

For Immediate Release: December 16, 2025

PRESS-RELEASE

IIT (ISM) Dhanbad Launches Three-Day Millet Entrepreneurship Programme for Tribal Women in West Bengal under Coal India CSR Initiative

The Indian Institute of Technology (Indian School of Mines) Dhanbad on Tuesday began a three-day Capacity Building Programme on High-Quality Millet Farming and Entrepreneurship for tribal women in Bankura, West Bengal under the Corporate Social Responsibility initiative of Coal India Limited. The programme is being implemented under the academic and strategic leadership of Prof. Niladri Das, Principal Investigator, and Prof. Rashmi Singh, Co-Principal Investigator, IIT (ISM) Dhanbad, with the objective of creating sustainable and women-led livelihood opportunities through scientific agriculture, entrepreneurship development and digital empowerment.

Aligned with national priorities on millet promotion, women empowerment and inclusive rural development, the initiative is being executed at Salma village in West Bengal, which has been identified as the programme's implementation site. Prior to the commencement of training, a comprehensive pre-impact and diagnostic survey was conducted under the supervision of Prof. Niladri Das and Prof. Rashmi Singh to assess existing agricultural practices, socio-economic conditions, resource availability and challenges related to millet cultivation. The findings of the survey have been used to design customized, need-based training modules aimed at ensuring long-term impact and sustainability.

Tribal women participants selected from the village are being trained through expert-led classroom sessions, hands-on workshops and field-based demonstrations. The training focuses on scientific millet cultivation practices, enterprise development, business planning and the use of digital tools for value addition, branding and marketing, facilitating a shift from subsistence farming to market-oriented, women-led agri-entrepreneurship.

On the first day of the programme, Dr. Bidhan Das, Joint Director, Indian Institute of Packaging, Kolkata, is conducting specialized sessions on branding and labeling, cost-effective packaging solutions and compliance with FSSAI standards. Participants are also engaging in practical digital exercises to design logos, labels and packaging for millet-based products using user-friendly platforms such as Canva, enhancing the market readiness of their products.

The second day will focus on digital and physical marketing integration, with Dr. Abhijit Kumar Nandi of Bidhan Chandra Krishi Viswavidyalaya providing practical training on market segmentation, use of social media platforms such as WhatsApp, Facebook and Instagram for digital marketing, and linkage with Farmer Producer Organizations and retail networks. Interactive workshops will enable participants to create online business pages and develop promotional content.

The final day of the programme will emphasize enterprise sustainability and scaling, with sessions on expansion strategies and access to government schemes including PMFME, SFURTI, NRLM and NABARD. Participants will prepare and present millet enterprise growth plans before an expert panel, followed by a valedictory ceremony marking the culmination of the capacity-building initiative.

The programme is being supported by a dedicated implementation team comprising Rohit Singh, Sunny Kumar, Sumana Banerjee and Firdous Ansari, who are ensuring effective on-ground execution and community engagement. The initiative reflects Coal India Limited's commitment to inclusive rural development while showcasing IIT (ISM) Dhanbad's role in translating academic research and expertise into impactful grassroots interventions aimed at creating self-sustaining economic opportunities for tribal women in West Bengal.

Rajni Singh

Dean (Corporate Communications)