

# VOICE OF CIRDAP

Empowering The Rural Communities

ISSUE 10, JUNE 2025

World Rural Development Day 2025

Integrated, Inclusive, Sustainable and Enterprising Rural Development



**Centre on Integrated Rural Development for Asia and the Pacific (CIRDAP)**

An Intergovernmental & Autonomous Organization Working For  
Strengthening Integrated Rural Development Systems for 15  
Asia and The Pacific Countries.

 [www.cirdap.org](http://www.cirdap.org)

## Digital Agriculture: The future of Agricultural Extension

Across the Asia-Pacific, from the coral reefs of Fiji to the mountains of Iran, 4.3 billion rural residents face a critical challenge: by 2050, they need 77% more food to sustain our region, yet climate change threatens a 15-20 % productivity drop, impacting rice fields in Vietnam and fisheries in Indonesia. Digital agriculture is one of the prime solution to this food security crisis.

The region's literacy rate averages 70% in rural areas, with women at 65%, but digital literacy lags at 25% compared to 45% in urban centers, hindering access to transformative tools. With 1.73 billion mobile subscribers (62% of the population) and 50% mobile internet penetration, the Asia-Pacific is poised for change. Digital tools like IoT, sensor networks, data security, and public-private partnerships have the potential to connect every village in the region.



In Indonesia's Sulawesi, Aruna's platform links Konawa fishers to global markets, boosting incomes by 15% with real-time pricing. In Bangladesh's Cox's Bazar, Kalu Fakir Para farmers use ICT apps and Farmer Field Schools, slashing rice production costs by 20%. The Philippines' Bicol Region adopts Farmmonaut for precision irrigation against typhoons. Vietnam's Ha Tinh province leverages the "Lang So" e-handbook, integrating 30 local digital platforms. Myanmar's Mandalay classrooms thrive with UNESCO's ICT training for teachers, while Iran's Khorasan villages market handicrafts via the Transaction Services Model. Thailand's Lampang Mae Moh doubles incomes with EGAT-supported vertical farming, and China's Guizhou lifts 70 million from poverty through e-commerce hubs since 2013.

CIRDAP calls for mandatory digital adoption by extension workers, literacy campaigns from Fiji's coral shores to Nepal's Himalayas, and mobilizing local networks like Indonesia's KUDs or Sri Lanka's Samurdhi groups. Expand connectivity, forge cross-border partnerships, and tackle regulatory barriers. Let's ensure every Pacific Islander, Southeast Asian farmer, and Central Asian herder thrives in a sustainable, inclusive digital future.

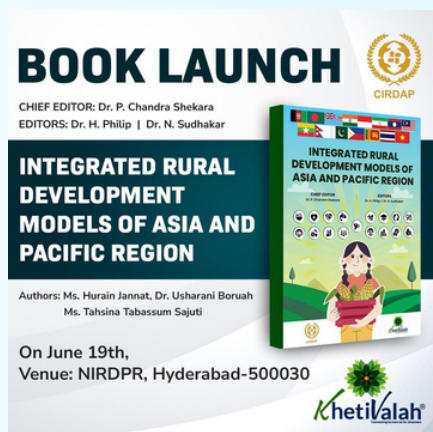
With Warm Wishes

**Dr. P. Chandra Shekara**  
Director General, CIRDAP





## Book Launch of CIRDAP International Publication titled "Integrated Rural Development (IRD) Models of Asia and Pacific Region"



The Centre on Integrated Rural Development for Asia and the Pacific (CIRDAP) successfully launched its international publication, "Integrated Rural Development (IRD) Models of Asia and Pacific Region," on June 19, 2025, at the NIRDPR in Hyderabad, India

The official book launch ceremony, graced by HE Dr. P. Chandra Shekar and esteemed representatives from Gates Foundation, UNICEF, GIZ, and ICRISAT, brought together 12 representative from the CIRDAP member countries - Fiji, India, Bangladesh, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, Nepal, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Vietnam to celebrate this flagship initiative.

