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INCLUSIVE DEVELOPMENT THROUGH SUSTAINABLE LIVELIHOODS

NABARD has played a pivotal role in advancing inclusive rural development by promoting livelihoods, building skills, strengthening institutions, and fostering both financial and digital inclusion. Its integrated approach has yielded tangible outcomes at the grassroots level, generating millions of sustainable livelihood and entrepreneurship opportunities. Through its multifaceted financial and developmental interventions, NABARD has nurtured a robust ecosystem that has significantly contributed to the emergence of self-sustaining rural communities and the broader economic growth of the nation.

4.1 MICROFINANCE AS A CATALYST FOR RURAL EMPOWERMENT

4.1.1 Towards seamless self-help group–bank collaboration

NABARD has been instrumental in advancing rural banking innovation through the Self-Help Group–Bank Linkage Programme (SHG–BLP). This initiative has facilitated access to affordable and sustainable credit and financial services for 17 crore rural households, in collaboration with mainstream banks (Table 4.1).

Table 4.1: Performance of the Self-Help Group–Bank Linkage Programme in FY2025

Particulars	Status as on 31 March 2025 (Change over FY2024)			
	SHGs (in lakh)	Change	Aggregate Amount	Change
Loans disbursed during FY2025	55.6	1%	₹2,08,282.7 crore	–0.5%
Loans outstanding	84.9	10%	₹3,04,258.7 crore	17%
Savings with banks	143.3	–1%	₹71,433.3 crore	10%
Non-performing assets			1.7%	–15%
Average loan disbursed per SHG during FY2025			₹3.7 lakh	–2%

SHG = Self-Help Group.

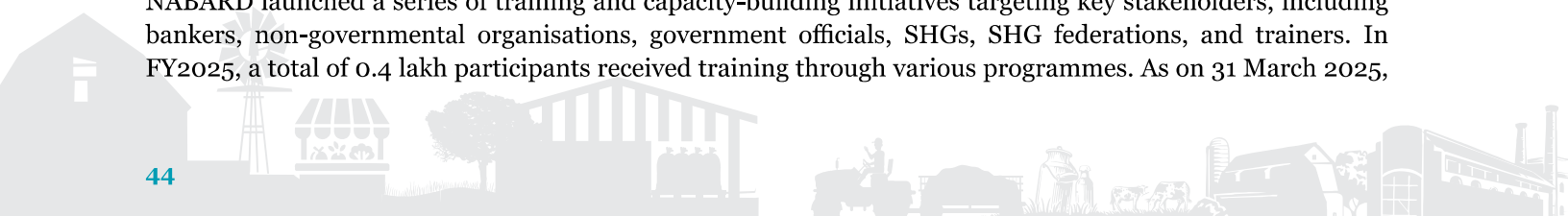
The SHG–BLP has empowered rural women by facilitating access to timely and affordable credit, encouraging savings, strengthening social capital, and promoting entrepreneurship in rural households. These outcomes have contributed to enhanced income generation and reduced dependence on private moneylenders. In addition, NABARD reinforces the SHG–bank interface by supporting Village Level Programmes in collaboration with banks and the Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana–National Rural Livelihoods Mission (DAY–NRLM) under the Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India (GOI). Village Level Programmes provide support for SHG account opening, access to formal banking services, credit linkage, repayment discipline, and broader participation in the financial system.

4.1.2 Deepening the impact of joint liability groups

NABARD is promoting the extension of collateral-free credit by banks to joint liability groups (JLGs), thereby enabling poor and marginalised members to undertake diverse farm and non-farm activities that strengthen livelihoods and mitigate risks. In FY2025, banks supported 49.8 lakh JLGs, taking the cumulative number to 380.7 lakh JLGs as on 31 March 2025.

4.1.3 Skill development for efficient programme implementation

NABARD launched a series of training and capacity-building initiatives targeting key stakeholders, including bankers, non-governmental organisations, government officials, SHGs, SHG federations, and trainers. In FY2025, a total of 0.4 lakh participants received training through various programmes. As on 31 March 2025,





cumulative training had been imparted to around 50 lakh participants under the Financial Inclusion Fund and 5.4 lakh participants under the Women SHG (WSHG) programme.

4.1.4 Pilot on Money Purse Application

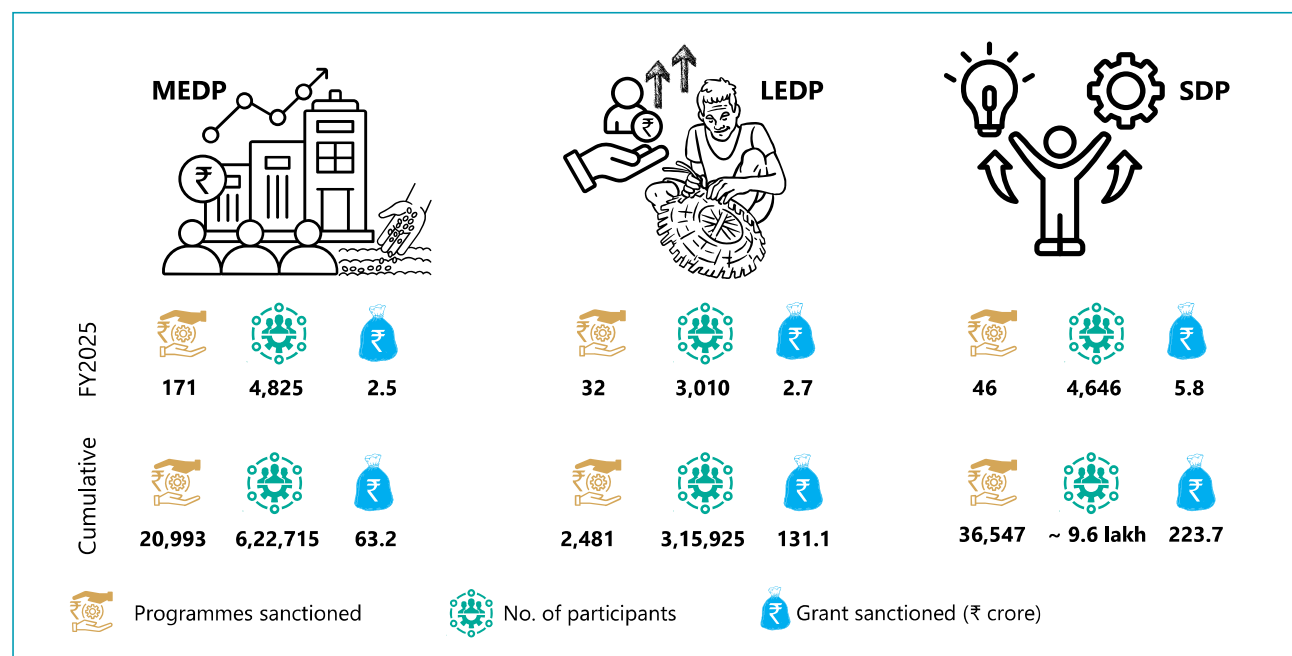
To deliver efficient, real-time financial services to SHG members at their doorstep, reduce turnaround time and transaction costs for banks and SHGs, and capture individual member-wise financial data to enable dynamic, real-time grading of SHGs, a pilot on the Money Purse (MP) Application was sanctioned in FY2024. It has been initiated in collaboration with Odisha Gramya Bank and Kerala State Cooperative Bank. Through the digitisation of SHG transactions and the use of technology, the MP App is expected to provide seamless member-level data to credit information companies and build credit histories to facilitate credit access to individual members for livelihood activities.

