

**STANDING COMMITTEE ON RURAL DEVELOPMENT AND
PANCHAYATI RAJ**

(2025-2026)

22

EIGHTEENTH LOK SABHA

**MINISTRY OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT
(DEPARTMENT OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT)**

*[Action taken on the recommendations contained in the Tenth Report
(Eighteenth Lok Sabha) on “Functioning of National Institute of Rural
Development and Panchayati Raj (NIRD&PR)” (2024-25) of the Ministry
of Rural Development (Department of Rural Development)]*

TWENTY SECOND REPORT



**LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT
NEW DELHI**

**STANDING COMMITTEE ON RURAL DEVELOPMENT AND
PANCHAYATI RAJ**

(2025-2026)

(EIGHTEENTH LOK SABHA)

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(DEPARTMENT OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT)**

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(Eighteenth Lok Sabha) on 'Functioning of National Institute of Rural
Development and Panchayati Raj (NIRD&PR) (2024-25) of the Ministry
of Rural Development (Department of Rural Development)']*

Presented to Lok Sabha on 16.12.2025

Laid in Rajya Sabha on 16.12.2025



**LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT
NEW DELHI**

December, 2025/Agrahayana, 1947 (Saka)

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**COMPOSITION OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON RURAL DEVELOPMENT AND
PANCHAYATI RAJ (2025-26)**

Shri Saptagiri Sankar Ulaka -- Chairperson

Lok Sabha Members

2. Shri Bhumare Sandipanrao Asaram
3. Shri Sudip Bandyopadhyay
4. Shri Raju Bista
5. Shri Vijay Kumar Dubey
6. Dr. Sanjay Jaiswal
7. Shri Bhajan Lal Jatav
8. Dr. Mohammad Jawed
9. Shri Jugal Kishore
10. Dr. D. Ravi Kumar
11. Shri Naba Charan Majhi
12. Shri Imran Masood
13. Shri Janardan Mishra
14. Shri Kota Srinivasa Poojary
15. Shri K. Radhakrishnan
16. Shri Ramashankar Vidharthi Rajbhar
17. Shri Omprakash Bhupalsinh *alias* Pavan Rajenimbalkar
18. Shri Parshottambhai Rupala
19. Shri Devendra Singh *alias* Bhole Singh
20. Shri Ganesh Singh
21. Shri Vivek Thakur

Rajya Sabha Members

22. Smt. Geeta *alias* Chandraprabha
23. Shri Neeraj Dangi
24. Dr. M. Dhanapal
25. Shri Samirul Islam
26. Shri Iranna Kadadi
27. Dr. Kavita Patidar
28. Smt. Rajathi
29. Shri Nagendra Ray
30. Shri Sant Balbir Singh
31. Smt. P.T. Usha

SECRETARIAT

- | | | |
|---------------------------|---|----------------------|
| 1. Shri D.R. Shekhar | - | Additional Secretary |
| 2. Shri V. K. Shailon | - | Director |
| 3. Smt. Rashmi Roy | - | Deputy Secretary |
| 4. Shri Sudhanshu Shekhar | - | Under Secretary |

INTRODUCTION

I, the Chairperson of the Standing Committee on Rural Development & Panchayati Raj (2025-2026) having been authorised by the Committee to present the Report on their behalf, present the Twenty Second Report on the action taken by the Government on the recommendations contained in the 10th Report of the Standing Committee on Rural Development and Panchayati Raj (18th Lok Sabha) on 'Functioning of National Institute of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj (NIRD&PR)' (2024-25) of the Ministry of Rural Development (Department of Rural Development).

2. The Tenth Report was presented to the Lok Sabha on 22.07.2025 and was laid on the Table of Rajya Sabha on 22.07.2025. Replies of the Government to all the recommendations contained in the Report were received on 16.10.2025.

3. The Report was considered and adopted by the Committee at their sitting held on 12.12.2025.

4. An analysis of the action taken by the Government on the recommendations contained in the Tenth Report (18th Lok Sabha) of the Committee is given in **Appendix-II**.

NEW DELHI
15 December, 2025
24 Agrahayana, 1947 (Saka)

Saptagiri Sankar Ulaka
Chairperson
Standing Committee on Rural Development and
Panchayati Raj

CHAPTER I

REPORT

This Report of the Standing Committee on Rural Development and Panchayati Raj (2025-26) deals with the action taken by the Government on the Observations/Recommendations contained in their Tenth Report (Eighteenth Lok Sabha) on 'Functioning of National Institute of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj (NIRD&PR)' of the Ministry of Rural Development (Department of Rural Development) for the term 2024-25.

1.2 The Tenth Report was presented to the Lok Sabha on 22.07.2025 and was laid on the Table of Rajya Sabha on 22.07.2025. The Report contained 04 Observations/Recommendations.