Authored by Ms. Hurain Jannat, Dr. Usharani Boruah, and Ms. Tahsina Tabassum Sajuti, and edited by Dr. P. Chandra Shekara, Dr. H. Philip and Dr. N. Sudhakar, the book compiles transformative 32 IRD models to drive sustainable growth across rural Asia-Pacific. Special thanks to Mr. Lakshman of Khetivalah Publications for publishing this vital resource.



## Asia-Pacific Journal of Rural Development (APJORD), Volume 35, Issue 1, June 2025 released



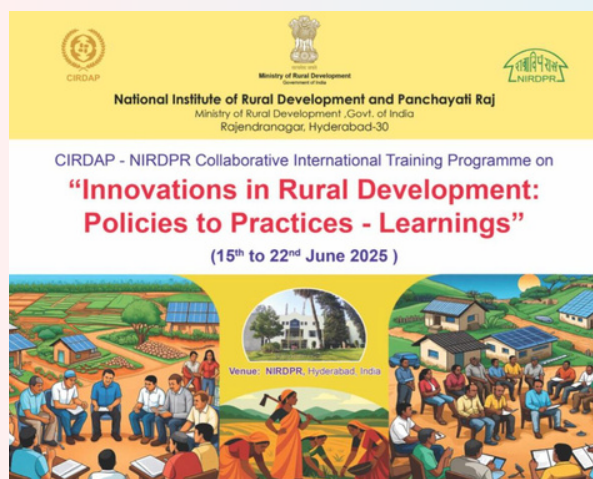
CIRDAP is pleased to announce the release of the Asia-Pacific Journal of Rural Development (APJORD), Volume 35, Issue 1, June, 2025. As a flagship publication of CIRDAP, APJORD continues to serve as a critical platform for addressing key issues and fostering discussions on Rural Development, particularly in the

Asia-Pacific region. This bi-annual academic journal is designed to provide a forum for academics, policymakers, NGOs, research scholars, and all other stakeholders interested in IRD to exchange insights, field observations, and empirical research on rural development.

If you are interested in access to full journal, kindly visit this link below:

<https://journals.sagepub.com/toc/jrda/35/1>

**Strengthening Regional Rural Innovation through Knowledge Exchange: CIRDAP–NIRDPR International Training Programme on Innovations in Rural Development: Policies to Practices – Learnings” from 15–22 June 2025 at the NIRDPR in Hyderabad, India**



CIRDAP, in collaboration with the National Institute of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj (NIRDPR), successfully organized the International Training Programme on “Innovations in Rural Development: Policies to Practices – Learnings” from 15–22 June 2025 at the NIRDPR, Hyderabad, India. This programme marked the second initiative under the CIRDAP Knowledge Circuit, designed to promote exchange innovations, and transformative rural development practices across the Asia-Pacific region.

The programme was formally inaugurated by HE Dr. P. Chandra Shekara, Director General of CIRDAP and Dr. G. Narendra Kumar, IAS, Director General of NIRDPR. Eleven

distinguished participants representing CIRDAP Member Countries – Fiji, India, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, Nepal, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand, and Vietnam – actively took part in this dynamic learning event.

In this program, India’s pioneering rural development frameworks were also featured prominently. Eminent speakers from NIRDPR, the Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD), Government of India, and other renowned organizations conducted insightful sessions.



The training programme culminated in a valedictory session on 21 June 2025, where international participants expressed their appreciation for the knowledge-rich experience. Concluding remarks were delivered by both DGs of CIRDAP and NIRDPR, followed by certificate distribution, a vote of thanks by Mr. FAM Zakirul Huq, Head of Administration, CIRDAP.



The CIRDAP–NIRDPR International Training Programme stands as a testament to the power of regional cooperation, policy-to-practice learning, and inclusive rural innovation, paving the way for more integrated development strategies across the Asia-Pacific.



### Empowering Rural Leaders of Tomorrow – Today!

CIRDAP is proud to announce the commencement of the Post Graduate Diploma in Rural Development Management (PGDRDM) for the 2025–26 Batch-23, hosted at the National Institute of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj (NIRDPR), Hyderabad, India. This prestigious one-year residential programme is tailored for international in-service professionals working in rural and agricultural development sectors.