4.2 INITIATIVES FOR SUSTAINABLE LIVELIHOODS

4.2.1 Skill and entrepreneurship development programmes

Adopting a demand-driven and outcome-focused approach to promote both wage and self-employment in rural India, NABARD implements Micro Enterprise Development Programmes, Livelihood and Enterprise Development Programmes, and Skill Development Programmes (SDPs) (Figure 4.1). These initiatives focus on promoting sustainable rural livelihoods by skilling, entrepreneurship, and enterprise development. Targeted support is provided in areas such as capacity building, market linkages, and financial access to empower individuals and communities.

Figure 4.1: Skilling and entrepreneurship development programmes (as on 31 March 2025)



LEDP = Livelihood and Enterprise Development Programme, MEDP = Micro Enterprise Development Programme, SDP = Skill Development Programme.

4.2.2 M-Suvidha: Empowering women with skills to set up micro enterprises

Strategised as an end-to-end intervention, M-Suvidha offers need-based and location-specific skill development projects for women, promoting sustainable rural livelihood solutions across farm and off-farm sectors. The scheme is being implemented in a detailed project report (DPR) mode. Under the pilot, an amount of ₹40.5 lakh was sanctioned to Women Organization for Mass Action to strengthen the livelihoods of 500 SHG members in Virudhunagar district, Tamil Nadu. Upon completion of the project, a credit flow of ₹1 crore is anticipated.

4.2.3 Partnership-driven approach to skilling and entrepreneurship development

As part of a strategic alliance to benefit rural WSHGs, NABARD and DAY–NRLM signed a landmark memorandum of understanding (MOU) on 27 February 2024. The MOU aims to pilot digital transactions through SHG federations, introducing transparency and efficiency to minimise turnaround time for members. It also seeks to explore the deployment of WSHG members as business correspondents of banks. An amount of ₹1,005 lakh was sanctioned to State Rural Livelihood Missions under the MOU and ₹300.8 lakh was released towards various interventions.

A key area of collaboration includes support for SHG marketing infrastructure such as the establishment of rural haats, rural marts, and participation in exhibitions/melas, and “Stall-in-Mall” initiatives, in accordance with guidelines under NABARD’s Gramya Vikas Nidhi (GVN). Subsequently, 20 rural marts, 8 exhibitions, 1 rural haat, and 1 Stall-in-Mall project were sanctioned.

NABARD has entered into MOUs with the National Scheduled Caste Finance and Development Corporation (NSFDC), National Backward Class Finance and Development Corporation (NBCFDC), and National Safai Karmacharis Finance and Development Corporation to strengthen inclusive development initiatives.

Based on jointly shortlisted courses and programmes, eight SDPs amounting to ₹1 crore were sanctioned to NSFDC and NBCFDC. This collaboration is expected to complement NABARD’s developmental interventions by facilitating credit support on highly concessional terms to marginalised and deprived communities, thereby enhancing their access to sustainable livelihood opportunities.

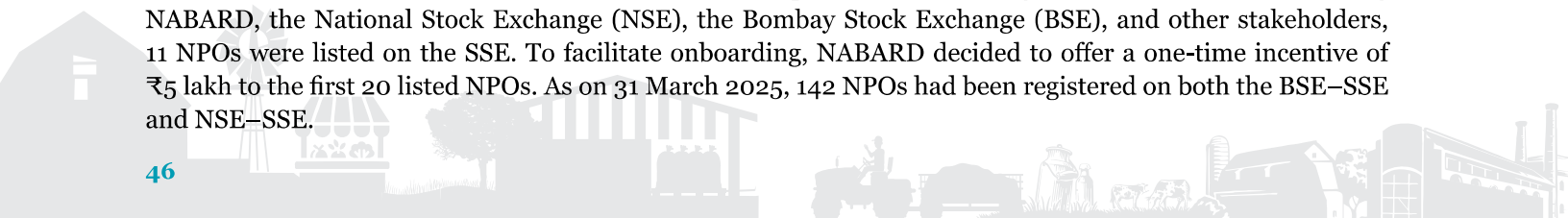
4.2.4 Lakhpati Didi initiative

In alignment with the Lakhpati Didi initiative of the GOI, a model scheme was formulated for regional rural banks (RRBs) to extend finance to individual members of mature WSHGs engaged in income-generating activities across the farm and non-farm sectors. The RRBs were advised to adopt the scheme with suitable modifications.

4.2.5 Activities under Social Stock Exchange and CBF–SSE

The Capacity Building Fund–Social Stock Exchange (CBF–SSE) was established in FY2023 with a corpus of ₹100 crore and is housed within NABARD. The fund supports awareness and capacity-building activities for stakeholders such as non-profit organisations (NPOs), for-profit enterprises, social impact assessors, investors, and others associated with the SSE. NABARD remains actively engaged in developing a sustainable SSE ecosystem.

NABARD has subscribed to ₹65 lakh worth of Zero Coupon Zero Principal instruments for three SSE listings, with contributions from the GVN and the Tribal Development Fund. Through coordinated efforts involving NABARD, the National Stock Exchange (NSE), the Bombay Stock Exchange (BSE), and other stakeholders, 11 NPOs were listed on the SSE. To facilitate onboarding, NABARD decided to offer a one-time incentive of ₹5 lakh to the first 20 listed NPOs. As on 31 March 2025, 142 NPOs had been registered on both the BSE–SSE and NSE–SSE.





4.3 FARMER PRODUCER ORGANISATIONS

Farmer producer organisations (FPOs) are collectives of farmers formed to enhance market access, strengthen collective bargaining power, and improve incomes through aggregation and value addition. NABARD has been a pioneer in promoting FPOs through its Producers Organisation Development Fund and the Producers Organisation Development and Upliftment Corpus Fund. It also serves as one of the implementing agencies for the Central Sector Scheme (CSS) aimed at forming and promoting 10,000 FPOs (Table 4.2, Box 4.1, and Figure 4.2).

