

Press release

Empowering Marginalized Communities: ICAR-NBFGR and College of Fisheries Science, Gumla, Drive Livelihood Transformation Through Skill development in Ornamental Fish Rearing in Jharkhand

In a targeted effort to foster economic self-reliance among Scheduled Caste (SC) men and women in one of Jharkhand's aspirational districts, ICAR-NBFGR Lucknow, and College of Fisheries Science, Gumla, affiliated with Birsa Agricultural University, Ranchi have launched an intensive skill development programme focused on ornamental fish rearing and maintenance. This initiative forms a key part of the Mission Navshakti component under the centrally sponsored Scheduled Castes Sub-Plan (SCSP) project, designed to unlock alternative livelihood avenues in rural areas where traditional agriculture often falls short.

The training is meticulously organized in four distinct phases, each a three day residential programme accommodating 25 participants, culminating in 100 skilled beneficiaries overall. By adopting a cluster based model, the programme seeks to concentrate expertise within Gumla and extend its ripple effects to neighboring regions, enabling participants both men and women to launch micro-enterprises in ornamental fisheries. This sector holds immense promise in India, driven by rising domestic demand for aquarium setups, decorative fish species, and related accessories, alongside export opportunities that can generate steady income with relatively low initial investment.

Trainees received comprehensive, hands-on instruction covering the full spectrum of ornamental fish production: from fabricating custom aquariums and mastering aquascaping for aesthetic appeal, to establishing efficient breeding systems, formulating nutrient rich specialized feeds, implementing optimal feeding regimes, and applying preventive measures against common diseases. Beyond core rearing skills, the curriculum extends to fish processing techniques, empowering beneficiaries to explore value addition such as packaging, local marketing, or even small-scale processing units, thereby diversifying revenue streams and enhancing profitability.

A particularly motivating moment unfolded during the first phase when Hon'ble Union Minister of State for Fisheries, Animal Husbandry & Dairying, and Panchayati Raj, Prof. S.P. Singh Baghel, visited ICAR-NBFGR in Lucknow and participated in a virtual Zoom interaction with 25 women trainees aged 30–40. These participants hailed from seven vibrant Self-Help Groups (SHGs) in Gumla block of Bokaro district, including Mayak Sakhi Samooch Mandal, Honey W-SHG, Rani W-SHG, Parvati Aajivika Sakhi Mandal, Vishnu Aajivika Sakhi Mandal, Satguru SHG, and Lakshmi Vikas Mahila Samuh. Sharing their journeys, trainees like Mrs. Kiran Devi, Mrs. Lilavati Devi, and Mrs. Asha Devi conveyed deep enthusiasm, highlighting how the programme's practical exposure and technical insights have instilled confidence to expand their ventures. They described the training as a turning point, transforming ornamental fish rearing from a novel idea into a feasible entrepreneurial pursuit capable of supporting family livelihoods.

The collaborative endeavour draws on the expertise of dedicated professionals: from the College of Fisheries Science, Gumla Dr. A.K. Singh, Associate Dean, Dr. Prasanta Jana, and Dr. K.S. Wisdom and from ICAR-NBFGR Dr. Poonam Jayant Singh, Nodal Officer, SCSP and Dr. A.K. Pathak, all operating under the strategic direction and guidance of Dr. Kajal Chakraborty, Director, ICAR-NBFGR. This partnership ensures high-quality, science backed delivery aligned with national priorities for inclusive growth.

Further enriching the empowerment narrative, the team celebrated International Women's Day on March 8, 2026, integrating the ongoing training with a health camp by Dr Neelam Jayant, Medical Officer, interactive brainstorming sessions, and cultural performances that showcased Jharkhand's rich traditional heritage, fostering not just skills but also community pride and solidarity. The event strongly focussed on women's empowerment in the fisheries sector, with prominent women leaders from the State Fisheries Department in attendance, including Mrs. Kusumlata, District Fisheries Officer (DFO), Gumla; Mrs. Divya Gulab Baa, Assistant Director of Fisheries; Mrs. Seema Toppo, DFO, Simdega; and Mrs. Swarnalata Madhu Lakra, DFO, Latehar. Their presence highlighted the critical role of women in leadership positions, inspiring trainees and reinforcing the programme's focus on gender-inclusive development and opportunities for women to lead livelihood generation through ornamental fisheries.

Ultimately, this programme represents more than skill acquisition; it is a strategic intervention to combat rural poverty by harnessing the economic potential of ornamental fisheries. By equipping SC men and women with marketable expertise, it paves the way for self-employment, household income enhancement, and broader socio-economic progress in Jharkhand's underserved communities, aligning with the government's vision of sustainable, inclusive development through fisheries-led entrepreneurship.



Phase 1 of training programme on hands on skill development in fabrication of Ornamental fish aquarium



Interaction of Honorable Union Minister of State Minister of State in the Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry & Dairying and Panchayati Raj with seven women Self Help Group from Gumla block of Bokaro district, Jharkhand undergoing training on Ornamental fish culture and rearing under Mission Navshakti of SCSP project of ICAR-NBFGR



Glimpses of training programme on Ornamental Fish Culture and Rearing at Gumla block Jharkhand



Celebration of International Womens day on 8th March 2026 at College of Fisheries Gumla with brainstorming session, training, health camp, input distribution and traditional cultural programme