FICSI
Food Industry Capacity and Skill Initiative

PROJECT EVALUATION REPORT

PEPSICO - SHRI ANNA PROJECT

Up-Skilling of 7,000 women food handlers for the job role of “Millet Food Processor” in Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh

December 2025

Prepared By

SGS

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ABBREVIATIONS

CSR: Corporate Social Responsibility
FICSI: Food Industry Capacity & Skill Initiative
FICCI: Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry
FSSAI: Food Safety and Standards Authority of India
FPO: Farmers Producer Organization
MSDE: Ministry of Skill Development & Entrepreneurship
MoFPI: Ministry of Food Processing Industries (MoFPI)
NCVET: National Council for Vocational Education and Training
NSQF: National Skills Qualification Framework
OECD: Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
RPL: Recognition of Prior Learning
SHG: Self Help Group
ToT: Training of Trainers
ToA: Training of Assessors
QB: Question Bank
SGS: Société Générale de Surveillance
UNDP: United Nations Development Program

ETHICAL CONSIDERATION

Informed consent: The interviews were done after receiving respondent's consent. Even after the interviews were completed, their permission was sought to proceed with their responses.

Confidentiality: The information provided by participants has been kept private. At no point were their data or identities disclosed. The research findings have been quoted in a way that does not expose the respondents' identities.

Comfort: The interviews were performed following the respondents' preferences. In addition, the interview time was chosen in consultation with them. At each level, respondents' convenience and comfort were considered.

Right to reject or withdraw: Respondents were guaranteed safety and allowed to refuse to answer questions or withdraw during the study.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We, at SGS, would like to express our sincere gratitude to the Food Industry Capacity & Skill Initiative (FICSI) for entrusting us with this project evaluation assignment. We are deeply appreciative of their continuous support and cooperation throughout the course of the study.

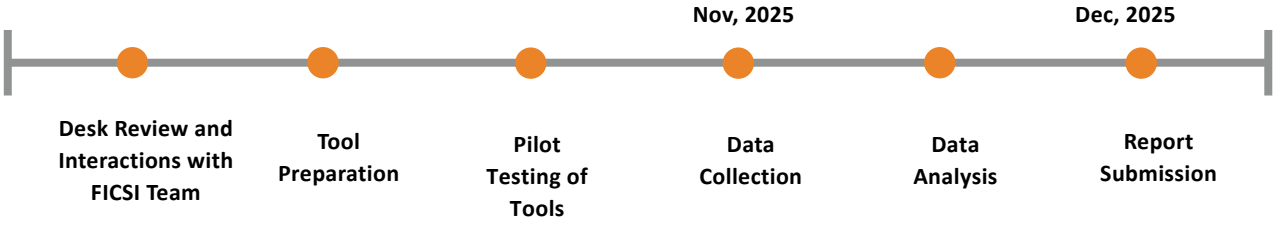
We extend our heartfelt thanks to all individuals and organizations who supported and facilitated the study, and to everyone who contributed valuable insights. We are especially grateful to the FICSI team for their intellectual guidance, constructive feedback, and timely assistance at every stage of the assessment.

Finally, we would like to acknowledge all the respondents who devoted their time to completing the extensive survey. Their participation and thoughtful responses were instrumental to the success of this study.