Table 4.2: Promotion of FPOs by fund (amount in ₹ crore)

Particulars		PRODUCE	PODF-ID	CSS	Total
FPOs sanctioned (number)	Overall target	2,000	3,000	1,694	6,694
	Cumulative	2,154	3,591	1,694	7,439
	Achieved in FY2025	-	84	-	84
FPOs registered (number)	Cumulative	2,094	2,427	1,694	6,215
	In FY2025 ^a	-	151	8	159
Grant sanctioned	Cumulative	221.3	457.8	806.2	1,485.3
	In FY2025	-	80.9	29.2	110.1
Grant utilised	Cumulative	200.0	257.3	338.7	796.0
	In FY2025	-	43.8	106.0	149.8
Farmers covered as shareholders (lakh)		10.2	11.1	6.3	27.6
Cumulative share capital collected by FPOs		113.3	121.1	104.6	339.0
Balance corpus, 31 March 2024		0.0	260.0	-	260.0
Corpus used during FY2025		0.0	43.8	106.0	149.8
Balance corpus, 31 March 2025		-	223.6 ^b	-	223.6

^a Of the 159 FPOs registered during FY2025, 127 had been sanctioned in FY2024.

^b Includes interest on unutilised fund.

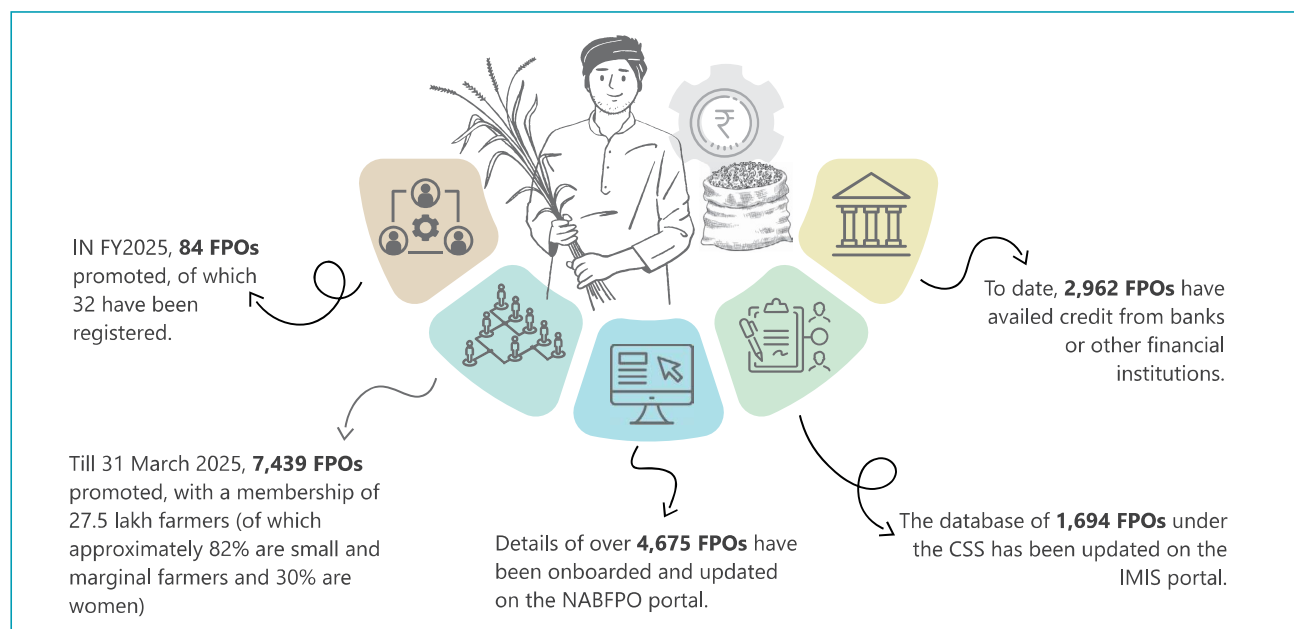
CSS = Central Sector Scheme, FPO = Farmer Producer Organisation, PODF-ID = Producers Organisation Development Fund-Interest Differential, PRODUCE = Producers Organisation Development and Upliftment Corpus.

Box 4.1: FPO Credit League 2025

The “FPO Credit League 2025” is a novel initiative by NABARD's Madhya Pradesh Regional Office, inspired by the popular televised format Shark Tank. The initiative brought together 30 FPOs and 14 FIs to foster collaboration for sustainable agricultural development. The FPOs presented their business plans, while the FIs gained insights into the intricacies of FPO operations. Based on evaluations, the credit league resulted in in-principle approval of credit support ranging from ₹5 lakh to ₹40 lakh, amounting to a total of ₹4 crore for 29 participating FPOs.

FI = Financial Institution, FPO = Farmer Producer Organisation.

Figure 4.2: Promotion of FPOs till FY2025 (highlights)



CSS = Central Sector Scheme, FPO = Farmer Producer Organisation, IMIS = Integrated Management Information Systems.

Note: NABFPO (nabfpo.nabard.org) is the portal developed by NABARD for digitised FPO data including members' profiles for use by the stakeholders.

4.3.1 FPO promotion and development initiatives in FY2025

- NABARD sanctioned ₹25 crore to the National Commodity & Derivatives Exchange (NCDEX) for a one-year Price Protection Programme for FPOs, encouraging farmers to use put options in the commodity market. The programme extended premium subsidies totalling ₹4.8 crore for hedging 6,604 metric tonne of commodities—specifically cumin, coriander, and turmeric—with participation from 81 FPOs and 1,22,109 farmers.
- In partnership with the Small Farmers' Agribusiness Consortium and the Open Network for Digital Commerce (ONDC), NABARD is conducting FPO melas titled “TARANG – Celebrating Collectivisation” at 50 locations across 24 states and Union Territories (UTs). These events aim to showcase FPO and Off-Farm Producer Organisation (OFPO) products, facilitate branding and marketing, and enhance nationwide sales through the ONDC network. In FY2025, 26 melas were organised in the second phase across 14 states and UTs.
- NABARD sanctioned ₹388.2 lakh for an FPO Accelerator Project in collaboration with the State of Maharashtra Agribusiness and Rural Transformation (SMART) project under the Government of Maharashtra, covering 40 FPOs.
- Under the CSS on the formation and promotion of 10,000 FPOs, a Credit Guarantee Fund with a corpus of ₹1,000 crore—jointly contributed by the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare and NABARD—has been established under the trusteeship of NABSanrakshan Trustee Private Ltd., a wholly owned subsidiary of NABARD. To date, 97 eligible lending institutions have been onboarded with NABSanrakshan, and credit guarantee cover amounting to ₹558.9 crore has been sanctioned for 2,259 FPOs (covering 3,054 guarantees).
- A saturation drive was conducted to facilitate licensing of FPOs promoted under the CSS on formation and promotion of 10,000 FPOs. Licences issued include: 1,198 for seeds, 1,090 for fertilisers, 914 for pesticides, 815 for mandi operations, 1,061 for the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India, and 350 for the Goods and Services Tax. In total, 1,130 FPOs have been onboarded on the ONDC platform.