With a mission to enhance capacity building and leadership in rural development, this intensive programme provides advanced training, knowledge sharing, and policy insights essential for transformative change in the rural landscape.

### 🎓 Meet the 2025–26 CIRDAP Fellows | PGDRDM, 2025–26 Batch-23 Highlights

In line with CIRDAP's commitment to nurturing regional expertise, we are delighted to present five distinguished professionals selected from across member countries. These Professionals were nominated by CIRDAP, funded by the Government of India to pursue the programme.



Ms. Zahra Goudarzi  
IR Iran



Ms. Amele Rosalia  
Fiji



Md. Taj Nowaj Ul Kabir  
Bangladesh



Ms. Niyousha Eghtedari  
IR Iran



Ms. Tint Ei Ei Naing  
Myanmar

#### Ms. Zahra Goudarzi | IR Iran

An Agricultural Extension Expert with the Ministry of Agriculture-Jahad in Islamic Republic of Iran, Ms. Goudarzi has more than 10 years of professional experience. Holding a PhD in Agricultural Extension and Education, she brings scholarly depth and field experience to the PGDRDM cohort, promoting innovation and education in rural Iran.

#### Ms. Amele Rosalia | Fiji

Ms. Rosalia joins the programme with over 6 years of experience as a Clerical Officer at the Ministry of Rural & Maritime Development and National Disaster Management Office (NDMO), Fiji. With an academic background in Information Systems and Human Resources, she is keen to apply digital and strategic insights to enhance rural transformation in Fiji.

#### Md. Taj Nowaj Ul Kabir | Bangladesh

Currently serving as Assistant Director at the Bangladesh Rural Development Board (BRDB), Dhaka, Mr. Kabir brings over 18 years of experience in rural development. With academic qualifications in Agriculture and a Master's in Extension Project Development, Gender & Development, he is a seasoned practitioner committed to inclusive growth in rural Bangladesh.

#### Ms. Niyousha Eghtedari | IR Iran

With over 16 years of experience as an Agricultural Expert at the Ministry of Agriculture-Jahad, Islamic Republic of Iran, Ms. Eghtedari also holds a PhD in Agricultural Extension and Education. Her commitment to applied research and community-based development is a significant asset to the international cohort.



### Ms. Tint Ei Ei Naing | Myanmar

An experienced Staff Officer at the Department of Rural Development, Ministry of Cooperatives and Rural Development, Myanmar, Ms. Naing has dedicated over 10 years to the rural sector. With academic credentials in English (BA and MA), she brings strong communication and community engagement skills to rural development work.

CIRDAP congratulates all selected fellows of Batch-23 and extends heartfelt appreciation to the Government of India for its continued support in building regional capacity. These fellows embody the spirit of collaboration and commitment needed to transform rural communities across Asia-Pacific and beyond.

### World Rural Development Day poster released by CIRDAP, NIRDPR & REEDS in Hyderabad, India

The Centre on Integrated Rural Development for Asia and the Pacific (CIRDAP), the National Institute of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj (NIRDPR), and the Rural Economic and Educational Development Society (REEDS) jointly released the World Rural Development Day (WRDD) poster at a special event held on June 18, 2025 at the NIRDPR, Hyderabad, India.

The event highlighted powerful messages from the chief guest, Prof. Anil K. Gupta, founder of the Honey Bee Network, advocating for rural enterprise models and grassroots innovations. HE. Dr. P Chandra Shekara, Director General of CIRDAP, announced a special outreach program initiated by REEDS, supported by the Government of Andhra Pradesh. Dr. G. Narendra Kumar, DG NIRDPR, emphasized reviving global attention on rural development through platforms like WRDD.



The event witnessed participation from representatives of 11 CIRDAP Member Countries (CMCs), including Indonesia, Sri Lanka, Malaysia, Vietnam, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Thailand, Fiji, Philippines, Bangladesh, and India—underscoring the growing international cooperation in addressing rural development challenges and promoting inclusive growth.





