

Press release

[Venue : Village Dhankutti, Barabanki, ICAR NBFGR, Lucknow, 23 Feb 2024]

Mission Navshakti: 50 women from Scheduled Caste community develop skill in aquarium fabrication , Ornamental Fish keeping and aquarium maintenance in ornamental fish *Pathshala* organised by ICAR NBFGR

Under the **Mission Navshakti** initiative of SCSP project, an Ornamental fish Aquarium *Pathshala* was organised for developing skill in aquarium fabrication, aquarium assembly and maintenance for 50 women belonging to Scheduled Caste community. The three day skill development programme from 21st to 23rd February was organised at Village Dhankutti with four Self Help Group women from four villages namely Saraswati SHG from Village Dhankutti, Tulsi SHG from village Gurwaguari, Ambedkar SHG from village Basantpur and Mahila Ekta SHG from village Rehramau. of Barabanki district (Uttar Pradesh) belonging to Scheduled Caste community undertook training on livelihood enhancement through ornamental fish keeping, rearing and maintenance through fabrication of aquarium.

The women learnt how to assemble the aquarium and had hands on experience of fabricating their own aquarium and setting it up. The women received inputs of aquarium with all components including filter, light, FRP cover, Aquarium LED light, fish net, background poster, cover, plants, stone, stone, feed and live ornamental fish. The women also learnt the art of designing and decorating aquarium with aesthetics. The training has empowered the women with skill for life. The women could identify molly and guppy by their characters

The women understood that fish is like a live currency that can be immediately sold to fetch revenue when in need. Women from four SHGs also identified 5 locations in their home with a backyard where they will dig small ponds for keeping and rearing aquarium fishes. Once a pond is dug and lined, live bearer fishes like molly and guppy will be given to the women for rearing. The grow out fishes will be sold to a distributor through a public private partnership mode where women initially won't have to worry about marketing. One established woman can start their own shops and sell fishes directly through direct and online platforms.

On the first day of the training programme women saw different fish species during exposure visit to "Ganga Aquarium" located in Lucknow around 70 km far from Dhankutti village. The women learnt identification, characterisation and different types of aquarium designs. The motto was learning by seeing. By the last day of the training programme for developing livelihood and entrepreneurship, the women developed skills to start earning from their homes as alternative source of income by fish keeping and rearing in the backyard of their homes. The trained women will inspire other women from their neighbourhood to start their own work and work together as a group and create job opportunities in rural sector. The main mission under the programme Mission Navshakti is to create alternative avenues of income generation among rural women. The training programme will generate a work force that will cater to the unmet needs of ornamental fish industry and help women be self-sufficient and create more job opportunities in rural sector. The women and their families own small land holding providing bare minimum productivity. The use of backyard home space helps women to be at their homes and be empowered by income generation through ornamental fish rearing.

The *pathshala* concept is aimed at empowering and fostering livelihood opportunities through education in aquarium fish keeping and rearing as part of the Scheduled Castes Sub Plan (SCSP) project and gained valuable knowledge in a new sector for exploring avenues for economic empowerment. The new skills learnt by women provides confidence needed for new livelihood opportunities in burgeoning aquarium fish industry, thus paving way for sustainable livelihood and for economic independence and transformation for a positive change. The project under SCSP component envisages to connect rural women with urban needs in ornamental fish sector. The project also aims at changing dynamics of village surrounding Barabanki district by training rural women and creating trained manpower in four villages, where women work only in fields with no alternative source of income. The main mission under the programme Mission Navshakti is to create alternative avenues of income generation among rural women.

The main objective of the training was to ensure that women become financially independent with a viable sustainable business model that can be replicated in other villages, towns and districts of Uttar Pradesh and serve as a hub and spoke cluster model, where SHGs connected to villages will become a cluster. Many such clusters will form a hub where women will sell the fishes to distributors already in the market. This will ensure surplus supply and non dependence of distributors from other states. The aim of ICAR NBFGR is to create a model ornamental fish village where women are first exposed to the system and then taught the art of fish rearing for supplying to the market. The programme was coordinated by Dr U K Sarkar, Director, ICAR NBFGR, who emphasised on creating a model village, Dr Poonam Jayant Singh, Nodal Officer SCSP invigorated women to come out of their comfort zone, Dr Suresh Chandra, Entrepreneur Trainer provided infrastructure for training, Sh Indramani Raja, Entrepreneur trainer assured buying back all reared fishes, Sh Amit Bisht and Sh Ravi Kumar coordinated the event. The village Pradhan Sh Anil, along with Dr A K Yadav also graced the occasion