- NABARD sponsored a roundtable conference on networking of women FPOs at the Bankers Institute of Rural Development, Lucknow. The conference focused on sharing success stories of women-led FPOs and supporting the development of a conducive FPO ecosystem.
- Chaired by Deputy Managing Director, NABARD, a task force has been constituted with representation from the State Bank of India, NABKISAN, NABSanrakshan, Axis Bank, and the Madhya Bharat FPO Consortium. The task force is responsible for developing a strategic action plan for FPO financing, finalising financial guidelines, and preparing a Lendability Assessment Tool to serve as a ready reference for bankers.
- NABARD has launched an FPO product catalogue, which is being promoted through its social media channels. This initiative aims to help farmers realise better prices by leveraging the potential of digital marketing while promoting farm sector development.

4.3.2 Promoting the farm sector

NABARD supports farm innovations, technology transfer, and capacity building through its Farm Sector Promotion Fund (FSPF). The fund has a corpus of ₹60 crore and is replenished annually through appropriation of NABARD's profits. As on 31 March 2025, cumulative disbursements under the FSPF stood at ₹281.83 crore.

FSPF projects implemented under DPR mode

Under the DPR mode, support is extended to projects in agriculture and allied sectors that promote innovation, enhance productivity, improve market access, and strengthen value chains. Focus areas include climate-resilient agriculture in vulnerable districts, farmer collectives, and hi-tech interventions leveraging the Internet of Things (IOT), information and communication technology (ICT), artificial intelligence, and machine learning (Showcase 4.1). These projects are typically sanctioned for 2–3 years.

Since the inception of the fund, 2,070 projects have been sanctioned under the DPR mode, with total grant assistance of ₹156.2 crore disbursed. Of these, 101 projects were sanctioned in FY2025, involving grant assistance of ₹29.04 crore.

Innovative projects in DPR mode

During the year, 12 innovative DPR-mode projects were sanctioned, including:

- the establishment of a drone pilot training hub at Kerala Agricultural University, Thrissur, Kerala;
- the implementation of a green skilling and livelihood programme for adults with intellectual disability in Telangana;
- the setting up of digital traceability mechanisms for the Ikat textiles production process to enhance sustainability and marketability for the weavers in Telangana; and
- an initiative to transform SHG women into micro enterprise owners in Haryana.

Showcase 4.1: Innovative IOT-based shrimp farming pilot in Hisar and Sirsa districts, Haryana

Project: Pilot project on IOT-based shrimp farming in Hisar and Sirsa district

Location: Meerkan and Karamsana villages in Hisar and Sirsa districts, respectively

Executing entity: The project is being implemented with NABARD support by Expert Skill Development in collaboration with Eruvaka Technologies.

Grant assistance: ₹24.8 lakh

Objectives

- To establish live demonstration units of IOT-based shrimp farming, enabling capacity building for both existing and potential shrimp farmers in Sirsa and Hisar.
- To evaluate and compare the performance of the IOT ecosystem with traditional shrimp farming methods.
- To develop and standardise a complete set of practices aligned with the IOT-enabled shrimp farming ecosystem.
- To assess the economic viability of shrimp cultivation using the IOT ecosystem.



Farmer displaying IOT-based shrimp farming produce; Mirkan, Hisar, Haryana.

Interventions

- Under this two-year initiative, IOT units have been installed at three sites covering a total area of 7 acres—one site in Hisar (3 acres in Meerkan village) and two sites in Sirsa district (2 acres each in Baragudha and Karamsana villages).
- The project involves the use of smart devices such as Pond Mother (automatic feeder), Shrimp Talk (an acoustics-based intelligent feeding system), and Pond Guard for real-time monitoring of critical water parameters like dissolved oxygen and pH levels.
- The cloud-based pond management software, PondLogs, enables farmers to access pond data via mobile phones, allowing them to make informed decisions.
- In the medium to long term, access to historical data from pond operations is expected to enhance farmers' creditworthiness and reduce insurance premium costs.
- Solar-powered devices offer timely alerts, remote operability, and ease of cultivation, improving the overall farming experience.



Output>>Outcomes>>Impact

- **Feed efficiency:** More efficient feed utilisation has reduced overall feed costs, with improvements in feed conversion ratio ranging from 17% to 23%.
- **Survival rates:** Increased survival rates of shrimp, varying between 12% and 90%.
- **Labour efficiency:** Reduction in labour costs by up to 50% and manual drudgery minimised through real-time monitoring and decision support.
- **Profitability:** Farmers witnessed a 32% increase in profits, with returns of ₹1.5 lakh to ₹2 lakh per acre per culture cycle.
- **Net additional income:** Due to input savings and better price realisation, farmers earned approximately ₹1.3 lakh per acre in a single four-month culture cycle.
- **Scalability:** The successful demonstration and impact of the technology have led to an increase in the area under shrimp farming in Sirsa district.
- **Replicability:** The project model is scalable and replicable across all salinity-affected districts in the state.

CAT—Capacity Building for Adoption of Technology

The CAT programme provides grant support to build farmers' capacity through training and exposure visits, facilitating the adoption of new technologies and best practices in agriculture and allied sectors. Since the inception of the FSPF, 2,866 exposure visits have been supported with grant assistance of ₹24 crore, benefitting 84,485 farmers.

In FY2025, 92 exposure visits were conducted, reaching 2,425 farmers with a total grant assistance of ₹1.7 crore.

4.4 STRENGTHENING THE RURAL MSME SECTOR

The promotion of rural micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) is critical in reducing rural India's dependence on agricultural income by encouraging alternative livelihood options. The sector not only offers supplementary sources of income but also reduces rural unemployment, enhances livelihoods, and contributes to economic growth by complementing agricultural activities.

NABARD is adopting a strategic approach to support rural MSMEs, with a comprehensive range of interventions focused on sectors such as handloom, handicrafts, and agro-processing. These include skilling, product diversification, marketing initiatives, branding, packaging, geographical indication (GI) registration, and more—aimed at generating local employment through value addition, design innovation, and enterprise development.