ABOUT SGS

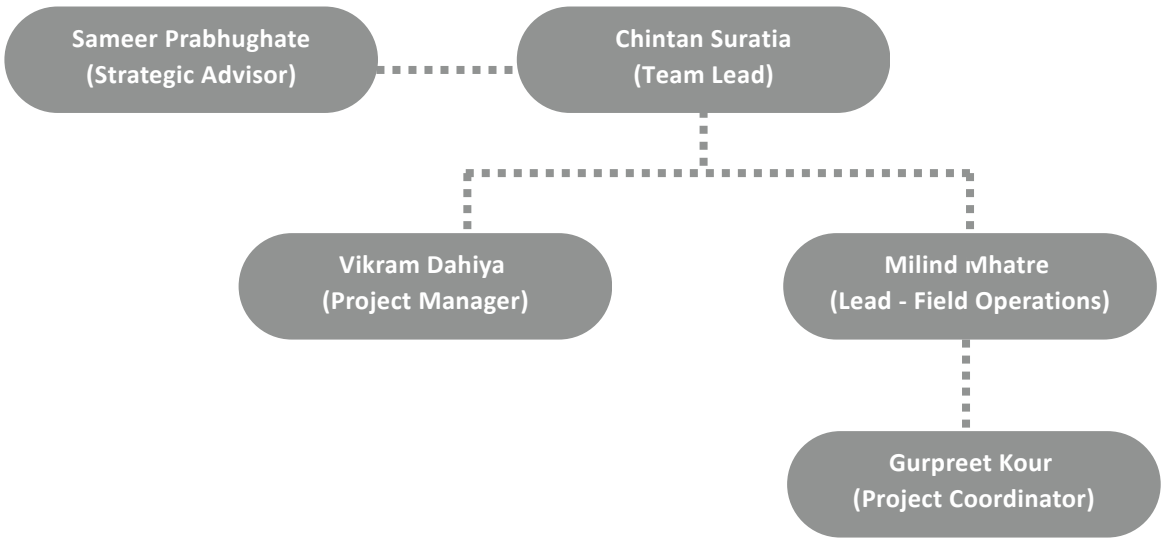
Founded in 1878, SGS is the world's leading company in testing, inspection, verification, and certification services, setting the global benchmark for quality, sustainability, and integrity across industries. Our mission is to create a better, safer, and more interconnected world by helping businesses manage risk, improve efficiency, and drive sustainable growth. With tailored solutions spanning agriculture, automotive, consumer goods, energy, healthcare, and more, we support organizations in meeting regulatory requirements and achieving higher performance standards.

As a trusted global partner, SGS combines its impact-led approach, expertise, and extensive presence to deliver measurable results. We collaborate with corporations, philanthropic organizations, foundations, and social organizations to design and implement CSR programs, ensuring compliance while maximizing social impact. Our integrated platform enables corporates and institutions to meet CSR mandates effectively and sustainably.



Project Timeline

Core Project Team



ABOUT FICSI

The Food Industry Capacity & Skill Initiative (FICSI), recognized as the Food Processing Sector Skill Council, is a nonprofit organization registered under the Societies Registration Act of 1860. This initiative has garnered support from the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) in collaboration with the Ministry of Skill Development & Entrepreneurship (MSDE) and the Ministry of Food Processing Industries (MoFPI). The organization's headquarters is situated at the third floor of the Shriram Bhartiya Kala Kendra Building, Copernicus Marg, New Delhi 110001.

FICSI operates as an autonomous entity within the industry, with the primary objective of cultivating a skilled workforce tailored for the Food Processing Industries. Its role extends to fostering a culture of food-related knowledge and enhancing the skills of individuals engaged in the food processing sector. Notably, FICSI is registered under the National Council for Vocational Education and Training (NCVET) as an Awarding Body.

ABOUT PEPSICO

PepsiCo products are enjoyed more than a billion times every day across over 200 countries and territories. PepsiCo's vision is to be the global leader in Beverages and Convenient Foods by Winning with pep+ (PepsiCo Positive)—a comprehensive transformation that puts sustainability and human capital at the center of value creation. Through pep+, PepsiCo seeks to operate within planetary boundaries while inspiring positive change for people and the planet.

In India, PepsiCo believes that progress is meaningful only when it is shared. PepsiCo's journey has never been solely about business; it is shaped by people, partnerships, and purpose. From improving access to essential resources to strengthening community ecosystems, PepsiCo's impact grows when the communities around it thrive.

PepsiCo's social responsibility efforts in India are anchored in the pillars of Communities and Livelihoods. These pillars reflect PepsiCo's commitment to listening, learning, and co-creating solutions that nurture resilience, restore dignity, and open doors to opportunity.

PepsiCo's work spans five key thematic areas—Water, Waste, Food Security, Farming, and Workforce Development. Across these areas, PepsiCo enhances water access and sustainability, strengthens circularity in waste systems, supports nutrition outcomes, increases farmer incomes through technology and capacity-building, and expands workforce opportunities with a strong focus on women's economic participation.

These initiatives are delivered through PepsiCo's CSR programs, the PepsiCo Foundation, and long-term collaborations with civil society and ecosystem partners. Through these sustained efforts, PepsiCo remains committed to contributing meaningfully to society and creating a more inclusive and resilient future for communities across India.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Millet Food Processor capacity-building initiative, supported by PepsiCo, aims to equip 7,000 women from Self-Help Groups (SHGs) and Farmer Producer Organisations (FPOs) with industry-relevant skills through an NSQF-aligned training and certification program designed by FICSI. The job role of Millet Products Processor (FIC/Q1011)—approved by NCVET and aligned with national occupational standards—provides a structured pathway for women engaged in food processing to transition into certified millet-based food entrepreneurs. Implemented during the momentum created by the UN International Year of Millets (2023), the project leverages a 50-hour Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) model, focusing on core competencies including production preparation, composite flour development, food safety, employability skills, and millet-based baked and extruded products.

