



MY MEETING NOTES

A Transformational Journey in Nutripreneurship: Reflections from the 21-Day CAFT Training at ICAR-IARI



In this meeting note, Pinaki Roy, Misha Madhavan M, Amandeep Singh, and Mastanbi Shaik reflect on their participation in the 21-day CAFT training at IARI, New Delhi.

CONTEXT

From January 3 to 23, 2025, a 21-day training programme sponsored by ICAR under the Centre for Advanced Faculty Training (CAFT) unfolded at the Division of Agricultural Extension, ICAR-IARI, New Delhi. Titled “Extension Approaches and Initiatives for Enhancing Farmers’ Income through Nutripreneurship,” this course brought together a vibrant cohort of scientists, assistant professors, and KVK specialists from across the National Agricultural Research System (NARS) and state departments.

WHY NUTRIPRENEURSHIP?

Nutripreneurship, a synergy of nutrition and entrepreneurship, has become increasingly relevant in today's health-conscious world. With growing demand for organic, fortified, and functional foods, the scope for innovation in this field is immense. From dietary supplements to health-tech platforms and nutrition-based agri-startups, nutripreneurship offers a sustainable pathway for rural development and income enhancement.

Recognizing this potential, IARI's training aimed to equip participants with the knowledge, skills, and extension strategies needed to drive this transformative agenda forward.





Inauguration session of the training programme

Breaking the Ice: Micro-Lab Exercises

Right after the inaugural session, we dove into a fun and energizing micro-lab session. Think: ball-passing games, circular movement challenges, and command-following drills — all designed to shatter the first-day jitters. These seemingly simple exercises worked wonders in building camaraderie and trust among participants, setting the tone for a collaborative 21 days ahead.

Aligning Expectations: Group Discussions

Before the technical sessions began, we split into groups to discuss our expectations from the programme. From enhancing farmer training to exploring incubation support and refreshing academic knowledge, our goals were diverse. What stood out was the organizing team's genuine effort to tailor the sessions to meet our varied learning needs.

Module I: Crop Technologies for Nutritional Security

This module deep-dived into a range of IARI-developed crop technologies aimed at improving nutritional outcomes. We explored nutrient-rich vegetable varieties, such as Pusa Hybrid-1 (bitter melon), biofortified maize and wheat hybrids, and iron-rich pearl millet — all supported by compelling case studies.

Highlights included:

- Agronomic biofortification techniques, such as foliar spraying and microbial interventions, offer effective ways to enhance micronutrient content.
- Microgreens: Learning to grow these nutrient-dense seedlings sparked genuine interest — many of us saw and tasted them for the first time.
- Indigenous foods like moringa, curry leaves, and millets showcased the untapped entrepreneurial potential in underutilized crops.

Module II: Extension Strategies and Community Approaches

This module explored the “how” behind outreach and engagement.

- We were introduced to the Agri-Nutri Smart Village Model, which integrates nutrition farming, nutri-clubs, capacity building, and education.
- The KVK interventions like *Nari Vatika* and *KSHAMATA* revealed how grassroots innovations can empower rural women and promote FPOs.
- A session on Personal Effectiveness for Nutripreneurship had us reflecting deeply through psychological self-assessments.

- Perhaps most uniquely, a lecture on Knowledge Co-Creation began with a half-hour YouTube video followed by thought-provoking discussions, showcasing how participatory learning can be both fun and powerful.

We also engaged with topics such as gender empowerment, scientific writing, and impact assessment, giving us a well-rounded extension toolbox.

Module III: Sustainable Food Systems & Value Addition

Here, the focus shifted to how nutrition and income generation go hand-in-hand.

- Livestock products, often overlooked in discussions on nutrition, were highlighted as powerful sources of protein and micronutrients.
- We were introduced to Spirulina: a nutrient-dense algae with immense potential for combating malnutrition.
- The session on Hallur Atta, made from pearl millet, showed how thermal treatments can preserve nutrition while extending shelf life.
- From organic foods to millets and 3D food printing, the sessions revealed a fascinating convergence of tradition, technology, and entrepreneurship.