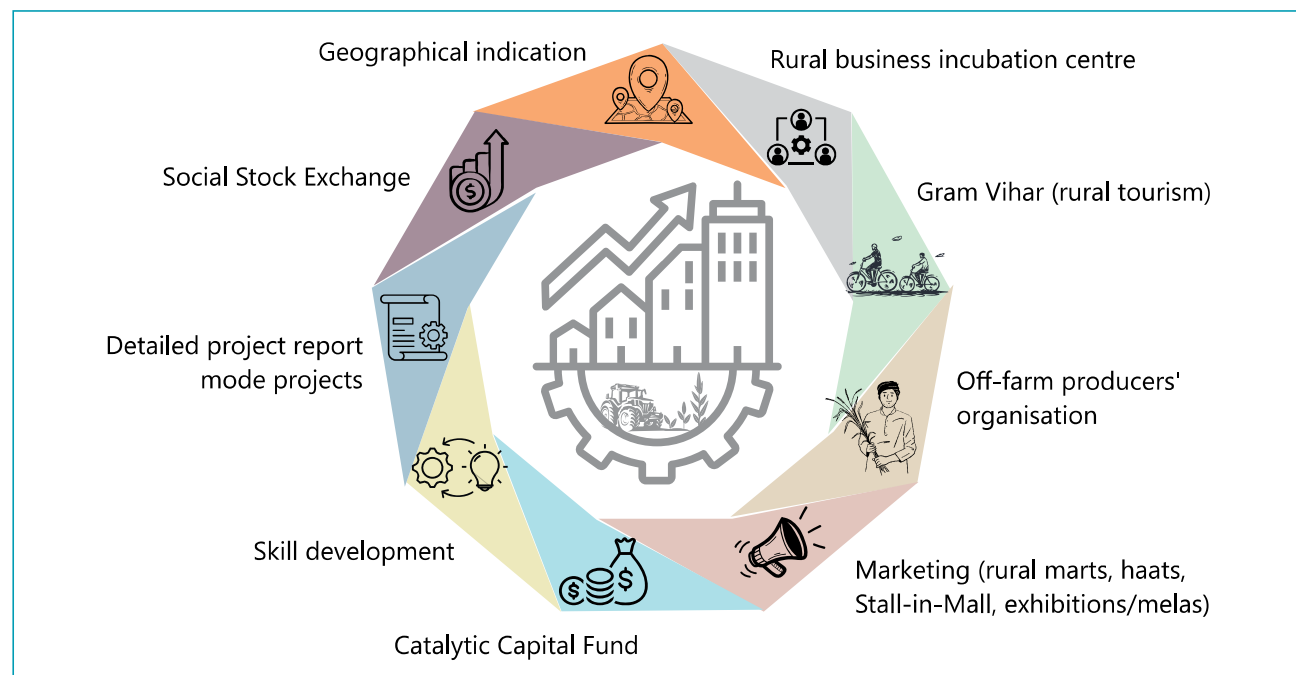
4.4.1 Performance under Gramya Vikas Nidhi

Gramya Vikas Nidhi was established in FY2016 to support MSME off-farm activities in rural areas. Its primary objective is to foster entrepreneurship, skill development, and livelihood diversification beyond traditional agriculture. The fund is utilised to promote and strengthen grassroots institutions such as SHGs and off-farm producer organisations (OFPOs).



During FY2025, disbursements under GVN amounted to ₹57.8 crore, while ₹57.7 crore was sanctioned for various projects across different GVN schemes (Figure 4.3).

Figure 4.3: Interventions under GVN



GVN = Gramya Vikas Nidhi.

As on 31 March 2025, NABARD has sanctioned grant assistance of ₹40.9 crore for the promotion and development of 79 OFPOs in 27 states, covering 26,810 beneficiaries, of which 18 are all-women organisations with a total of 6,890 members (Showcase 4.2).

Showcase 4.2: Enhancing livelihoods through Channapatna Lacware Handicraft— a GI-based OFPO success story

Name of OFPO: Artisan Pride Off-Farm Producer Organisation

Location: Mandya, Karnataka

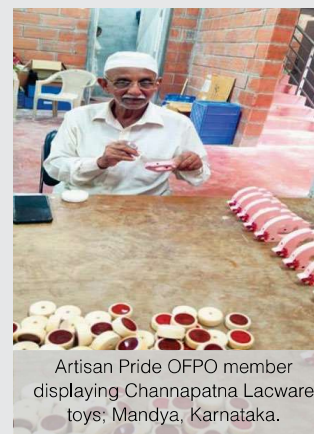
Executing entity: Movement for Alternatives and Youth Awareness (MAYA)

Activity: Production of GI-tagged Channapatna Lacware Handicraft

Turnover (FY2025): ₹1.2 crore

Background

Established in 2019 with a modest membership of 10, Artisan Pride OFPO expanded rapidly to 50 members in 2020 and 250 by 2021. The organisation has created sustainable employment opportunities for all its members and aims to increase membership to approximately 450 in the near future.



Artisan Pride OFPO member displaying Channapatna Lacware toys; Mandya, Karnataka.



Intervention

With strategic guidance from NABARD, the OFPO has streamlined operations by reducing turnaround time, scaling production, and enhancing productivity.

Outcomes

- The OFPO has achieved consistency in product quality and costing while introducing product diversification.
- The organisation has entered the e-commerce space through platforms such as Amazon, Flipkart, ONDC, IndiaMart, and the Government e-Marketplace portal.
- A retail outlet has been established.
- An exclusive website—<https://artisanpride.in/>—has been launched.

Impact

- **Income enhancement:** Average monthly income of artisans has doubled from ₹6,000 to ₹12,000.
- **Inclusivity:** Artisans across different skill levels have seen income growth of at least 100%.
- **Market access:** Entry into multiple e-commerce platforms has expanded visibility and sales.
- **Employment generation:** Sustainable livelihoods have been created for over 250 artisans, with further expansion anticipated.
- **Business growth:** Improved operational efficiency and diversification have contributed to a turnover of ₹1.23 crore in FY2025.



Channapatna Lacware toy-making in progress; Mandya, Karnataka.

GI = Geographical Indication, OFPO = Off-farm Producer Organisation.

4.5 SUPPORTING RURAL ENTREPRENEURS, START-UPS, MARKETING, AND BRANDING

4.5.1 Rural business incubation centres

Rural business incubation centres (RBICs) are early-stage support institutions that form a vital part of the start-up ecosystem. They assist entrepreneurs in developing their businesses by offering the necessary infrastructure and high-quality incubation services.

NABARD provides end-to-end assistance for establishing RBICs at agricultural universities and similar institutions (Showcase 4.3).

Showcase 4.3: MABIF—Scaling rural innovation through enterprise development

Name of the rural business incubation centre: Madurai Agri-Business Incubation Forum (MABIF)

Location: Tamil Nadu Agricultural University (TNAU), Madurai

Supported by: NABARD

Context

MABIF was established in 2017 with NABARD support, and was hosted by TNAU, Madurai. Since then, MABIF has continued to expand its role in promoting agri-innovation, supporting start-ups, and strengthening institutional linkages in the rural enterprise ecosystem of Tamil Nadu.

Initiatives

- Supported the incubation of over 170 start-ups in the agriculture and rural sectors.
- Provided a comprehensive suite of incubation services, including:
 - ♦ Co-working and office spaces
 - ♦ Training and conference halls
 - ♦ Laboratories and specialised equipment
 - ♦ Animal feed manufacturing unit
 - ♦ Bio-floc aquaculture system
- Established an **Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) Cell**, issuing advisories on:
 - ♦ Patents
 - ♦ Plant variety protection
 - ♦ Trademarks
 - ♦ Geographical indications (GIs)
- Set up a **GI Facilitation Centre** with NABARD support to assist in:
 - ♦ GI product registration
 - ♦ Producer capacity building
 - ♦ Marketing and brand positioning
- Acted as a **Cluster-Based Business Organisation (CBBO)** for 25 FPOs across Tamil Nadu.



