

NIRDPR to support 120 rural startups, innovators

By [Y V Phani Raj](#) | Published: 21st Mar 2017 12:08 am Updated: 21st Mar 2017 12:58 am



Hyderabad: Hyderabad-based National Institute of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj (NIRDPR) is making efforts through its rural innovation and startup conclave to create networking opportunity with incubators, mentors and funding agencies. NIRDPR has received around 200 applications from startups and innovators and of them some 120 will get a chance to showcase their innovations. These startups will get a platform to pitch in front of investors and raise funding to scale up.

Dr W R Reddy, director general, NIRDPR, told Telangana Today, “We will provide cash prizes to these startups and will help them grow with needed support. Those who will not get funding support can still get mentorship and linkage with other stakeholders through NIRDPR. If they need technical support, we can connect them to IITs and T-Hub for IT support.”

“We have also got institutions that can give specific guidance to startups in food processing and agriculture. These companies can get incubation support,” he added.

There are many incubators for IT, agriculture and health, but NIRDPR is creating something that will help rural innovation and entrepreneurship. Nasscom’s 10,000 Startups Programme will collaborate with NIRDPR to extend its support. The idea is to trigger innovation and help capacity building.

“In the urban space, even the bus and cinema ticket booking is taken care by digital apps and platforms, bigger issues in rural India remain unsolved even today. We want to change this,” he said,

Inclusive innovation in rural India, through social and rural innovators, does have a lot of takers however these entrepreneurs and innovators suffer from lack of finance and backing. Even with the formation of finance initiatives and ecosystem support, they still don’t seem to attract most of the incubators.

The Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) act 2006, was enacted to facilitate the promotion, development and enhancement of Micro, Small and Medium enterprises and entrepreneurship, but still has a long way to go with respect to rural India.

Rural innovation and entrepreneurship have challenges as not too many enterprises exist in the region, low awareness on support available and lack of adequate networking opportunities. He said, “The lack of interest from incubators also has a lot to do with the thought process involved with the types of innovations that are urban focused, versus those that are rural focused. Those that have an urban focus seem to be more on the lines of the western thought processes and seem to generate more interest while the innovations with a rural focus, though very practical, seem very archaic to the common man. This diverts the interest of the incubators as well.”

Crux Management Services president Dr Vikas Singh, said, “It is a unique initiative of the NIRDPR to recognise, respect and reward grassroots innovations and foster a supportive ecosystem. We want to focus on learning and sharing the global experience in designing, developing and delivering empathetic and inclusive innovations for the common good.”

“We believe that Bharat has to learn a lot of lessons from India but it also has a lot to share in terms of frugal and grassroots innovations. It is imperative that India becomes a growth engine for the world and provides a new model of inclusive development by providing technological and other solutions for the rural economy. The effort must be made to create a window to support entrepreneurs by funding and handholding innovative solutions for rural development through grassroots innovations, student ideas and other technologies for agriculture, rural development,” he added.

The NIRDPR conclave is being held in its campus at Hyderabad on March 23 and 24.