

**Policy Samvad Session:** *Enabling Policy Environment for Sustainable Livelihood Promotion: Planet, People & Prosperity (3Ps)*

**Date & Time:** 20 February 2026, 3:50 PM – 4:50 PM

**Venue:** National Conference on *Transforming the Rural Livelihood Landscape in India* at ICAR–NAARM, Hyderabad

**Dr. Amir Ullah Khan**

**Member of the Telangana Public Service Commission, Founder-Director, CDPP.**

He is a Development Economist. He has worked on various research projects for the European Commission, National Council for Applied Economic Research, Planning Commission, Confederation of Indian Industry and the World Bank. Dr. Amir has also been engaged with the Project LARGE of the UNDP on legal reforms, and with Encyclopaedia Britannica in the previous century. During this millennium, he has worked with the AEquitas Consulting, India Development Foundation, PHDCCI, Bangalore Management Academy, and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.

**Prof. Aseem Prakash**

**Professor of Public Policy and currently Campus Director of the Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Hyderabad.**

Aseem Prakash's research interests include the interface between the state and markets; regulation and institutions; welfare regimes, city and inclusive development, sociology of markets; social discrimination, and human development. He has been instrumental in creating institutional bedrock for training new-age policy professionals. He leads a Policy Area Concentration (PAC) in "Regulation and Institutions," which encourages students to think and design an institutional framework that can regulate the emergent market economy. He has been the author to many publications including, *Dalit Capital: State, Markets, and Civil Society in Urban India*; published by Routledge and *The Indian Middle Class* (co-authored with Surinder Jodhka), published by Oxford University Press

**Ms. Rubina Ayesha**

**Visionary Educationist, Social Entrepreneur, Civic Administrator & Social Worker.**

In recognition of her services in the field of Education and Social work she was nominated to the city council (Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation) as a co-opted member. As a co-opted member she has contributed by laying out the first ward development plan in the country and has been instrumental in planning a first-of-its-kind park for special needs people in India apart from initiating livelihood training for more than 8,000 youth. An Educationist by profession, she has helped set up 10 schools for the underprivileged which cater to the educational needs of more than 4500 children. She also runs a school for kids with special needs.

**Raman Wadhwa, Director**

**DAY-NRLM, Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India.**

Dedicated to driving transformative change in the lives of rural communities, he serves as the Director overseeing Administration at the National Rural Livelihoods Mission (NRLM). He has pioneered sub-sector interventions, modernized planning frameworks, and led insightful field visits

to ensure our initiatives align with ground realities. His leadership has catalyzed impactful projects across sectors, focusing on Monitoring, Evaluation, and Knowledge Management for data-driven results. He has fostered collaborations with national and international partners, magnifying the impact of our initiatives. Notably, he has led projects resulting in 30 million additional AEP, three crore lakhpati beneficiaries, and the establishment of large-scale producer enterprises.

## **Panel Minutes**

The Policy Samvad session on *“Enabling Policy Environment for Sustainable Livelihood Promotion: Planet, People & Prosperity (3Ps)”*, held on 20 February 2026 at ICAR–NAARM, Hyderabad, focused on strengthening the policy ecosystem supporting rural livelihoods. The discussion brought together practitioners, academics, and development sector experts, who examined how the intersecting dimensions of people, planet, and prosperity shape the possibilities for rural transformation. The panel highlighted that meaningful policy design must begin with a realistic assessment of what rural communities actually need, rather than assumptions held by policymakers. Speakers noted that many women earlier struggled even to access bank accounts, revealing persistent administrative barriers and underscoring the need for grounded, context-sensitive programme approaches. Experiences from large-scale initiatives, such as NRLM, demonstrated that ecosystem gaps, rather than absence of initiative, often restrict the reach and impact of livelihood interventions.

The session examined the quality of existing skill-development initiatives. While the country has seen an expansion in skill programmes, speakers argued that these often prioritise numerical targets over actual skill enhancement. Many participants in such programmes do not gain the business literacy required to sustain enterprises. Even financial literacy curricula rarely integrate business skills, creating a gap in entrepreneurial readiness. The panel further emphasised the importance of shifting livelihood strategies from a narrow focus on value chains to fostering viable, sustainable enterprises supported by knowledge, markets, and institutional platforms.

Climate-related risks emerged as another central theme in the session. Speakers highlighted that farmers and rural households are disproportionately affected by climatic shocks, and adaptation is no longer optional but essential. Partnerships with meteorological departments have improved early-warning dissemination, enabling timely advisories. The need for resilient seeds, improved agricultural practices, livelihood diversification, and risk-mitigation savings was underscored as crucial for climate-resilient livelihoods. The panel reiterated that climate change cannot be reversed, but its impacts can be mitigated through better planning, preparedness, and responsive institutions.

One of the most powerful threads in the discussion centred on the relationship between gender-based violence (GBV) and women’s economic participation. Findings from a study conducted by students from public policy and governance course, Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Hyderabad, revealed deep linkages between domestic violence and livelihood vulnerability. The study found that 60% of women experienced a decline in economic conditions due to violence, 49% had to temporarily stop working, 74% incurred health costs, and 31% spent on legal procedures. Much of the violence stemmed from mobility restrictions, suspicion, and financial control. The session also examined the functioning of Gender Resource Centres (GRCs), an institutional innovation within the NRLM

architecture. GRCs provided a community-based mechanism for grievance redressal, enabling women to record complaints and receive mediation support. However, despite resolving nearly a quarter of cases, many issues persisted or resurfaced due to the absence of standard protocols, insufficient professional training, and the lack of clear escalation pathways. The panel concluded that economic empowerment without protection often leads to backlash, making safety and gender justice central to livelihood policy.

Labour market dynamics and persistent gender discrimination were also discussed. Evidence presented during the session showed that wage discrimination against women continues across rural India, and women's labour force participation remains low despite economic expansion. Speakers drew attention to the "U-shaped curve" of female labour force participation, where increases in household income initially reduce women's labour participation, but noted that India has not yet reached the upward turn of this curve. Concerns about wage suppression, inadequate social security, the absence of property rights for women, and the prevalence of wage theft in informal sectors were highlighted as barriers to women's economic mobility. Readings of consumption expenditure data further indicated worrying trends, pointing to the need for stronger labour protections and fair wage policies.

The session also emphasised institutional ecosystem strengthening. Speakers underlined the importance of convergence across departments, partnerships with civil society and research organisations, and decentralised community institutions for knowledge dissemination and grievance redressal. They noted that sustainable livelihood promotion requires robust and responsive institutions that can support both economic and social interventions.

The session concluded with the release of the telugu version of the "Agriculture in India" publication and September 2025 special issue on Livelihoods and Research Training, of the Journal of Development Policy and Practice, in collaboration with ILRT.

In closing, the session reaffirmed that sustainable livelihoods cannot be achieved through isolated interventions. Instead, they require integrated attention to gender justice, climate resilience, economic viability, and equitable labour systems. Meaningful outcomes will emerge only when policies address both the structural barriers limiting women's participation and the environmental risks threatening rural incomes. The discussion underscored that People, Planet, and Prosperity must be treated as interdependent pillars for India's rural development agenda.