Incubation services: multihead packaging machine; MABIF, TNAU, Madurai.

Outcomes

- Enhanced start-up engagement and service delivery through improved infrastructure and capacity.
- Expanded institutional support to farmer collectives through CBBO activities.





- Formalised IPR and GI processes to support value addition and product differentiation.
- Strengthened market readiness and investor confidence for rural agri-enterprises.

Impact

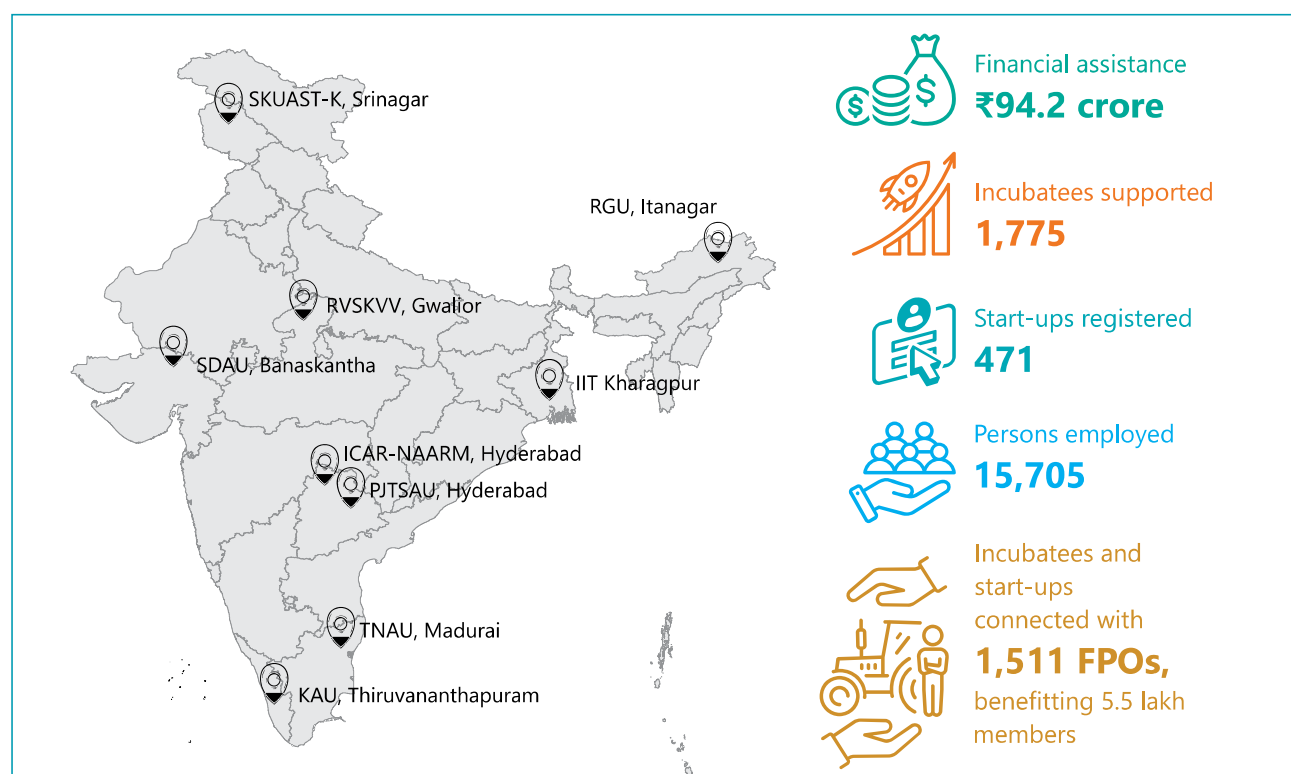
- Positioned MABIF as a leading model for rural incubation, integrating technology, entrepreneurship, and grassroots capacity building.
- Empowered rural start-ups to scale innovations in agri-business.
- Supported farmer producers' organisations and producer groups to access markets, improve governance, and enhance incomes.
- Demonstrated the potential of incubation centres to drive structural transformation in rural enterprise development.

In FY2025, three new RBICs were sanctioned at:

- Rajiv Gandhi University, Arunachal Pradesh;
- Sher-e-Kashmir University of Agricultural Sciences and Technology, Srinagar, Jammu & Kashmir; and
- Kerala Agricultural University, Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala.

This takes the total number of sanctioned RBICs to 10, of which 9 were functional as on 31 March 2025 (Figure 4.4).

Figure 4.4: NABARD support to RBICs as on 31 March 2025



FPO = Farmer Producer Organisation, ICAR-NAARM = Indian Council of Agricultural Research-National Academy of Agricultural Research Management, IIT = Indian Institute of Technology, KAU = Kerala Agricultural University, PJTSAU = Professor Jayashankar Telangana State Agricultural University, RBIC = Rural Business Incubation Centre, RGU = Rajiv Gandhi University, RVSKVV = Rajmata Vijayaraje Scindia Krishi Vishwa Vidyalaya, SDAU = Sardarkrushinagar Dantiwada Agricultural University, SKUAST-K = Sher-e-Kashmir University of Agricultural Sciences and Technology of Kashmir, TNAU = Tamil Nadu Agricultural University.

Note: Start-ups are registered with the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade, Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Government of India

4.5.2 Catalytic Capital Fund to support agri and rural start-ups

NABARD established the Catalytic Capital Fund (CCF) in March 2020 to support rural and agri start-ups during the critical “valley of death” phase. Currently, assistance is extended to start-ups that have developed at least a prototype or minimum viable product, primarily through RBICs and NABARD subsidiaries. During FY2025, ₹4.02 crore was disbursed under the CCF for supporting 17 start-ups.