1.3 Action Taken Notes in respect of all the 04 Observations/Recommendations contained in the Report have been received from the Government. These have been examined and categorised as follows: -

(i) Observations/Recommendations which have been accepted by the Government:

Serial Nos. 4

Total: 1
Chapter-II

(ii) Observations/Recommendations which the Committee do not desire to pursue in view of replies of the Government:

Serial No. NIL

Total: NIL
Chapter-III

(iii) Observations/Recommendations in respect of which replies of the Government have not been accepted by the Committee:

Serial No. 1, 2, 3

Total: 03
Chapter-IV

(iv) Observations/Recommendations in respect of which final replies of the Government are still awaited:

Serial No. NIL

Total: NIL
Chapter-V

1.4 The Committee desire that Final Action Taken Notes on the Observations/ recommendations contained in Chapter I of this Report may be furnished to the Committee within three months of the presentation of this Report.

1.5 The Committee will now deal with action taken by the Government on some of their Observations/Recommendations that require reiteration/merit comments.

I. Continuation of NIRD&PR's Engagement with MoRD

Recommendation (Serial No. 1)

1.6 With regard to the continuation of NIRD&PR's engagement with MoRD, the Committee had recommended as under:-

“The Committee note that NIRD&PR has a long-cherished history of existence since 1958 and is also recognized as one of the UN-ESCAP centres of Excellence and building capacities of rural development functionaries, elected representatives of PRIs, banks, NGOs and other stakeholders. It also acts as a ‘Think-Tank’ for the MoRD, MoPR and other line Ministries by helping them with policy formulation, development and implementation of national-level programmes/schemes through its various training and research activities.

The Committee note that the Department of Expenditure with a view to furthering the aim of “minimum government, maximum governance” and ensuring economical and efficient use of public fund, reviewed the need for the continuity of Autonomous Bodies under the control of Department of Rural Development in the year 2020 and recommended in its report AB-4 that NIRD&PR may be disengaged from MoRD/Government of India gradually in terms of financial support and administrative control and it may be converted into a Center of Excellence/Deemed University engaged in training and research. Further, Committee note from the report that Central government may access its services as a client. Government may give grants based on the functions of the body till it is converted into a deemed, autonomous Institute. Disengagement by the government is recommended with a three-year timeline and a gradual budget reduction of 25 % each year.

The Committee observe that NIRD&PR's work has always been aligned with the constitutionally mandated goals of social sector development, decentralized governance and inclusive growth. Its focus has been on creating public goods, not revenue-generated services. Its structure, processes and priorities have therefore evolved to support long-term outcomes, not commercial outputs. The Committee strongly believe that any move to delink NIRD&PR from MoRD represents not only an administrative change but a fundamental shift away from these core national priorities. The Committee also find that NIRD&PR has grown under the aegis of MoRD with global recognition, a highly qualified faculty, vast infrastructure and an expansive reach. Hence,

the Committee opine that any disengagement as decided by the Government apprehends to undermine its credibility and authority in policymaking is likely to dilute the quality of long-term research and training, divert it into unrelated or short-term consultative activities and sever its intellectual alignment with the rural development ecosystem. The

Committee is of the view that disengagement will not reduce Government expenditure. Instead, it will shift costs to various agencies with disparate mandates, further increasing the burden on MoRD officers for oversight and coordination. Moreover, the financial instability due to disengagement may force the institution to drift away from supporting the flagship Programmes/Schemes of rural development viz., MGNREGA, DAY-NRLM, DDU-GKY, PMAY-G, PMGSY, NSAP and Rashtriya Gram Swaraj Abhiyan (RGSA). The Committee are therefore, at a loss to understand that such a centre of excellence and serving as apex capacity building institution instrumental in nation building and national development especially in rural areas since the last seventy years has to be abruptly disengaged by the Government with the sole aim of furthering “minimum Government and maximum Governance”.

The Committee, strongly feel that rather than disengagement, the need of the hour is to forge deeper strategic collaboration between MoRD and NIRD&PR through structural reforms, decentralized decision-making, adequate allocation of budgetary grant-in-aid and with greater autonomy and allow the institute to thrive and grow within the existing MoRD framework. The Committee, therefore, strongly recommend that keeping in view the immense contribution made by NIRD&PR in the progress and development of nation building in all spheres in rural areas the MoRD should take initiatives and come out with a strategic plan/new roadmap for the institute and prevail upon the DoE to halt the ongoing process of disengagement and allowing the institute to continue and sustain itself.”

1.7 The DoRD in their action taken reply have stated as follows:-

“The Department of Expenditure (DoE) has recommended that the National Institute of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj (NIRD&PR) be developed into a Centre of Excellence or a Deemed University by progressively disengaging it from direct government control and financial dependence. Under this model, the Government may continue to utilize the Institute’s services as a client, while NIRD&PR transitions towards full financial autonomy.

The Department of Rural Development requested the Department of Expenditure in October 2024 to re-consider the proposal keeping the National Institute of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj (NIRD&PR)'s position as a cornerstone of India's rural development strategy and an indispensable critical think tank and strongly advocated for its continued integration. However, the D/o Expenditure conveyed vide OM dated 13.2.2025 that request of Department of Rural Development has not been agreed to.