## DG CIRDAP Honored with Lifetime Achievement Award in Agricultural Extension Management



CIRDAP is proud to share that HE Dr. P. Chandra Shekara, Director General of CIRDAP, has been honored with the Lifetime Achievement Award at the National Seminar on Extension Education Strategies for Digital Agriculture: Experiences and Sustainable Pathways, held on 20 June 2025 at Odisha University of Agriculture and Technology (OUAT), Bhubaneswar, India. The award recognizes his remarkable professional contributions and achievements in the field of Agricultural Extension Management. On this prestigious occasion, Dr. Shekara also delivered the keynote address on "Digital Agriculture and Practice of Extension", highlighting innovations and future directions in the sector. The conference was jointly organized by the International Society of Extension Education (INSEE) and OUAT, Odisha. CIRDAP extends heartfelt congratulations to DG, Dr. Shekara on this well-deserved honor!



### IRD Model -10

#### Building Resilient Communities through Innovation: The Community-Based Integrated Rural Development Centre (CBIRD) in Sub Tai, Thailand 🌍

##### *A Model of Integrated Rural Development and Conservation from Thailand*

In the rural heartland of northeastern Thailand, the Community-Based Integrated Rural Development Centre (CBIRD) in Sub Tai village stands as a remarkable example of how integrated approaches can uplift communities while preserving the environment. Established in 1985 by the Population and Community Development Association (PDA), CBIRD Sub Tai has become a pioneering model that links biodiversity conservation with sustainable livelihoods.

Located near the ecologically rich Khao Yai National Park, the community once faced intense socioeconomic pressures—including poverty, high indebtedness, and environmental degradation driven by illegal logging and poaching. In response, CBIRD Sub Tai developed a holistic strategy to reverse this trend by aligning conservation efforts with tangible economic incentives for local residents.



Key innovations such as the Environmental Protection Society (EPS)—a self-help group offering low-interest loans in exchange for conservation commitments—and the Carbon Bank model, where villagers were financially rewarded for reforestation, have transformed the local landscape. Capacity building in organic farming, youth and women's training programs, and investments in ecotourism and small businesses have ensured long-term community engagement and financial sustainability.

The impacts speak volumes: illegal logging and poaching decreased by over 75%, forest areas have been regenerated, and village incomes nearly doubled within four years of project implementation. Notably, the initiative now generates over 70% of its annual operating budget through local commercial ventures, proving its sustainability and scalability.





Having been replicated in over 150 villages across Thailand, the CIRDAP Sub Tai model offers a practical, community-driven framework that supports both rural prosperity and ecological integrity. As countries strive to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), this model provides a valuable template for integrated rural development around the world.

### **CIRDAP and the GIAN (Gujarat Grassroots Innovation Augmentation Network) signed MoU: Strengthening Grassroots Innovation for Inclusive Rural Development**

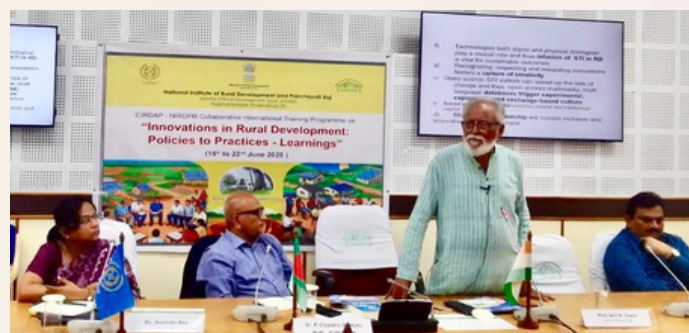
On 18 June 2025, CIRDAP and the Gujarat Grassroots Innovation Augmentation Network (GIAN) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to empower rural communities, promote innovation-driven enterprises, and foster cross-border knowledge exchange across the Asia-Pacific.