4.5.3 Skill and entrepreneurship development among rural youth

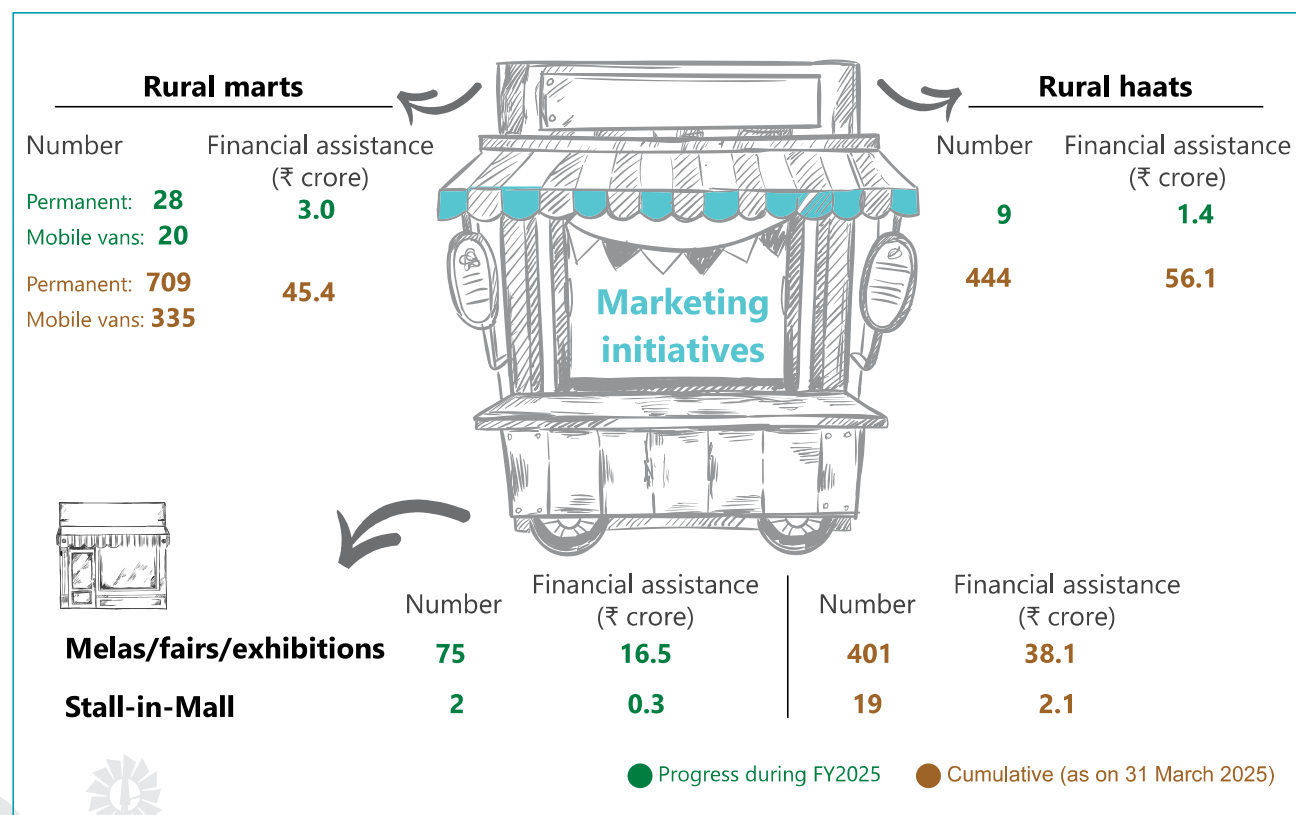
NABARD continues to support capacity-building initiatives aimed at promoting skill development and entrepreneurship among rural youth, including those from disadvantaged sections of society. In FY2025, ₹5.8 crore was sanctioned for conducting 46 skill development programmes.

As on 31 March 2025, a total of 36,547 skill development programmes had been sanctioned, with grant assistance of ₹223.7 crore, to enhance the employability of rural youth through vocational and enterprise-related training.

4.5.4 Marketing initiatives

To improve market access and price realisation for rural producers, NABARD has been extending support for the establishment of rural haats and marts, and for facilitating the participation of artisans and craftspersons in national and regional exhibitions and melas (Figure 4.5, Showcase 4.4).

Figure 4.5: Progress of marketing initiatives





As part of efforts to promote the Pradhan Mantri Vishwakarma Scheme, NABARD's regional offices have been advised to allocate space within NABARD-sanctioned rural haats and rural marts to certified Vishwakarmas, thereby providing marketing support for their products.

In FY2025, a new activity was introduced under the Rural Mart scheme to exclusively encourage SHG women to operate food cafés or dhabas, providing them with enhanced livelihood opportunities and visibility in local markets.

To celebrate and scale up the momentum of rural development, NABARD organised a national-level sale-cum-exhibition event, Grameen Bharat Mahotsav 2025, which served to showcase India's rural innovation, enterprise, and cultural heritage. The event was inaugurated by the Hon'ble Prime Minister of India and brought together stakeholders from across the country (Box A4.1).

Showcase 4.4: "Stall in Mall"—Bringing rural innovation to urban spaces

Location: PVP Square Mall, Vijayawada, Andhra Pradesh

Duration: 18 December 2024–13 March 2025

Supported by: NABARD

Executing entity: Nestham Rural & Urban Development Society

Context

Artisans and craftspersons from rural areas often face challenges in accessing urban markets and showcasing their products to an urban and affluent consumer base. Recognising this gap, NABARD initiated a market linkage platform under the "Stall-in-Mall" scheme to enhance visibility and income opportunities for rural producers.

Initiative

A 91-day "Stall-in-Mall" exhibition was organised at PVP Square Mall in Vijayawada in collaboration with Nestham Rural & Urban Development Society. The event brought together 48 rural artisans specialising in handlooms and handicrafts, providing them with direct exposure to urban consumers in a high-footfall retail environment.

Outcomes

- Participation of 48 rural artisans over a sustained 3-month period.
- Showcasing of a diverse range of handloom and handicraft products.
- First-hand experience in engaging with urban buyers and learning retail marketing techniques.

Impact

- Total sales generated amounted to **₹50 lakh**, contributing directly to income enhancement.
- Artisans secured **bulk and repeat orders**, improving business sustainability.
- Exposure to urban markets led to a significant **expansion in market reach** and increased confidence in customer engagement.
- The initiative contributed to the **long-term transformation of livelihoods** through market access and skill building.



Stall-in-Mall: With NABARD support, artisanal products displayed in exclusive stalls at PVP Square Mall; Vijayawada, Andhra Pradesh.



4.5.5 Gram Vihar (rural tourism)

To give a fillip to the rural tourism sector and promote sustainable employment for rural communities, NABARD introduced a new scheme titled Gram Vihar, which focused on rural and eco-tourism. The scheme encourages activities such as homestays, day tours, rural transportation, sale of artefacts, folk music and dance performances, and the preservation of local arts, crafts, culture, and traditions.

Gram Vihar enables tourists to spend time in rustic settings and experience authentic rural lifestyles. In FY2025, four projects were identified and considered for DPR preparation.

4.5.6 Promotion of GI products

As on 31 March 2025, NABARD has supported the registration and post-registration activities of 464 GI products, of which 138 products have secured GI tags. In FY2025 alone, seven products from the Andaman and Nicobar Islands received GI registration with NABARD support.

With a focused and inclusive approach, support was approved for 181 new products during FY2025, ensuring coverage across all states and UTs (Showcase 4.5).

Further, support was extended for the registration of:

- 1,600 authorised users for 13 GI products of Arunachal Pradesh, and
- 4,500 authorised users for six GI products of Maharashtra.

During the **Grameen Bharat Mahotsav** held in January 2025, **116 GI products** from 16 states and UTs were displayed and offered for sale, showcasing India's rich artisanal heritage (Box A4.1).