Further, GIA has also not been allocated to NIRD & PR in Demand for Grants of Department of Rural Development in FY 2025-26. It has been observed that in the absence of allocated government funding, NIRD&PR has been successfully operating on a self-sustaining basis during the initial five months of FY 2025–26 (since 1st April 2025). The Institute has comfortably mobilized resources by conducting sponsored programmes commissioned by various State Government departments and Ministries of the Government of India, including the Ministry of Rural Development.

As NIRD & PR is operating on self-sustaining mode as on date, the Cabinet Note is being revised afresh for Inter Ministerial consultations and the same shall be placed before the Cabinet in due course for a final decision regarding the future course of action on NIRD&PR.”

Comments of the Committee

1.8 NIRD&PR is recognised as centre of excellence and building capacity of rural development in India. It trains people to run villages better and helps to make rules for programs that fight against poverty and build roads or homes. The Committee laud NIRD&PR for its 67-year legacy in rural development, however, at the same time rejects the disengagement process. The Committee are dismayed at the prospect of abruptly severing ties with an institution that has been instrumental in rural nation-building for almost seven decades, solely to advance the "minimum government, maximum governance" agenda. The Committee, view the disengagement not as a mere administrative tweak but as a profound deviation from core national priorities. The committee contend that NIRD&PR's growth fuelled by MoRD's support has been symbiotic, enabling its international stature and broad impact. Financially, disengagement promises no net savings instead, costs would redistribute across agencies with divergent mandates, escalating oversight and coordination burdens on MoRD officers. This fragmentation could inflate overall expenditures, contradicting the DoE's fiscal prudence goals.

Operationally, the spectre of financial instability looms large and without steady grants, NIRD&PR might drift from supporting flagship rural schemes, including the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) for wage employment, Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana-National Rural Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NRLM) for women's self-help groups, Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Grameen Kaushalya Yojana (DDU-GKY) for skill development, Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yojana-Gramin (PMAY-G) for rural housing, Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY) for connectivity, National Social Assistance Programme (NSAP) for vulnerable groups, and Rashtriya Gram Swaraj Abhiyan (RGSA) for local governance strengthening. Strategically, the committee express dismay at the irony that a 67-year-old institution, pivotal to rural nation-building, faces abrupt curtailment under the very banner of governance optimization. Employee unrest, including delayed salaries and pension issues, has compounded challenges. Therefore, rather than disengagement, the Committee reiterate earlier recommendation to intensified broader strategic partnership between MoRD and NIRD&PR, underpinned by structural reforms to enhance efficiency and relevance, decentralized decision-making to empower local innovation, adequate grant-in-aid to ensure financial stability, and enhanced autonomy for growth—all within the existing MoRD framework. Furthermore, once again the MoRD is urged to formulate a comprehensive strategic plan or roadmap, delineating NIRD&PR's future contributions to rural spheres and must persuade DoE to suspend the ongoing disengagement process immediately to safeguard NIRD&PR's continuity and to persist it as a beacon of excellence in rural development and capacity building.

II. Constitution of a MoRD led Committee to Oversee Administrative and Governance matters at NIRD&PR

Recommendation (Serial No. 2)

1.9 With regard to constitution of a MoRD led Committee to Oversee Administrative and Governance matters at NIRD&PR, the Committee had recommended as follows:-

"The Committee were apprised about the progress and challenges being faced by the NIRD&PR during their study visit recently. Over the past four years, the institute got paralyzed by the present administration. The administrative framework of NIRD&PR has adversely affected the key posts such as DDG (Academic), Registrar, and FA lying vacant or being handled by lower-rank officers on an in-charge basis. This Centralized control has weakened the institution's operational integrity. While the Administrative Staff College of India (ASCI) was appointed to develop a roadmap for transition, its report was reportedly ignored. The disengagement plan submitted to MoRD was neither internally reviewed nor externally validated, making it the work of a single individual rather than a collective institutional vision. Infrastructure has been poorly maintained under the guise of cost-cutting, leading to declining training ratings and a diminishing brand image. Faculty morale is at an all-time low due to adhoc inter-centre transfer policy, unresolved vigilance cases (non-financial in nature), long-pending promotions through Centre for Agrarian Studies (CAS) and lack of leadership trust. Lastly, the current administration has also tasked individual units with preparing revenue generation plans in isolation, with no strategic coordination or institutional direction particularly unfeasible for support centres not designed to generate revenue. The Committee take serious view of the present piquant situation of the institute which is unwarranted at this critical juncture and feel that it is more of an impediment thrust upon them with no clear directions as to how to proceed. The Committee also disapprove the attitude of the present executive council towards the problems being faced by the employees serving and retired who are not able to get their salary/pension in time. In view of the above, the Committee strongly recommend the MoRD to expeditiously constitute a committee under its supervision to oversee administrative and governance matters so as to prevent the situation from going bad to worse."