SHGs and FPOs already active in millet-related activities are mobilized across selected districts, ensuring community ownership and relevance. The broader objectives are to strengthen women's livelihoods, enhance traditional food skills, promote local employment, reduce seasonal migration, and embed good manufacturing and food safety practices as per FSSAI guidelines—ultimately positioning women as skilled processors in the growing millet value chain.

SGS was entrusted with the responsibility of conducting the project evaluation. Using a mixed-method approach, the study engaged a total of 379 beneficiaries and trainers through structured questionnaires, Key Informant Interviews (KIIs), and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs). The assessment was carried out across six training centres located in Uttar Pradesh (Agra, Barabanki, Chandauli) and Madhya Pradesh (Rewa, Sidhi, Singrauli). This combination of quantitative and qualitative methods helped capture both measurable changes and deeper behavioural insights. The major findings emerging from this assessment are summarized below, while detailed results are presented in the subsequent sections of the report.

The assessment clearly shows that the millet food processing training has made a strong and positive difference in the lives of the women who participated. Most women reported a major improvement in their understanding of how to handle, process, and prepare millet-based products safely.

Their ratings across key concepts—such as hygiene, packaging, storage, and quality control highlight that more than 90% now feel confident or very confident about applying what they learned. This reflects that the training approach, demonstrations, and hands-on practice were effective and easy for participants to follow.

A visible behavioural change is also evident. Basic hygiene habits improved drastically after the training, with the number of women who always follow safe practices increasing from 11% before to 80% after the training. Many respondents also mentioned that they have started using gloves, hairnets, and proper cleaning methods more regularly. This shift shows that the programme has helped women internalize safe and hygienic food handling practices that are essential for producing quality millet products.

The training has also started generating livelihood benefits. About 31% of the women have already begun small-scale income-generating activities, especially preparing millet laddus, cookies, and other snacks at home. Over 55% feel confident about selling their products in the market, and an encouraging 94% want to take up advanced training to further improve their skills. These outcomes show that the project is not only building knowledge, but also motivating women to explore new livelihood opportunities.

IMPACT AT GLANCE - PEPSICO SHRI ANNA PROJECT

FICSI
Food Industry Capacity and Skill Initiative

50 Hours

NSQF aligned training on job role "Millet Products Processor" and FosTaC (FSSAI)

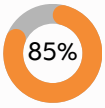
7000

Women Beneficiaries from SHGs/ FPOs

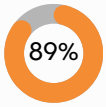
30+

Training centers across Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh

Outcomes - Adoption of Food Safety & Hygiene Practices



Adopted **two or more hygiene practices** learned during training



Rated **knowledge improvement** above 4 (Out of 5 Score Rating)

Rated between 4 and 5 on **food safety and FSSAI guidelines**

Project Relevance

65%

Belong to households earning less than INR 5K per month

Focus on vulnerable groups engaged in informal food-handling and micro-enterprise activities

Readiness for Advancement and Market Participation

31% Initiated income generating activities

55% 55% reported feeling confident to sell or market millet-based products

94% Expressed interest in receiving advanced training

Training Access and Quality

97%

Reported that training centers were accessible

92%

Rated quality of training as Excellent/ Very Good

SETTING THE CONTEXT

India continues to face interlinked challenges of malnutrition, limited livelihood opportunities for women, and declining consumption of traditional nutritious crops like millets. States such as Uttar Pradesh (UP) and Madhya Pradesh (MP) reflect these challenges acutely. MP, for instance, has over 10 lakh malnourished children, including 1.36 lakh severely wasted, with a severe/moderate malnutrition rate of 7.79% — significantly higher than the national average. These nutrition deficits are compounded by diets dominated by rice and wheat, while millets — rich in micronutrients, fibre, and essential minerals — remain underutilized despite their proven health benefits.

At the same time, rural women in both UP and MP remain an under-tapped economic demographic. Although female labour force participation in India has risen to 41.7%, states like UP still lag behind, despite recent improvements from 14.2% (2017–18) to roughly 32–36% in the most recent assessments. This indicates both the challenges and the significant opportunity to engage women in structured economic activity. Skill development, especially in sectors such as food processing, provides a viable pathway for women to transition into productive, income-generating roles.