Showcase 4.5: Heritage honoured—from local legacy to national identity through GI registration of Tripura Pachra

Project: GI Registration of Tripura Pachra

Executing entity: Tripura Rural Livelihood Mission

Context

Tripura's traditional **Pachra** weaving represents a vibrant and intricate craft, deeply rooted in the cultural heritage of the state. Hand-woven from natural fibres and characterised by fine detail and indigenous design, **Pachra** products are both functional and artistic. Recognising its heritage value and commercial potential, NABARD supported the initiative to facilitate GI registration for Pachra, thereby elevating its status and expanding opportunities for the artisan community.

Initiatives

- Engaged **150 artisans**, fostering a strong sense of community and collaboration.
- Focused on preserving and promoting the traditional **Pachra** craft, known for its hand-woven, natural-fibre-based designs.
- Established **marketing collaborations** with local and regional markets to increase product visibility.
- Initiated **partnerships with governmental and non-governmental bodies** to strengthen support for artisans in scaling production and expanding market access.





Outcomes

- Increased awareness and recognition of Tripura **Pachra** as a unique cultural product.
- Expanded market reach through formal tie-ups and collaborative networks.
- Strengthened institutional support for the craft ecosystem in the region.

Impact

- Artisans reported a **significant increase in income** due to improved market access and the anticipated benefits of GI registration.
- The project reinforced traditional skills while positioning **Pachra** as a potential national and global cultural identity product.
- Created a replicable model for linking traditional crafts with market access and intellectual property tools.



Indigenous women artisans enjoying better incomes and expanded market access for Tripura Pachra with its GI registration.

GI = Geographical Indication.

4.6 FOSTERING RESEARCH AND PROMOTING KNOWLEDGE SHARING

NABARD leverages its dedicated Research and Development Fund to support applied socioeconomic studies, seminars, publications, student engagement schemes, and training. These efforts are aimed at expanding the knowledge base in agriculture and rural development, and disseminating insights among policymakers, stakeholders, and the broader public.

4.6.1 NAFIS 2021–22

NABARD released the findings of the second All India Rural Financial Inclusion Survey (NAFIS) 2021–22 in October 2024. The survey captured primary data from 1 lakh rural households across 28 states and 2 UTs on a wide range of economic and financial indicators. It offers a comprehensive analysis of household income,



savings, credit, insurance, pensions, remittances, and financial literacy, providing valuable insights into the state of financial inclusion and livelihoods in rural India.

4.6.2 Rural Economic Conditions and Sentiments Survey

The Rural Economic Conditions and Sentiments Survey (RECSS) is conducted bi-monthly, capturing macroeconomic data from 6,000 households across 600 villages nationwide. It covers key parameters such as income, consumption, financial savings, borrowings, interest rates, and inflation expectations. The findings serve as a valuable input for evidence-based policymaking. As on May 2025, five rounds of RECSS reports have been published (September 2024, November 2024, January 2025, March 2025, and May 2025).

4.6.3 Supporting research studies, seminars, and conferences

Of the 20 in-house and collaborative research studies currently underway, three were sanctioned in FY2025. In the same year, NABARD supported 125 seminars and conferences covering diverse themes such as sustainable rural development, digital transformation in horticulture, agro-entrepreneurship, sustainable development, and the blue economy.

4.6.4 Student engagement schemes

NABARD continues to foster academic engagement through the Student Internship Scheme (SIS) and the Citation for Outstanding Ph.D. Thesis, encouraging young scholars to contribute to rural development research.

4.6.5 Publications

1. In FY2024, NABARD began publishing policy briefs to highlight key findings and recommendations from its research. As on 31 March 2025, seven issues of *NAB Policy Briefs* have been released.
2. Periodic bulletins such as *EcoThink* (monthly) and *EcoWatch* (fortnightly) continue to inform internal committees and departments.
3. Thirteen papers have been published under NABARD's *Research and Policy Series*, offering authoritative insights and policy suggestions on relevant issues.
4. NABARD released the second edition of its *Impact Report for FY2023–24*, documenting field-level outcomes of its interventions across the triple bottom line—People, Planet, and Profit. The report also maps NABARD's initiatives to the Sustainable Development Goals, reflecting its commitment to promoting sustainability.

4.7 WAY FORWARD

Grassroots institutions such as SHGs, JLGs, FPOs, and OFPOs play a crucial role in promoting inclusive rural development. While SHGs and JLGs drive financial inclusion and social cohesion, FPOs and OFPOs enhance income generation through aggregation, value addition, and improved price realisation. These institutions also serve as key conduits for delivering government schemes and development programmes.

Looking ahead, NABARD will focus on strategically scaling up FPOs, OFPOs, and rural MSMEs to increase rural employment opportunities, improve livelihoods, and promote sustainable economic growth while continuing to support the building of a resilient, robust, and diversified farm sector.





APPENDIX TO CHAPTER 4

Box A4.1: Grameen Bharat Mahotsav

Event: Grameen Bharat Mahotsav 2025

Dates: 4–9 January 2025

Organised by: NABARD, under the aegis of the Department of Financial Services (DFS), Ministry of Finance, Government of India

Theme: Building a Resilient Rural India for a Viksit Bharat 2047

Initiatives

- The Mahotsav featured **panel discussions** on key topics such as:
 - ◊ Leveraging GI products for economic prosperity
 - ◊ Scaling up organic agriculture
 - ◊ Building scalable rural women-led enterprises
 - ◊ Promoting inclusive development, particularly in the NER
- Provided a **national platform for rural artisans, entrepreneurs, and SHGs** to exhibit products and innovations.
- Emphasised **financial inclusion, capacity building, and digital commerce**, particularly for women entrepreneurs and cooperatives.
- Created opportunities for **market linkages** and strengthened visibility for rural businesses.
- NABARD also served as the **lead sponsor of the AgriTech Pavilion** at **Startup MahaKumbh 2025**, New Delhi, where **30 start-ups** incubated by NABARD-supported RBICs showcased their products and technologies.

Impact

- Strengthened rural entrepreneurship and **enhanced self-reliance** across Indian villages.
- Fostered **sustainable livelihoods** through organic farming, digital marketing, and cooperative empowerment.
- Catalysed rural–urban market integration, enabling long-term rural economic growth.
- Promoted inclusive development by **amplifying women's economic participation** and drawing national focus to underrepresented regions such as the NER.



Grameen Bharat Mahotsav 2025 was well-attended by a wide range of participants from across the country.



Shri Shaji K. V., Chairman, NABARD, presenting memento to the Hon'ble Prime Minister of India.



Hon'ble Prime Minister addressing the audience.



Hon'ble Prime Minister visiting stalls and interacting with artisans.



GI = geographical indication, NER = North East Region, RBIC = Rural Business Incubation Centre, SHG = Self-Help Group.

