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PRESS RELEASE

IIT (ISM) embarks on Mission to transform the quality of life of Scheduled Tribe (ST) people of Jamtara to help them evolve as farm based entrepreneurs

A team of faculty members of Department of Management Studies of IIT (ISM) Dhanbad led by Dr Rashmi Singh, Assistant Professor has embarked on a mission to transform the lives of scheduled tribe people of remote Jamtara district through tailor made interventions to help them evolve as farm based entrepreneurs.

Dr Singh along with the Dr Niladri Das, associate professor of her department today heralded the intervention today in Kundit Block, a community development block of Jamtara 32.72% of population of which is agricultural labourer, by organizing a workshop as part of Rs 60,75,211 (Rs 60.75 Lakh) project of Department of Science and Technology (SEED division) titled “Improving the well being of Schedule Tribe Communities (ST) using Game Theoretic and Operations Research Techniques in Jamtara district of Jharkhand”.

The four hour workshop organized today under the scheme, “Science Technology and Innovation Hubs for Development of Scheduled Caste (SC) and Schedule Tribe (ST) communities” from 11 am to 3 pm was attended by over 130 Schedule Tribe farmers of block besides of local officials and people’s representatives, including, Sriram Marandi, Block Development Officer (Kundhit) and different Mukhiyas of adjoining villages, Shankar Kora, Ameli Soren, Bimla Hansda, Arti Hembrom, Dulu Singh Tudu.

“We dwelt at length about the different tribal welfare schemes, including, special Central Assistance to Tribal Sub Scheme; Institutional support for development and marketing of tribal products (produce); Mechanism for Marketing of Minor Forest Produce (MFP) through minimum support price and development of value chain for MFP as a measure of social safety for MFP gatherers etc and the beneficiaries of programme took keen interest about the intricacies of the scheme during the workshop” said Dr Rashmi Singh and added that they will be organizing similar workshop in all six blocks of Jamtara till August 31 as part of the project.

Divulging more details Dr Singh said, “The idea is to improve the economic well-being of the scheduled tribes (ST) communities of Jamtara and primary focus is on the agriculture sector as it is the main source of income for the people of here as per the census data (2011).”

“As data is not available that can provide the statistics of scheduled tribes (ST) living in villages of Jamtara the so the primary survey is needed to get the current statistics about the scheduled tribes (ST) living in a particular village which will help to have an idea of their well-being and thus strategically plan the interventions to improve their quality of life” elaborated Dr Singh.

“The outbreak of COVID 19 has also negatively impacted the economy which has disrupted the supply chain and its implications for a developing country (India) that has high population density and limited resources is likely to be devastating” further explained Dr Singh.

“Moreover in the prevailing scenario the agriculture sector of India, which accounts for 42 percent of total employment is on the verge of a deepening crisis as it susceptible to uncertainties due to dependence on weather, traditional farming techniques and poor financial planning” explained Dr Singh.



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“As the lockdown period has worsened the economic outlook for agricultural commodities, It is expected that the demand for agricultural goods will be further compressed due to fall in incomes” further said Dr Singh and added that the consequence of these circumstances is more crucial for Jharkhand, where agriculture is the mainstay for 80% of the rural population. “Furthermore, reverse migration will aggravate the economic situation and government’s target of doubling farmer’s income cannot be achieved in the absence of innovative solutions’ said Dr Niladri Das.

“Our study which is the first of its kind proposes that farmers should be viewed as an “investor” of valuable resources: time, land, labor, and capital as farmers are the key functionaries of agricultural sector but they have ignored as decision makers” said Dr Das.

“Though the government has introduced for the welfare of the farmers but these do not empower them as informed decision makers and thus perpetuates sub optimal use of financial incentives and therefore, farmers are continuously trapped in a cycle of low income that severely constrains their capacity to invest in the farm and restricts future earnings” said Dr Das while elaborating the problem areas.

“As investors, farmers can benefit by adopting a strategy that would maximize and stabilize their earnings in the long run” said Dr Das and added in this context, diversification seems to be a promising approach to achieve higher returns with long term stability.

“Diversification will also enable the farmers to sustain themselves during unforeseen crises and to effectively manage risk.

“The aim of this study is to encourage farmers (ST) to evolve as farm-based entrepreneurs who are equipped to make informed financial decisions” said Das and added that an optimal scientific mechanism will give them feasible options for effective resource allocation and savings.

“This will encourage the habit of saving among the farmers and will help them in reducing indebtedness which will eventually improve the financial condition of the scheduled tribes (ST) communities and inculcate a strong sense of economic freedom, which is essential for a healthy ecosystem” summed up Das and added that series of workshops have been launched beginning today in this regard.

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