

SAMAIRA POLICY RESEARCH INSTITUTE

Lok Nayak Rural Fellowship [LNRF]
Two Fellows for the year 2026-27

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DEHRADUN

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February 2026

SAMAIRA POLICY RESEARCH INSTITUTE



INSPIRED BY THE VISION OF LOK NAYAK JAYPRAKASH NARAYAN

About the Fellowship

The Lok Nayak Rural Fellowship (LNRF) is a year-long grassroots engagement and policy research program launched by the Samaira Policy Research Institute (SPRI), inspired by Lok Nayak Jayaprakash Narayan's ideals of participatory democracy and rural reconstruction. It immerses young scholars in the functioning of Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs), enabling them to work directly with elected representatives, study governance processes, and contribute to local development through applied policy research.

The Fellowship aims to create a new generation of policy professionals grounded in the realities of rural India, combining field immersion with academic research. Its objectives are: To expose fellows to the functioning of local governance systems and participatory planning. To enhance capacity in grassroots policy research and evidence-based decision-making. To promote documentation of best practices and innovations in rural governance. To generate actionable insights for national and state-level rural policy frameworks.

FELLOWSHIP STRUCTURE

The Fellowship is structured into three integrated components:

1. Field Immersion (Primary Component)

Fellows are placed in rural areas and attached to Panchayati Raj Institutions, where they:

- Observe and document governance processes
- Work with elected representatives and local officials
- Attend Gram Sabha and Panchayat meetings
- Engage with community members and civil society actors

2. Applied Policy Research

Each Fellow undertakes structured policy research on themes such as:

- Rural development and livelihoods
- Local governance and decentralisation
- Health, education, nutrition, and sanitation
- Gender, social justice, and inclusion
- Climate resilience and sustainable rural planning

Research outputs include policy briefs, field reports, and working papers under faculty mentorship.

3. Capacity Building & Mentorship

Fellows receive continuous academic and professional support through:

- Research methodology workshops
- Policy writing and communication training
- Ethics, leadership, and public service modules
- One-on-one mentorship from SPRI faculty and practitioners

Fellowship Structure

Phase	Duration	Key Focus
Orientation & Training	1 Months	Induction at SPRI, Dehradun — workshops, methods, and rural exposure
Field Immersion	6 Months	Placement with elected representatives in Panchayats to support locals
Thematic Policy Research	3 Months	Research on rural livelihoods, inclusion, governance, or cooperatives
Reporting & Policy Dialogue	2 Months	Presentation at Lok Nayak Policy Dialogue and submission of final repo

Fellowship Benefits

1. Monthly Stipend: INR 35,000 Fieldwork Allowance: up to 8,000/month Mentorship by SPRI Faculty and Elected Representatives.
2. Regular Workshops, Exposure Visits, and Research Support /Publication & Presentation
3. Fellowship Completion Certificate from SPRI, Dehradun & AVARD, New Delhi

Eligibility Criteria - Lok Nayak Rural Fellowship (L NRF)

1. Educational Qualification: Applicants must hold a Bachelor's degree from a recognized university or institution in India or abroad. Candidates from all disciplines are eligible. Final-year undergraduate students may apply, provided they submit proof of degree completion before the Fellowship commencement.
2. Age Criteria: Preferred age range: 21 to 30 years at the time of commencement of the Fellowship. Candidates outside this range may be considered on a case-by-case basis if they demonstrate strong motivation, relevant experience, or exceptional merit.
3. Citizenship: The Fellowship is open to Indian citizens.. Overseas Citizens of India (OCI) may apply subject to, Compliance with applicable fieldwork, residency, and legal requirements Willingness to work in rural India for the full duration.
4. Language & Communication: Working knowledge of English is required for research, reporting, and training components. Knowledge of Hindi and/or regional languages will be considered a strong advantage for field engagement.