Millet processing represents a particularly strategic avenue for women's economic empowerment. Traditional processing in rural areas is often manual, time-intensive, and unhygienic — leading to inconsistent product quality and limiting commercial potential. Upskilling women in modern processing, food safety, hygiene, and value-added millet product development strengthens local food systems while enabling women to become active participants in emerging millet value chains. This is especially timely as national and state governments work to revive millet cultivation and promote millet-based foods for improved nutrition and climate-resilient agriculture.

MOSPI (Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation). “Women and Men in India – Participation in Economy.” (2023).
Earth Focus. “Millet Tradition Loses Flavour Among Madhya Pradesh’s Tribals.” (2024) – Nutritional benefits of millets.
Uttar Pradesh Millets Revival Programme. UP PCSM / Govt. of Uttar Pradesh. (2024).
MSSRF (M. S. Swaminathan Research Foundation). Report on Women & Millet Micro-Enterprise Models. (2025).

ABOUT THE PROJECT

The PepsiCo–Shri Anna Project is a flagship CSR initiative focused on strengthening rural livelihoods by empowering 7,000 women across Self-Help Groups (SHGs), Farmer Producer Organisations (FPOs), and individual food workers in Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh. The project is rooted in PepsiCo's commitment to advancing the millet value chain and expanding sustainable, income-generating opportunities for women at the grassroots.

Implemented in partnership with the Food Industry Capacity & Skill Initiative (FICSI) and supported by UNDP, the initiative delivers high-quality, NSQF-aligned training for the nationally approved job role of "Millet Products Processor" (FIC/Q1011). The NCVET-endorsed curriculum equips participants with practical skills in millet processing, food safety and hygiene, packaging, product development, and essential employability competencies.

As India assumes a global leadership role in promoting millets, following the United Nations General Assembly's designation of 2023 as the International Year of Millets —the project harnesses this national momentum to position women as vital contributors to local food systems and value-added millet enterprises.

Through a structured 50-hour Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) training model, strong community mobilization, and certified assessments, the project seeks to enhance women's technical proficiency, improve incomes, promote safe and hygienic production practices, strengthen community enterprises, and expand the market presence of millet-based products.

By investing in women's skills, the PepsiCo–Shri Anna Project is cultivating a capable rural workforce while fostering economic resilience, nutritional awareness, and community-driven growth—setting a meaningful benchmark for inclusive development in India.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

Mobilization

- Conducted through FICSI-affiliated Training Partners
- Women from SHGs, FPOs, and individual food handlers targeted
- Eligibility: Women aged 18–55, meeting NSQF criteria
- Candidate details uploaded on the Skill India Portal and FoSTac portal

Training

- 46 hours of skills training and 4 hours of Basic Manufacturing FoSTaC training.
- TOT-certified trainers approved by FICSI and FSSAI.
- Scheme branding and practical lab facilities available at the training centre.
- Trainer and candidate feedback is collected
- Learning materials provided (handbooks, guides)

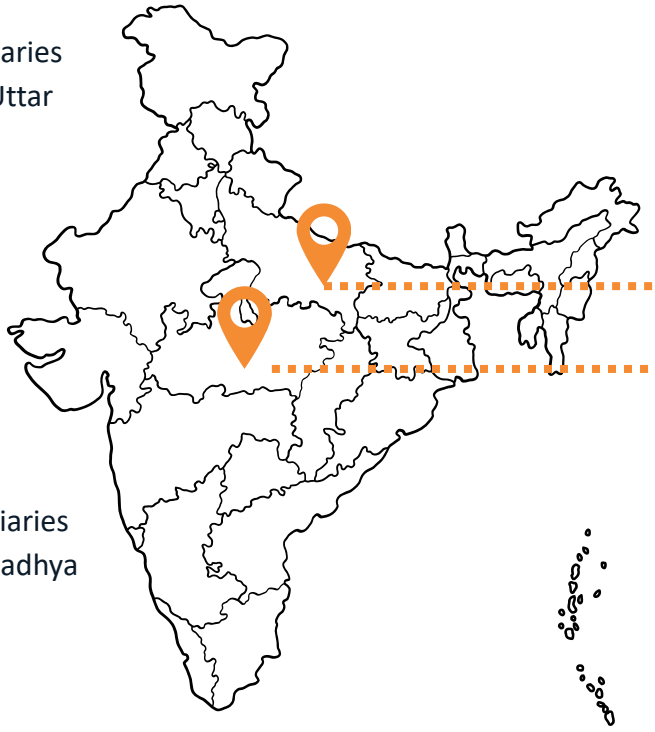
Assessment & Certification

- Third-party assessments are conducted by TOA-certified assessors using FICSI-approved question banks.
- Candidates who score 70% or above in the assessment are certified
- Each certified candidate receives two certificates: a Skill Certificate and FSSAI Certificate

