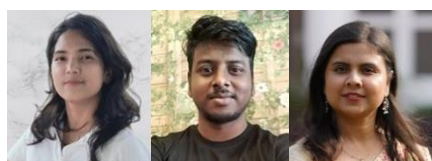




MY MEETING NOTES

**FACILITATING LEARNING LABS FOR SOCIO-TECHNICAL INNOVATION BUNDLING (STIB)
FOR WOMEN'S RESILIENCE AND EMPOWERMENT:
Experiences from the IRRI-IVRI Partnership Project
26 December 2024
Division of Extension Education, ICAR-Indian Veterinary Research Institute
Izatnagar, Uttar Pradesh, India**



Sandipamu Raahalya, Tamal C. Dhara & Pragati Shukla attended the Workshop on Facilitating Learning Labs for Socio-Technical Innovation Bundling (STIB) for Women's Resilience and Empowerment: Experiences from the IRRI-IVRI Partnership Project. They share their experiences here.

CONTEXT

The CGIAR Gender Equality Initiative, Work Package 2 - EMPOWER, aims to enhance women's resilience and empowerment in Africa and Asia by bundling socio-technical innovations. In West Bengal, this initiative is spearheaded by the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI) in collaboration with the ICAR-Indian Veterinary Research Institute (IVRI) and NGOs such as PRADAN, Change Initiative, and SEVA.

Building on IVRI's government-supported Scheduled Caste Sub-Plan and Scheduled Tribe Sub-Plan projects, Learning Labs in Balarampur (South 24 Parganas) and Makaltala (North 24 Parganas) aim to empower marginalized women, particularly from Scheduled Castes and Tribes, through poultry and goat farming initiatives. These labs serve as a foundation for designing and implementing Socio-Technical Innovation Bundling (STIB) via Multi-Stakeholder Platforms (MSP).



Objectives of the Workshop:

- Highlight the design and implementation of STIB through MSP and Learning Labs to scale its impact.
- Explore solutions to address structural barriers, including gender norms, to empower women within climate-affected agri-food systems.

- Encourage faculties and research scholars from veterinary institutions to adopt and spread the STIB methodology.

INAUGURAL SESSION

The event began with a warm welcome from Dr. H. R. Meena, Head of the Division of Extension Education, ICAR-IVRI.

Dr. Mahesh Chander, Principal Scientist and Project PI, presented an overview of the initiative titled “Facilitating Learning Labs on Climate-Smart Gender-Responsive Livestock-Based STIB for Women’s Resilience and Empowerment.”



Introductory session on Facilitating Learning Labs by Dr. Mahesh Chander

Key Highlights:

- HER+ Initiative: Integrates technological and social innovations to amplify women’s voices in agriculture.
- STIB Framework: Combines climate-smart technologies, capacity-building programs, and gender-transformative approaches to address structural barriers.
- Learning Labs in Action: Photographs and videos showcased successful efforts in West Bengal, where STIB improved women’s resilience and livelihoods.

Key Takeaways:

- STIB integrates technological and social innovations to empower women in agriculture.
- Gender-transformative approaches address structural barriers and increase access to solutions.
- The HER+ initiative scales successful methodologies through grassroots outreach.
- Learning Labs in West Bengal demonstrated tangible benefits for marginalized women through targeted poultry and goat farming initiatives.

Empowering Women Through Learning Labs and Multi-Stakeholder Platforms

Dr. Rupasi Tiwari, Joint Director of Extension Education, emphasized the role of women’s empowerment in national development. She highlighted:

- Challenges such as limited technical resources, low decision-making autonomy, and restricted awareness and
- Success stories from flagship programs like SC/ST plans that fostered entrepreneurship and collective learning in livestock farming.

Key Takeaways:

- Learning Labs address barriers like resource limitations and decision-making autonomy.
- Collective learning initiatives foster entrepreneurship and problem-solving.
- Flagship programs coupled with the STIB approach led to transformative outcomes in West Bengal.

Building Women’s Strength through Education, Technology, and Financial Independence

Ms. Shruti Gangwar, Chairperson of Bareilly Urban Cooperative Bank, stressed the importance of grassroots empowerment initiatives like Beti Bachao Beti Padhao and PM Ujjwala Yojana. Quoting Mahatma Gandhi – *If you educate a man, you educate an individual, but if you educate a woman, you educate an entire family* – she highlighted the transformative impact of educating women.

Key Takeaways:

- Government schemes empower women at the grassroots level.
- Collective efforts within groups help overcome challenges.
- Collaboration with institutions enhances technological and financial literacy.
- Women must prioritize financial stability and be aware of supportive government initiatives.

TECHNICAL SESSIONS

Session I: Understanding the Landscape

Speaker: Dr. Arnab Sen, Head, Eastern Regional Station – IVRI

Dr. Arnab Sen shared insights from the HER+ initiative and STIB’s role in addressing gender inequalities in agriculture. He highlighted:



Discussion on Socio-Technical Innovation Bundling (STIB) interventions by Dr. Arnab Sen

- Successful Learning Labs in West Bengal that advanced poultry and goat farming among women.
- The Theory of Change paradigm as a tool for impactful gender-responsive research.

Key Takeaways:

- STIB effectively integrates technological and social interventions for economic empowerment.
- Capacity-building and input support improve livestock care and integrated farming.
- The Theory of Change facilitates planning and evaluation of gender-focused initiatives.

Session II: Transformative Strategies and Good Practices

Participants shared challenges faced by farm women and solutions for empowerment through group discussions involving 75 members, including scholars, experts, and women farmers.



Group exercise on challenges faced by farm women in Bareilly

Key Takeaways:

- Organize workshops for financial literacy and technical skills.
- Promote awareness of government schemes via grassroots organizations.
- Develop rural infrastructure and market linkages to boost women’s incomes.
- Advocate for holistic value chain development addressing women’s needs.
- Build partnerships with NGOs, local authorities, and private stakeholders

Session III: Scaling the STIB Approach

Discussions focused on challenges such as limited access to extension services, gender norms, and policy gaps. Participants proposed:

- Improving access to financial institutions.
- Forming women’s collectives and grassroots interventions.
- Encouraging political participation and skill mapping.
- Establishing multi-stakeholder platforms to systematically address barriers.



Discussion on the Holistic STIB approach to address the challenges

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Organize zone-wise workshops to promote the STIB approach and Learning Labs.
2. Map women's contributions in the agricultural value chain for recognition and strategy development.
3. Compile good practices and evidence to facilitate scaling across diverse contexts.

OUR LEARNING

Attending this workshop offered deep insights into women's empowerment in agriculture. Key lessons included:

- **STIB's Impact:** Combining agricultural innovations with social interventions empowers women and enhances resilience.
- **Addressing Gender Norms:** Societal norms significantly influence women's access to resources and decision-making.
- **Learning Labs in Action:** Poultry and goat farming initiatives in West Bengal demonstrated tangible improvements in women's livelihoods.
- **Grassroots Efforts:** Capacity-building programs and outreach efforts are critical for empowering women and fostering inclusive agricultural systems.

This experience inspired us to adopt these learnings to create equitable and inclusive ecosystems in agriculture. The workshop was not just an event—it was a call to action.

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