

14 February 2025

## **Mission Navshakti 2.0: Empowering Scheduled Caste Women to Become Micro-Entrepreneurs in Ornamental Fisheries through Systemic Design Thinking led Innovation**

A skill development training program was conducted on January 10, 2025, at KVK Unnao in collaboration with ICAR NBFGR under the SCSP project, focusing on sustainable livelihood enhancement for Scheduled Caste (SC) women. This initiative introduced participants to the art of aquarium fabrication and rearing fishes for equipping them with additional practical skills for alternative source of income. Following the initial training, an exposure visit to Lulu Mall in Lucknow provided insights into market trends and consumer preferences. Another meeting was held on February 14, 2025, at KVK Unnao, where a design studio session was conducted for sustainable local ecofriendly solutions. In the context of Mission Navshakti 2.0, systemic design thinking ensures that interventions like ornamental fish farming are not just skill-based but are embedded within a larger framework of market linkages, eco-friendly production methods, and rural-urban integration. This session incorporated systemic design thinking, guiding women to create clay prototypes for mini-aquarium decorations. Using locally available resources, these handcrafted items will be baked in traditional chullahs, adding value to their products while preserving cultural techniques.

A dedicated team, including Dr. Poonam Jayant Singh, Nodal Officer SCSP, ICAR NBFGR, Dr A K Singh, Dr Archana Singh, Dr Ratna Sahay, KVK Unnao, Shri Ravi, Dr. Suresh Sharma, Hitech Fisheries, Sh Indramani , Aquaworld, and Shri Saddam, conducted the programme.

The team also visited the homes of women in two villages Unchahar and Barakheda where women proudly showcased their home-based aquariums, their vegetable farms supplying local markets, and newly created small units where they endeavour to rear rear molly and guppy fish. The integration with farming fosters a sustainable model, generating additional income streams for rural women while addressing urban demands. As part of the initiative, the women were also provided with molly and guppy fish to support their rearing activities. This holistic approach, blending skill development, prototype creation, and systemic design thinking, is set to empower rural women to establish independent ventures, strengthening their economic resilience and expanding their role in market-driven enterprises.

Furthermore, the initiative aims to develop a cluster and hub model, where Lucknow and adjoining areas such as Sitapur, Kanpur Dehat, Barabanki, and Unnao will create a synergistic ecosystem. This model will facilitate a structured supply chain for rural women entrepreneurs and enhance market linkages to strengthen the integration of marginalized communities specially rural women into the broader economy by transforming them into micro-entrepreneurs.



Visiting Villages Barakheda and Unchdwar at Unnao to understand ground level problems



Local design studio session with sustainable materials to create prototypes for custom made mini aquariums

