

*For Immediate Release: June 23, 2025*

## **PRESS-RELEASE**

### **IIT (ISM) Dhanbad holds stakeholder dialogue in Bankura to launch capacity-building programme on high-quality millet cultivation for tribal women**

Faculty from the Department of Management Studies and Industrial Engineering at the Indian Institute of Technology (Indian School of Mines), Dhanbad convened a stakeholder meeting at the Salma Gram Panchayat office in Saltora Block, Bankura district, to advance a Coal India Limited (CIL) CSR-sponsored project titled “Designing and Delivering a Capacity Building Programme for High-Quality Millet Cultivation to Empower Tribal Women Entrepreneurs in West Bengal and Creating a Digital Marketing Platform for Effective Delivery.”

Led by Prof Rashmi Singh and Prof Niladri Das, the session brought together representatives of local governance, agriculture, health and non-governmental organisations, alongside female farmers and women entrepreneurs. Block Development Officer Soumalya Ghosh, Salma Gram Panchayat Pradhan Baby Mukhopadhyaya, ward members, Krishi Vigyan Kendra experts and agriculture officers joined the discussion, ensuring that community priorities guided the programme design.

A technical team from IIT (ISM) Dhanbad—Rohit Singh, Nilesh Kumar, Sunny Kumar, Anand Chandra Sahu, Sumana Banerjee and Pawan Kumar—outlined field-level strategies to introduce climate-resilient millet varieties, entrepreneurship training and a mobile-friendly marketplace that will link growers directly with buyers.

“We aim to couple scientific know-how with the lived experience of tribal women so that millet farming becomes both climate-smart and commercially rewarding,” said Prof Rashmi Singh. Prof Niladri Das added, “The digital platform will shorten the path from farm to market, allowing producers to capture more value and scale their enterprises.”

The meeting identified local challenges such as erratic rainfall, limited storage infrastructure and restricted market access, and agreed on a phased action plan that blends agronomic training, business mentoring and digital literacy. The initiative is expected to benefit more than 500 women across the Saltora and adjoining blocks in its first year.

Rajni Singh

***Dean (Corporate Communications)***