1.10 The DoRD in their action taken reply have stated as under:-

"NIRD&PR already has a statutory governance structure. The General Council, chaired by the Hon'ble Minister of Rural Development, is the apex policy-making body, and the Executive Council, chaired by the Secretary, Rural Development, is the principal executive authority for administration, finance, and management. The most recent meeting of the Executive Council was held on 2nd May 2025, wherein important administrative and programme relating issues were deliberated. The Department is of the view that strengthening the

functioning of the statutory councils would adequately address governance concerns and ensure accountability and delivery of outcomes.

Further, it is envisaged that, post disengagement, the Institute would be fully equipped to operate independently. A new governance framework is expected to be established, in line with NIRD&PR's evolving role as a high-impact, research-driven, autonomous institution. The revamped structure will emphasize enhanced professional autonomy, transparency, inclusive stakeholder participation, and adherence to best practices in academic and research governance."

Comments of the Committee

1.11 The Committee welcome the Government's move, which reaffirms confidence in NIRD&PR's statutory governance structure—the General Council (chaired by the Hon'ble Minister of Rural Development) as the apex policy-making body and the Executive Council (chaired by the Secretary, Rural Development) as the principal executive authority for administration, finance, and management. The Committee also acknowledge and appreciate the positive outcomes from the Executive Council's meeting on May 2, 2025, where administrative and programmatic issues were deliberated, and the forward-looking vision for a post-disengagement governance framework emphasizing enhanced professional autonomy, transparency, inclusive stakeholder participation, and adherence to best practices in academic and research governance. However, given the elapsed time since the May,2025 meeting (now over six months) and the persistent challenges outlined in initial report such as key post vacancies, faculty morale erosion, infrastructure neglect, uncoordinated revenue planning, and delays in salary/pension disbursements, the Committee strongly urge DoRD to take proactive measures to translate commitments into tangible progress. While the existing structure is robust on paper, its efficacy depends on timely, transparent implementation.

In view of the above, the Committee once again strongly recommend and urge DoRD to expeditiously constitute a committee under its supervision and if not possible, at least constitute a lean Interim Task Force (5-7 members, including MoRD representatives, external governance experts from ASCI/IIMs, and NIRD&PR stakeholders) to monitor transition milestones. For the time being, the Committee also recommend DoRD to prevail upon the Department of Expenditure (DoE) to allocate a dedicated "Transition Fund" (at least 10% of NIRD&PR's annual budget) for immediate interventions, such as leadership training programs to rebuild trust and targeted infrastructure upgrades to halt brand erosion. The Committee remain committed to NIRD&PR's revitalization and view these recommendations as collaborative extensions of the Government's reply. Timely action will not only avert worsening challenges but also position the Institute as a model for autonomous rural development excellence.

III. Expeditious Filling up of Vacancies

Recommendation (Serial No. 3)

1.12 In the context of expeditious filling up of vacancies, the Committee had recommended as below:-

“The National Institute of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj (NIRD&PR) serves as the apex capacity-building institution in the country. It supports the implementation of rural development programmes through its multidisciplinary faculty and an extensive outreach network in States. The Committee are constrained to note that the institute has eighteen functional centres falling under seven schools catering to different thematic areas of holistic rural development. In addition, three professional centres are providing support to overall functioning of the institute, yet the institute of national importance like NIRD&PR has been experiencing huge shortage of manpower in the categories of Academic and Non-academic Posts. The Committee also note with concern that as against the total sanctioned strength of 640, the NIRD&PR is working with a strength of only 221 leaving as large as 419 vacancies. Moreover, recruitment of regular officials in key positions viz., DDG, Registrar and Finance Advisor are also pending since long. The Committee are surprised to

note that these 3 key positions which are very crucial for the day-to-day smooth functioning of the institute are lying vacant. In such a situation one cannot expect the institute to perform its role and functions effectively. In view of these, the Committee strongly recommend that the MoRD should take all out efforts to fill up the existing vacancies expeditiously on full time basis for the smooth functioning of the institute."

1.13 The following Action Taken Reply has been given by DoRD:-

"Based on the recommendations of the Department of Expenditure (DoE) for the gradual disengagement of NIRD&PR from MoRD and its transition into a self-sustained Centre of Excellence/Deemed University within a three-year period, filling up of regular administrative posts has been constrained.

However, with reference to the Committee's concern regarding large-scale vacancies, it is submitted that it was decided in the EC meeting for filling up key positions on deputation basis.

It is further submitted that, subsequent to the proposed disengagement, NIRD&PR will be in a better position to address the issue of vacancies in a pragmatic and need-based manner. The Institute will have greater flexibility to assess its functional requirements from time to time and accordingly decide the mode of filling posts—through deputation, contractual appointments, or regular recruitment, as the situation demands. This will enable NIRD&PR to ensure that critical positions do not remain vacant for long periods and that the overall administrative and academic efficiency of the Institute is maintained without disruption."