Selection Process – Lok Nayak Rural Fellowship (LNRF)

The selection to the Lok Nayak Rural Fellowship (LNRF) shall be conducted through a multi-stage, merit-based process designed to assess candidates' understanding of India, policy aptitude, analytical ability, and suitability for grassroots governance work.

Stage I: Written Examination (Total: 200 Marks)

The written examination shall be conducted offline (pen-and-paper mode) at the following centres:

New Delhi | Dehradun | Shimla | Alwar | Gwalior | Darjeeling | Mumbai | Kolkata | Bangalore Chennai | Kochi

Candidates must appear at any one centre of their choice.

Paper I: Understanding India

Marks: 100

Type: Objective (MCQ-based)

Duration: 1.5 Hours

This paper is designed to test a candidate's foundational understanding of India and its social, institutional, and economic structures.

Indicative Areas:

- Indian History (ancient, medieval, modern)
- Indian Geography (physical, economic, human geography)
- Indian Society and Sociology
- Indian Legal and Constitutional System
- Indian Economic System and Development

Qualifying Rule:

- Candidates must secure a minimum of 50% marks (50 out of 100) in Paper I to be eligible for evaluation of Paper II.
- Candidates failing to meet this threshold shall be disqualified from further stages of the selection process.

Selection Process – Lok Nayak Rural Fellowship (LNRF)

Paper II: Indian Policy and Political Apparatus

Marks: 100

Type: Descriptive (Essay-based)

Duration: Three Hours

This paper assesses analytical ability, policy understanding, clarity of thought, and written expression.

Structure:

- Total Questions: 5 (10 question will be given, any 5 can be answered)
- Marks per Question: 20
- Candidates must attempt all five questions

Indicative Themes:

- Indian public policy formulation and implementation
- Political institutions and governance frameworks
- Panchayati Raj Institutions and decentralisation
- Centre–State relations
- Contemporary policy challenges and reforms

Evaluation Rule:

- Paper II shall be evaluated only for those candidates who qualify Paper I.

Written Examination Qualification Criteria

- Candidates must secure:
 - At least 50% marks in Paper I, and
 - An aggregate of 50% marks across Paper I and Paper II combined (i.e., minimum 100 out of 200 marks)

Only candidates meeting both conditions shall be shortlisted for the Interview stage.

Selection Process – Lok Nayak Rural Fellowship (LNRF)

Stage II: Online Interview (Total: 50 Marks)

Shortlisted candidates shall be invited for an **online interview**, conducted by a duly constituted Selection Panel.

Interview Assessment Areas:

- Motivation for rural governance and public service
- Understanding of grassroots issues
- Policy orientation and ethical reasoning
- Communication skills and clarity of purpose
- Overall suitability for the Fellowship

Final Merit List & Selection

- Total Marks Considered:
 - Written Examination: 200 marks
 - Interview: 50 marks
 - Grand Total: 250 marks
- A final merit list shall be prepared based on the combined score of:
 - Written Examination (Papers I & II), and
 - Interview
- **Number of Fellows to be Selected:**
 - **Two (2) candidates only**
- In case of a tie, preference may be given to:
 - Higher marks in Paper II
 - Interview performance
 - Demonstrated commitment to rural or public service (as assessed by the Panel)

Final Authority

The decision of the Samaira Policy Research Institute regarding eligibility, examination conduct, evaluation, interview, and final selection shall be final and binding.

Application & Selection Schedule – Lok Nayak Rural Fellowship (LNRF)

StageDate / Timeline

Release of Official Notification & Prospectus.	15 Feb 2026
Opening of Online Applications.	20 Feb 2026
Last Date for Submission of Applications	1 March 2026 (11:59 PM IST)
Issue of Admit Cards for Written Examination.	10 March 2026
Written Examination (Paper I & Paper II)	22 March 2026 (Sunday)
Publication of Written Exam Results.	5 April 2026
Online Interviews of Shortlisted Candidates.	10–13 April 2026
Declaration of Final Merit List	25 April 2026
Offer Letters Issued	28 April 2026
Commencement of Fellowship	10 May 2026

Contact Information

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