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Kant Calls for a Rural Development Model Centered on Local Enterprise

The Economic Times reported that he also called for better market access, finance and higher farm productivity at the fifth Rohini Nayyar Prize ceremony.

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Attendees listen to a speaker at a rural development awards ceremony in New Delhi. (AI-generated image / EconoTimes)

Former NITI Aayog CEO Amitabh Kant urged India to place rural communities closer to the center of economic development, with better market access and room for local enterprise, The Economic Times reported.

At the fifth Rohini Nayyar Prize ceremony in New Delhi on Oct. 31, Kant presented rural residents as contributors to economic activity and innovation. The Economic Times reported that he called for development policy to give enterprise and local participation a larger place alongside welfare programs. On prices, Kant said, “They do not need pity. They need fair prices,” The Economic Times reported.

His proposals ranged from higher farm productivity and rural industries to food processing and farmer-producer organizations. He also backed women’s self-help groups, training for young people and broader use of technology. The Economic Times reported that Kant called for policymakers to account for differences among districts and include local communities in decisions.

He also sought systems that would let rural residents reach markets and finance, exercise rights, and rely on public services and connectivity, The Economic Times reported. PTI described the remarks as a call to

make rural communities economic participants, not only recipients of welfare support.

The prize went to Prashant Chaudhary, founder of the CodeYogi Foundation, The Week and PTI reported. The Week described the foundation as using a smartphone-first teaching model for coding and AI. The Nayyar Foundation for Social and Economic Purpose says the prize recognizes innovative work or sustained impact in rural development and is open to Indians under 40.

Chaudhary told PTI that CodeYogi's 30-day applied artificial intelligence (AI) program had reached more than 350,000 students across nine states and 120 districts over three years. PTI said the districts cover 30% of India's geographical area.

The Nayyar Foundation says the prize is worth ₹10 lakh and has been awarded annually since 2022. It was created in memory of economist-administrator Rohini Nayyar, the foundation says.