Comments of the Committee

1.14 The Committee express deep concern over the institute's chronic manpower crisis, which threatens its ability to fulfil its mandate effectively. Despite a sanctioned strength of 640 posts (spanning academic, administrative, and support roles), NIRD&PR is operating with a mere 221 staff members, resulting in a staggering 419 vacancies equivalent to over 65% of its total workforce. This acute shortage permeates all categories, severely limiting the institute's capacity to conduct training programs, maintain research output, and extend outreach to state-level stakeholders. Particularly alarming is the prolonged vacancy in three critical leadership positions viz.,

DDG, Registrar and Finance Advisor. These gaps have led to reliance on lower-rank officers in in-charge roles, causing operational bottlenecks, delayed decision-making, and diminished institutional efficiency. The Committee underscore that such a scenario is untenable for an institute of national importance, as it directly impairs day-to-day functioning and long-term strategic goals. Therefore, the Committee had strongly recommended DoRD to undertake all-out efforts to fill these vacancies on a full-time, regular basis as expeditiously as possible. This would restore operational smoothness, bolster faculty and staff morale, and ensure uninterrupted delivery of rural development services. The DoRD, provided a measured response that situates the vacancy issue within the broader context of institutional reforms. It references recommendations from the Department of Expenditure (DoE) for a gradual disengagement of NIRD&PR from MoRD over a three-year period. The objective is to transform the institute into a self-sustained Centre of Excellence or Deemed University, reducing dependency on central funding and enhancing its autonomy. This transition imposes constraints on filling regular administrative posts, as premature hiring could conflict with the evolving organizational structure and fiscal prudence. However, with reference to the Committee's concern regarding large-scale vacancies, the DoRD has decided in its Executive Council (EC) meeting for filling up key positions on deputation basis. The Committee, however, comprehend about the risks exacerbating current challenges if interim measures like deputation are not implemented promptly and swiftly. Therefore, to ensure no disruption in day-to-day functioning, the Committee strongly recommend DoRD to operationalize the EC decision by launching a

targeted deputation drive immediately for key posts and preparing for broader vacancy reductions in phase wise manner to address the 419 vacancies viz., short-term via contractual appointments for non-core support roles (e.g., administrative assistants in professional centres) to stabilize outreach networks, medium-term via deputation or on contractual basis in academic categories, prioritizing thematic schools with highest shortages and long-term via regular recruitment depending upon the functional requirements. The Committee are of the view that this pragmatic mix would mitigate the current "huge shortage" without contravening DoE guidelines, ensuring multidisciplinary faculty support for rural programmes. By acting expeditiously, DoRD can safeguard NIRD&PR's role as the nation's premier rural development institution.

CHAPTER II

RECOMMENDATIONS WHICH HAVE BEEN ACCEPTED BY THE GOVERNMENT

Recommendation (Serial No. 4)

2.1 The National Institute of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj (NIRD&PR) is setup as registered society which has two main governing entities, which are the General Council headed by the Minister for Rural Development and the Executive Council headed by the Secretary for Rural Development and Director General being the Member Secretary and Principal Executive Officer. The Committee were enlightened during their recent study visit about the centralized control and mismanagement by current administration. In this connection, the Committee observe that since the 2025 budget presentation, NIRD&PR employees and faculty have sought clarity and administratorship from the Director General (DG) regarding a strategy for self-sustainability and institutional transition. Unfortunately, there has been no formal communication, no inclusive consultation, and no clarity on the way forward. Internal file notings and verbal instructions are being used based on the Zero budget allocation by Government of India which is creating panic and distrust within the organization. The Committee also observe that, despite sufficient Internal Generated Revenue (IGR) and corpus fund interest, there are delays in salary disbursements, medical reimbursements, and vendor payments-causing financial distress, especially among SHG and contractual staff. The Committee, also learn that there is no plan or direction from Director General to mobilize resources or bringing sponsored projects. There is pressure on individual faculty to generate income for her/his monthly salary. This centralized control has weakened the institution's operational integrity and create serious apprehensions about the administration's commitment to upholding the assurances made to faculty and staff at the time of their recruitment. Therefore, in order to ensure effective leadership and institutional stability, the Committee strongly recommend for immediate review and replacement of the current administration, which has failed to maintain faculty trust or organizational coherence till than grant already extended by the Government may be continued.

Reply of the Government

2.2 It is submitted that NIRD&PR is an autonomous body and, in keeping with its mandate, is empowered to take decisions necessary for achieving its objectives and safeguarding institutional sustainability. Further, in the absence of grant-in-aid support from the Government, the Institute may suitably determine, from time to time, the role of its faculty and administration need to undertake for achieving self-reliance.

Further, post disengagement, the Institute would be fully equipped to operate independently. A new governance framework is expected to be established, in line with NIRD&PR's evolving role as a high-impact, research-driven, autonomous institution. The revamped structure will emphasize enhanced professional autonomy, transparency, inclusive stakeholder participation, and adherence to best practices in academic and research governance.

