of demand from beneficiaries or deficiencies in credit delivery mechanisms.

The Secretary asked stakeholders to focus on five key priorities:

- Improving credit linkages
- Modernising and improving the courses offered
- Improving the quality of trainers
- Developing truly modern and model RSETIs
- Achieving complete digital transformation and effective use of Artificial Intelligence

He observed that around 65% of trainees are concentrated in a set of courses, and called for a review of the course basket, including emerging sectors such as AI, digital and mobile technologies, automobiles and tourism. He also highlighted opportunities in the international labour market, such as nursing, caregiving, plumbing and foreign-language skills, and asked governing bodies to revise courses that have not been updated recently.



On mobilisation, he emphasised RSETI courses should be attractive enough that rural youth seek them out. He advised every State to commit to at least one Model RSETI, with a definite timeline, and called for the entire RSETI lifecycle, from mobilisation and registration to training, assessment, certification and outcome monitoring, to be integrated on the Kaushal Rural portal, with an AI layer to match candidate profiles with suitable courses and livelihood opportunities in India and abroad. Stressing accountability, he said, "What gets measured gets done," and that performance will be reviewed by RSETI,

with well-performing institutions recognised and rewarded. He urged participants to treat the programme not merely as a task but as a form of seva, and assured States that regular consultations would continue and genuine challenges would be addressed through reforms and simplified processes.

During the review meeting Shri S. Sasikumar, Joint Secretary (Rural Skills), MoRD, spoke on current updates and future plans. Describing RSETI as one of the country's longest-running and most successful skill development programmes, and a 100% centrally sponsored one, he highlighted its growing role as a convergence platform for training under various Government schemes. He informed the participants that the Ministry is considering an expanded training portfolio including emerging technologies such as AI, Rural Business Incubation Centres, Enterprise Mentoring Cells, partnerships with local industries, a National RSETI Alumni Meet, common branding of trainees' products, structured post-training handholding and a model RSETI in each State. Bank wise presentations were also made by the respective bankers, while State wise presentations were jointly delivered by the State Directors/State Controllers of RSETIs and the National Officers of SRLMs. The different sessions also covered the Ministry's observations, discussions on best practices as well as targets for the remaining quarters of the current year and the next year. During the meeting, the RSETI beneficiaries, shared their success stories and experiences of how the training helped them become self-employed and build sustainable livelihoods.

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