Field Visits & Hands-On Experiences

No classroom can replace the value of seeing things firsthand. Our visits were both inspiring and educational:



Trainees at the Crop Cafeteria, ATIC, IARI

- Crop Cafeteria & Krishi Haat: A visual treat of IARI's vegetable varieties and a live showcase of farmer-led agri-enterprises.
- PHT Laboratory: Hands-on training in making ready-to-serve beverages helped us appreciate post-harvest processing in action.



Hands on session on preparation of ready-to-serve beverage at PHT Lab

- 3D Printing Demo: Fascinating insights into how tech can revolutionize food customization.
- ZTM-BPD Unit ('Pusa Krishi'): Conversations with incubatees revealed the power of mentorship, infrastructure, and patience in turning ideas into businesses.
- IFS Model: Observing integrated farming practices strengthened our understanding of circular resource use and farm sustainability.



CAFT Team during their visit to IFS Model at IARI

External Visits that Left a Mark

- NIFTEM (Kundli): Cutting-edge food processing labs and incubation services wowed us with their scale and sophistication.



CAFT team during their visit at NIFTEM, Kundli

- Lady Irwin College: Exposure to research and innovation in food science added academic depth to our practical insights.
- IIP (Patparganj): An eye-opener on how packaging impacts shelf life, consumer appeal, and marketing success.
- Sunshine Vegetables Pvt. Ltd.: Col. (Retd.) Subhash Deshwal's journey — from non-farmer to "Carrot King" — inspired us to think big, start small, and act fast.



CAFT team at the carrot farm of Col (Retd.) Subhash Deshwal, Sunshine Vegetables Pvt Ltd

FINAL REFLECTIONS: OUR TAKEAWAYS

This training programme was a rich blend of theory, hands-on practice, and field-based insights. The diversity of participants and experts fostered a vibrant learning ecosystem.

Here's what stood out:

- **Balanced design:** The training catered to varied backgrounds — from social sciences to food technology and animal sciences.
- **Engaging pedagogy:** Group games, ice-breakers, and interactive sessions kept the energy high.
- **Real-world exposure:** Visits and interactions with actual nutripreneurs made the learnings tangible and relatable.
- **Scope for growth:** While nutrition was well-covered, future editions could include more focused sessions on business planning, incubation support, and funding schemes.

A Call to Action

For anyone working in agriculture, nutrition, or rural development, nutripreneurship is more than a buzzword; it's a vision for a healthier, more self-reliant India. This training showed us what's possible. Now it's up to us to take the knowledge forward into our classrooms, communities, and extension programmes.

Here's to creating a new generation of nutripreneurs!

Dr. Pinaki Roy is Subject Matter Specialist (SMS), Agricultural Extension, Krishi Vigyan Kendra Sitamarhi Bihar currently working on 'Transfer of Technology, Business Canvas Development modelling and Impact Assessment of the district Sitamarhi Bihar'. He can be contacted at roypinaki51@gmail.com

Dr. Misha Madhavan M is Scientist at Division of Agricultural Extension, ICAR-IARI, New Delhi, currently working on 'Agricultural Extension for Nutrition and Health (AE4NH)- Strategies and Models' and 'Converging Agripreneurship, Farmers' Innovations and Modern Technologies'. She can be contacted at mishamadhavanmsy4@gmail.com

Dr. Amandeep Singh is Assistant Professor at GADVASU, Ludhiana, Punjab, currently working on 'Formation of FPO of dairy farmers at Tarn Taran, Punjab and Establishment of Pashu Palak Tele-Advisory Kendra at GADVASU, Ludhiana'. He can be contacted at amandeepsingh@gadvasu.in

Dr. Mastanbi Shaik is Assistant Professor, Department of Veterinary and Animal Husbandry Extension Education, NTR College of Veterinary Science, Gannavaram, Andhrapradesh currently working on career opportunities for the veterinarians and Gender sensitization. She can be contacted at drmastanbi@gmail.com

AESA Secretariat: Centre for Research on Innovation and Science Policy (CRISP)
Road No 10, Banjara Hills, Hyderabad 500034, India

www.aesanetwork.org

Email: aesanetwork@gmail.com