Furthermore, in the absence of allocated government funding, NIRD&PR has been operating on a self-sustaining basis during the initial five months of FY 2025–26 (since 1st April 2025). The Institute has successfully mobilized resources by conducting sponsored programmes commissioned by various State Government departments and Ministries of the Government of India, including the Ministry of Rural Development.

(O.M. No. K-15018/01/2025-Trg. (391468) dated 16.10.2025)

CHAPTER III

RECOMMENDATIONS WHICH THE COMMITTEE DO NOT DESIRE TO PURSUE IN VIEW OF REPLIES OF THE GOVERNMENT

NIL

(O.M. No. K-15018/01/2025-Trg. (391468) dated 16.10.2025)

CHAPTER IV

RECOMMENDATIONS IN RESPECT OF WHICH REPLIES OF THE GOVERNMENT HAVE NOT BEEN ACCEPTED BY THE COMMITTEE

Recommendation (Serial No. 1)

4.1 The Committee note that NIRD&PR has a long-cherished history of existence since 1958 and is also recognized as one of the UN-ESCAP centres of Excellence and building capacities of rural development functionaries, elected representatives of PRIs, banks, NGOs and other stakeholders. It also acts as a 'Think-Tank' for the MoRD, MoPR and other line Ministries by helping them with policy formulation, development and implementation of national-level programmes/schemes through its various training and research activities.

The Committee note that the Department of Expenditure with a view to furthering the aim of "minimum government, maximum governance" and ensuring economical and efficient use of public fund, reviewed the need for the continuity of Autonomous Bodies under the control of Department of Rural Development in the year 2020 and recommended in its report AB-4 that NIRD&PR may be disengaged from MoRD/Government of India gradually in terms of financial support and administrative control and it may be converted into a Center of Excellence/Deemed University engaged in training and research. Further, Committee note from the report that Central government may access its services as a client. Government may give grants based on the functions of the body till it is converted into a deemed, autonomous Institute. Disengagement by the government is recommended with a three-year timeline and a gradual budget reduction of 25 % each year.

The Committee observe that NIRD&PR's work has always been aligned with the constitutionally mandated goals of social sector development, decentralized governance and inclusive growth. Its focus has been on creating public goods, not revenue-generated services. Its structure, processes and priorities have therefore evolved to support long-term outcomes, not commercial outputs. The Committee strongly believe that any move to delink NIRD&PR from MoRD represents not only an administrative change but a fundamental shift away from these core national priorities. The Committee also find that NIRD&PR has grown under the aegis of MoRD with global recognition, a highly qualified faculty, vast infrastructure and an expansive reach. Hence, the Committee opine that any disengagement as decided

by the Government apprehends to undermine its credibility and authority in policymaking is likely to dilute the quality of long-term research and training, divert it into unrelated or short-term consultative activities and sever its intellectual alignment with the rural development ecosystem. The Committee is of the view that disengagement will not reduce Government expenditure. Instead, it will shift costs to various agencies with disparate mandates, further increasing the burden on MoRD officers for oversight and coordination. Moreover, the financial instability due to disengagement may force the institution to drift away from supporting the flagship Programmes/Schemes of rural development viz., MGNREGA, DAY-NRLM, DDU-GKY, PMAY-G, PMGSY, NSAP and Rashtriya Gram Swaraj Abhiyan (RGSA). The Committee are therefore, at a loss to understand that such a centre of excellence and serving as apex capacity building institution instrumental in nation building and national development especially in rural areas since the last seventy years has to be abruptly disengaged by the Government with the sole aim of furthering “minimum Government and maximum Governance”.

The Committee, strongly feel that rather than disengagement, the need of the hour is to forge deeper strategic collaboration between MoRD and NIRD&PR through structural reforms, decentralized decision-making, adequate allocation of budgetary grant-in-aid and with greater autonomy and allow the institute to thrive and grow within the existing MoRD framework. The Committee, therefore, strongly recommend that keeping in view the immense contribution made by NIRD&PR in the progress and development of nation building in all spheres in rural areas the MoRD should take initiatives and come out with a strategic plan/new roadmap for the institute and prevail upon the DoE to halt the ongoing process of disengagement and allowing the institute to continue and sustain itself.

Reply of the Government

4.2 The Department of Expenditure (DoE) has recommended that the National Institute of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj (NIRD&PR) be developed into a Centre of Excellence or a Deemed University by progressively disengaging it from direct government control and financial dependence. Under this model, the Government may continue to utilize the Institute’s services as a client, while NIRD&PR transitions towards full financial autonomy.

The Department of Rural Development requested the Department of Expenditure in October 2024 to re-consider the proposal keeping the National

Institute of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj (NIRD&PR)'s position as a cornerstone of India's rural development strategy and an indispensable critical think tank and strongly advocated for its continued integration. However, the D/o Expenditure conveyed vide OM dated 13.2.2025 that request of Department of Rural Development has not been agreed to.