The MoU was signed by FAM Zakirul Huq, Head of Administration, CIRDAP, and Dr. Anamika Dey, CEO, GIAN, in the presence of HE. Dr. P Chandra Shekara, Director General, CIRDAP, and Prof. Anil K. Gupta, Founder of GIAN and faculty at NIRDPR, along with PGD-RDM students and distinguished representatives from CIRDAP member countries. In his keynote address, Prof. Gupta emphasized the urgency of giving "voice, visibility, and velocity" to grassroots innovations for inclusive and sustainable rural development.

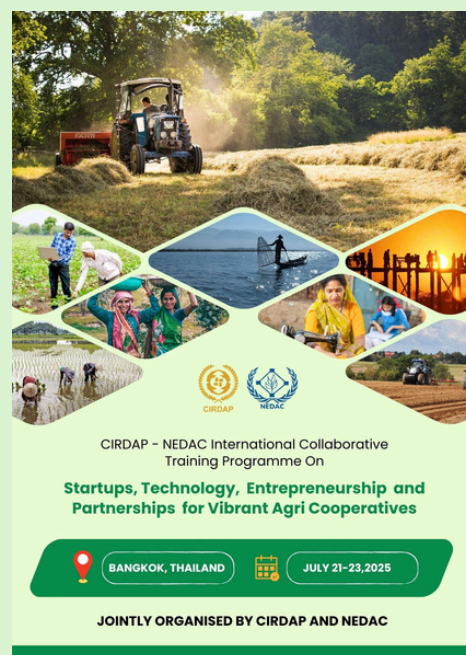
### **"Harnessing Creativity and Open Innovations for Inclusive Rural Development" Prof. Anil Gupta, Founder, Honey Bee Network**

"Harnessing Creativity and Open Innovations for Inclusive Rural Development" – This was the inspiring message shared by Prof. Anil Gupta, Founder of the Honey Bee Network and GIAN, during the CIRDAP–NIRDPR International Training Programme on 18 June 2025. In this powerful session, he emphasized that frugal, grassroots innovations can emerge not from material scarcity, but from empathetic immersion in others' pain – a spirit embodied in initiatives like Shodhyatra and Salisilk Lakbay. Prof. Gupta called for a strong ecosystem linking farmers, artisans, scientists, students, and policymakers to create accessible, circular, and sustainable solutions. With the Honey Bee Network offering voice, visibility, and velocity to informal innovators, he underscored the need for a collaborative future through the proposed Academy of Inclusive Innovations and Knowledge Augmentation (AIKA). This interaction marks a key step in CIRDAP-GIAN's vision to transform rural development from policy to practice.





Join the CIRDAP-NEDAC  
International Training Programme on  
'Startups, Technology,  
Entrepreneurship & Partnerships for  
Vibrant Agri-Cooperatives' on 21-23  
July, 2025, Bangkok, Thailand



**Designed for Agri-Professionals, Cooperative Leaders, Agri Startups, and Policymakers, this immersive program covers:**

- Learn from global experts & successful entrepreneurs
- Discover cutting-edge tech like AI, IoT & Blockchain in Agriculture
- Network with industry leaders & Cooperative professionals
- Empower your cooperative with innovation & strategic collaborations
- Global Case Studies & Best Practices
- Leadership & Entrepreneurial Development

Be part of the transformation. Equip yourself with the tools and insights to lead Agri-Coops into a smarter, sustainable future. 🖱️ For more details, check out the full brochure and application form and be a part of the Agri-revolution!

[https://cirdap.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/CIRDAP-NEDAC\\_Collaborative\\_International\\_Training\\_Programme\\_21-23\\_July\\_2025\\_Revised.pdf](https://cirdap.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/CIRDAP-NEDAC_Collaborative_International_Training_Programme_21-23_July_2025_Revised.pdf)

<https://cirdap.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/CIRDAP-NEDAC-Application-Form-18-4-2025.pdf>

🖱️ **Innovation begins when Agri meets Entrepreneurship- Don't miss this transformative opportunity!**



## Attention To The CIRDAP EXPERTS

CIRDAP would like to seek the support of the CIRDAP Experts for their greater involvement in enriching the lives of Rural Communities on CIRDAP platform.