Further, GIA has also not been allocated to NIRD & PR in Demand for Grants of Department of Rural Development in FY 2025-26. It has been observed that in the absence of allocated government funding, NIRD&PR has been successfully operating on a self-sustaining basis during the initial five months of FY 2025–26 (since 1st April 2025). The Institute has comfortably mobilized resources by conducting sponsored programmes commissioned by various State Government departments and Ministries of the Government of India, including the Ministry of Rural Development.

As NIRD & PR is operating on self-sustaining mode as on date, the Cabinet Note is being revised afresh for Inter Ministerial consultations and the same shall be placed before the Cabinet in due course for a final decision regarding the future course of action on NIRD&PR.

(O.M. No. K-15018/01/2025-Trg. (391468) dated 16.10.2025)

Comments of the Committee

(Please see Paragraph No. 1.8 of Chapter I of the Report)

Recommendation (Serial No. 2)

4.3 The Committee were apprised about the progress and challenges being faced by the NIRD&PR during their study visit recently. Over the past four years, the institute got paralyzed by the present administration. The administrative framework of NIRD&PR has adversely affected the key posts such as DDG (Academic), Registrar, and FA lying vacant or being handled by lower-rank officers on an in-charge basis. This Centralized control has weakened the institution's operational integrity. While the Administrative Staff College of India (ASCI) was appointed to develop a roadmap for transition, its report was reportedly ignored. The disengagement plan submitted to MoRD was neither internally reviewed nor externally validated, making it the work of a single individual rather than a collective institutional vision. Infrastructure has been poorly maintained under the guise of cost-cutting, leading to declining training ratings and a diminishing brand image. Faculty morale is at an all-time low due to ad-hoc inter-centre transfer policy, unresolved vigilance cases (non-financial in nature), long-pending promotions through Centre for Agrarian Studies (CAS) and lack of leadership trust. Lastly, the current

administration has also tasked individual units with preparing revenue generation plans in isolation, with no strategic coordination or institutional direction particularly unfeasible for support centres not designed to generate revenue. The Committee take serious view of the present piquant situation of the institute which is unwarranted at this critical juncture and feel that it is more of an impediment thrust upon them with no clear directions as to how to proceed. The Committee also disapprove the attitude of the present executive council towards the problems being faced by the employees serving and retired who are not able to get their salary/pension in time. In view of the above, the Committee strongly recommend the MoRD to expeditiously constitute a committee under its supervision to oversee administrative and governance matters so as to prevent the situation from going bad to worse.

Reply of the Government

4.4 NIRD&PR already has a statutory governance structure. The **General Council**, chaired by the **Hon'ble Minister of Rural Development**, is the apex policy-making body, and the **Executive Council**, chaired by the **Secretary, Rural Development**, is the principal executive authority for administration, finance, and management. The most recent meeting of the **Executive Council was held on 2nd May 2025**, wherein important administrative and programme relating issues were deliberated. The Department is of the view that strengthening the functioning of the statutory councils would adequately address governance concerns and ensure accountability and delivery of outcomes.

Further, it is envisaged that, post disengagement, the Institute would be fully equipped to operate independently. A new governance framework is expected to be established, in line with NIRD&PR's evolving role as a high-impact, research-driven, autonomous institution. The revamped structure will emphasize enhanced professional autonomy, transparency, inclusive stakeholder participation, and adherence to best practices in academic and research governance.

(O.M. No. K-15018/01/2025-Trg. (391468) dated 16.10.2025)

Comments of the Committee

(Please see Paragraph No. 1.11 of Chapter I of the Report)

Recommendation (Serial No. 3)

4.5 The National Institute of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj (NIRD&PR) serves as the apex capacity-building institution in the country. It supports the implementation of rural development programmes through its multidisciplinary faculty and an extensive outreach network in States. The Committee are constrained to note

that the institute has eighteen functional centres falling under seven schools catering to different thematic areas of holistic rural development. In addition, three professional centres are providing support to overall functioning of the institute, yet the institute of national importance like NIRD&PR has been experiencing huge shortage of manpower in the categories of Academic and Non-academic Posts. The Committee also note with concern that as against the total sanctioned strength of 640, the NIRD&PR is working with a strength of only 221 leaving as large as 419 vacancies. Moreover, recruitment of regular officials in key positions viz., DDG, Registrar and Finance Advisor are also pending since long. The Committee are surprised to note that these 3 key positions which are very crucial for the day-to-day smooth functioning of the institute are lying vacant. In such a situation one cannot expect the institute to perform its role and functions effectively. In view of these, the Committee strongly recommend that the MoRD should take all out efforts to fill up the existing vacancies expeditiously on full time basis for the smooth functioning of the institute.

Reply of the Government

4.6 Based on the recommendations of the **Department of Expenditure (DoE)** for the **gradual disengagement of NIRD&PR from MoRD** and its transition into a self-sustained Centre of Excellence/Deemed University within a three-year period, filling up of regular administrative posts has been constrained.

However, with reference to the Committee's concern regarding large-scale vacancies, it is submitted that it was decided in the EC meeting for filling up key positions on deputation basis.

It is further submitted that, subsequent to the proposed disengagement, NIRD&PR will be in a better position to address the issue of vacancies in a pragmatic and need-based manner. The Institute will have greater flexibility to assess its functional requirements from time to time and accordingly decide the mode of filling posts—through deputation, contractual appointments, or regular recruitment, as the situation demands. This will enable NIRD&PR to ensure that critical positions do not remain vacant for long periods and that the overall administrative and academic efficiency of the Institute is maintained without disruption.

(O.M. No. K-15018/01/2025-Trg. (391468) dated 16.10.2025)

Comments of the Committee

(Please see Paragraph No. 1.14 of Chapter I of the Report)

CHAPTER V

RECOMMENDATIONS IN RESPECT OF WHICH FINAL REPLIES OF THE GOVERNMENT ARE STILL AWAITED

NIL

(O.M. No. K-15018/01/2025-Trg. (391468) dated 16.10.2025)

NEW DELHI
15 December, 2025
24 Agrahayana, 1947 (Saka)

Saptagiri Sankar Ulaka
Chairperson
Standing Committee on Rural Development and
Panchayati Raj

STANDING COMMITTEE ON RURAL DEVELOPMENT AND PANCHAYATI RAJ
(2025-26)

**EXTRACTS OF THE MINUTES OF THE SIXTH SITTING OF THE COMMITTEE
HELD ON FRIDAY, THE 12th DECEMBER, 2025**

The Committee sat from 1500 hrs to 1510 hrs in Committee Room No. '2', First Floor, Parliament House Annexe Extension (EPHA), New Delhi.

PRESENT

Shri Saptagiri Sankar Ulaka, *Chairperson*

MEMBERS

Lok Sabha

2. Shri Raju Bista
3. Shri Vijay Kumar Dubey
4. Shri Bhajan Lal Jatav
5. Dr. Mohammad Jawed
6. Shri Jugal Kishore
7. Shri Naba Charan Majhi
8. Shri Janardan Mishra
9. Shri Ramashankar Vidharthi Rajbhar
10. Shri Omprakash Bhupalsinh *alias* Pavan Rajenimbalkar
11. Shri Devendra Singh *alias* Bhole Singh

Rajya Sabha

12. Smt. Geeta *alias* Chandraprabha
13. Shri Neeraj Dangi
14. Dr. M. Dhanapal
15. Dr. Kavita Patidar
16. Smt. Rajathi
17. Shri Sant Balbir Singh
18. Smt. P. T. Usha

Secretariat

- | | | |
|-----------------------|---|----------------------|
| 1. Shri D. R. Shekhar | - | Additional Secretary |
| 2. Shri V. K. Shailon | - | Director |
| 3. Smt Rashmi Roy | - | Deputy Secretary |

2. At the outset, the Hon'ble Chairperson welcomed the Members to the sitting of the Committee convened for consideration and adoption of the following draft reports:

- a. Draft report on action taken by the Government on the recommendations contained in the 10th Report on 'Functioning of National Institute of Rural

- Development and Panchayati Raj (NIRD&PR)' (2024-25) pertaining to the Department of Rural Development (Ministry of Rural Development).
- b. XXX XXX XXX XXX XXX XXX

3. Above mentioned draft reports were taken up for consideration one-by-one and after discussion, the Committee adopted the same without any modifications. The Committee then authorized the Chairperson to finalise the aforesaid draft reports and present the same to the Parliament.

The Committee then adjourned.

XXX Not related to the Draft Report.

ANNEXURE II

[Vide para 4 of Introduction of Report]

ANALYSIS OF THE ACTION TAKEN BY THE GOVERNMENT ON THE RECOMMENDATIONS CONTAINED IN THE TENTH REPORT (18TH LOK SABHA) OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON RURAL DEVELOPMENT AND PANCHAYATI RAJ

- | | | |
|------|---|-------------------------------|
| I. | Total number of recommendations: | 4 |
| II. | Observations/Recommendations which have been accepted by the Government: | |
| | Serial Nos. 4 | |
| | | Total:1
Percentage: - 25% |
| III. | Observations/Recommendations which the Committee do not desire to pursue in view of replies of the Government: | |
| | Serial No. NIL | |
| | | Total: NIL
Percentage:- 0% |
| IV. | Observations/Recommendations in respect of which replies of the Government have not been accepted by the Committee: | |
| | Serial No. 1, 2, 3 | |
| | | Total: 3
Percentage: - 75% |
| V. | Observations/Recommendations in respect of which final replies of the Government are still awaited: | |
| | Serial No. NIL | |
| | | Total: NIL
Percentage:- 0% |