Experts are invited to contribute in the following ways:

**1. Provide updated information as indicated below. This reply will be treated as Experts renewed interest in CIRDAP Activities:**

*Name, Designation, Office, Contact detail, Photo, Country, No. of years of Experience, Areas of Expertise in Integrated Rural Development (Mention only FIVE important areas) and Complete CV.*

**2. A monthly e-bulletin 'Voice of CIRDAP' has been started by CIRDAP which is reaching 1.18 lakh stakeholders covering member countries every month. Experts are requested to give at least one Innovation on Rural Development with good photos in not more than one page for publication.**

**3. Please provide 2-3 minutes video on any innovation, experience in Rural Development which would be added to newly created CIRDAP YouTube Channel.**

**4. CIRDAP will be very happy to process/forward any of your national/International projects on Rural Development to funding agencies through **Project Facilitation Centre of CIRDAP**. If approved, the project will be led by the expert who prepare the project.**

*You are requested to send all the above information to Ms. Hurain Jannat, Communication Officer, and CIRDAP Email: **communication\_officer@cirdap.org** with copy to **chandradgcirdap@cirdap.org***



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The Centre on Integrated Rural Development for Asia and the Pacific (CIRDAP) is an Intergovernmental, Regional, and Autonomous organization. It was established on 6 July 1979 at the initiative of the countries of the Asia-Pacific region and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations with support from several other UN bodies and donors. The Centre came into being to meet the felt needs of the developing countries at that time as an institution for promoting Integrated Rural Development in the region.

The United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) declared the date of 6 July as the World Rural Development Day, which is also the foundation day of Centre on Integrated Rural Development for Asia and the Pacific (CIRDAP), as a recognition of the organizations significant role in sustainable rural development endeavors in its member states in the Asia-Pacific region. The World Rural Development Day will be celebrated every 6 July as to inform and to remind everyone on his/her role and responsibility for collaborative actions on integrated rural development to meet the Sustainable Development Goals.

From the original six members, CIRDAP has now grown up as a Centre of 15 member countries. The member-countries are Afghanistan, Bangladesh (Host Country), Fiji, India, Indonesia, IR Iran, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Vietnam.

### **The main objectives of CIRDAP are to:**

- Assist National Action;
- Promote Regional Cooperation;
- and Act as a servicing institution for its member countries for promotion: Integrated Rural Development (IRD) through Research, Action Research, Pilot Project, Training, and Information Dissemination. Amelioration of Rural Poverty in the Asia-Pacific region has been the prime concern of CIRDAP.

### **The programme priorities of CIRDAP are set under four Areas of Concern:**

- Agrarian Development;
- Institutional/ Infrastructural;
- Resource development, including human resources;
- and Employment.

Within these Areas of Concern, the thematic areas identified are: Poverty alleviation through participatory approaches with emphasis on social sector development (e.g. Health, Education and Nutrition); Employment generation through Microcredit support, Infrastructure Development and Local resource mobilisation; Gender issues; Governance issues; and Environmental concerns for Sustainable Rural Development.

Operating through designated Contact Ministries and Link Institutions in member countries, CIRDAP promotes Technical Cooperation among nations of the region. It plays a supplementary and reinforcing role in supporting and furthering the effectiveness of Integrated Rural Development Programmes in the Asia-Pacific region.

## **Voice of CIRDAP – Monthly E-Bulletin of CIRDAP**

Voice of CIRDAP (VoC) is a monthly newsletter published by CIRDAP. The purpose of the VoC is to highlight various facets of IRD in the Asia-Pacific region and activities of CIRDAP with stakeholders.

The designations employed and the presentation of materials in VoC do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of CIRDAP concerning the legal status of any country, city or area, or of its authorities or boundaries. News items, viewpoints on IRD and related issues are welcome. All correspondence should be addressed to the Editor.



**Chameli House  
The Headquarter of CIRDAP**



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