7000+ Women Beneficiaries

3400 women beneficiaries across 8 **districts** in Uttar Pradesh

3600 women beneficiaries across **8 districts** in Madhya Pradesh



Uttar Pradesh

1. Sonbhadra
2. Ghazipur
3. Chandauli
4. Agra
5. Barabanki
6. Balrampur
7. Ambedkar Nagar
8. Gonda

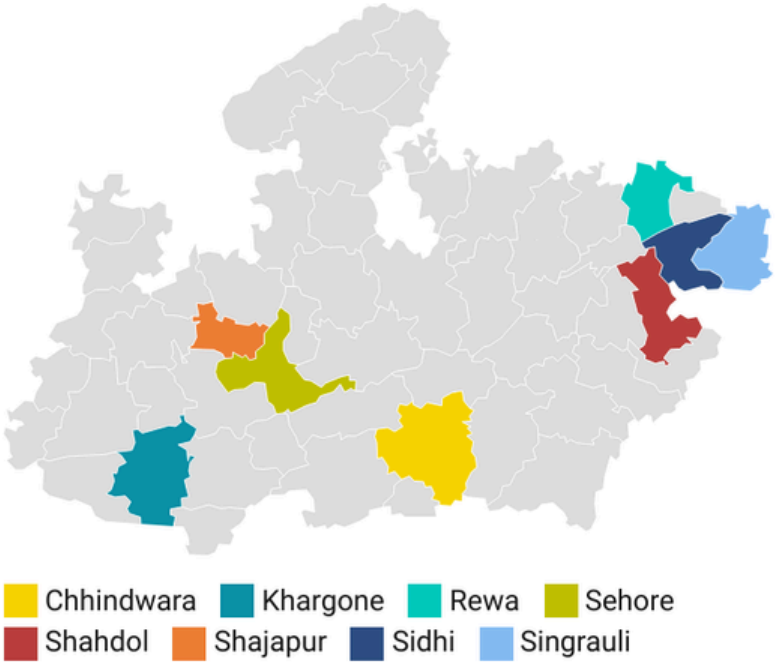
Madhya Pradesh

1. Singrauli
2. Sidhi
3. Rewa
4. Shahdol
5. Chhindwada
6. Khargone
7. Sehore
8. Sahjapur

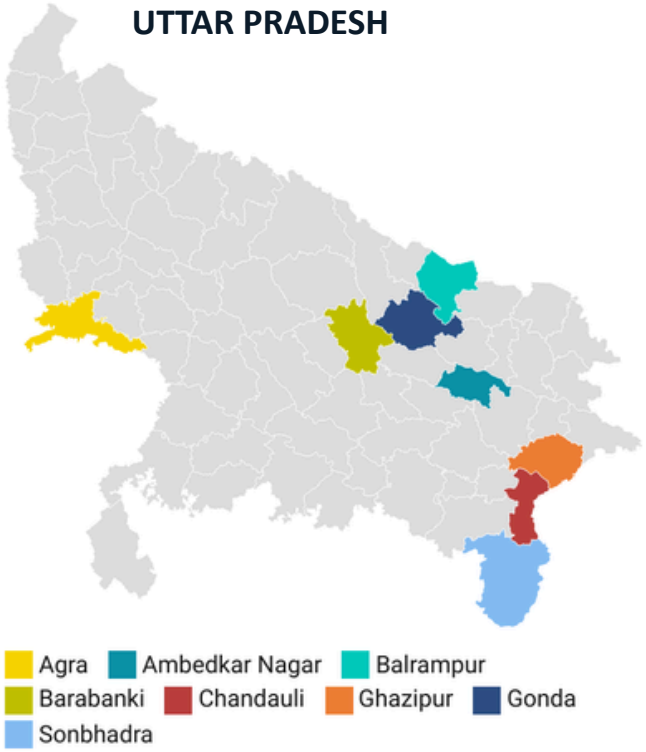
Fig 1: Geographical Outreach

TRAINING GEOGRAPHY

MADHYA PRADESH



UTTAR PRADESH

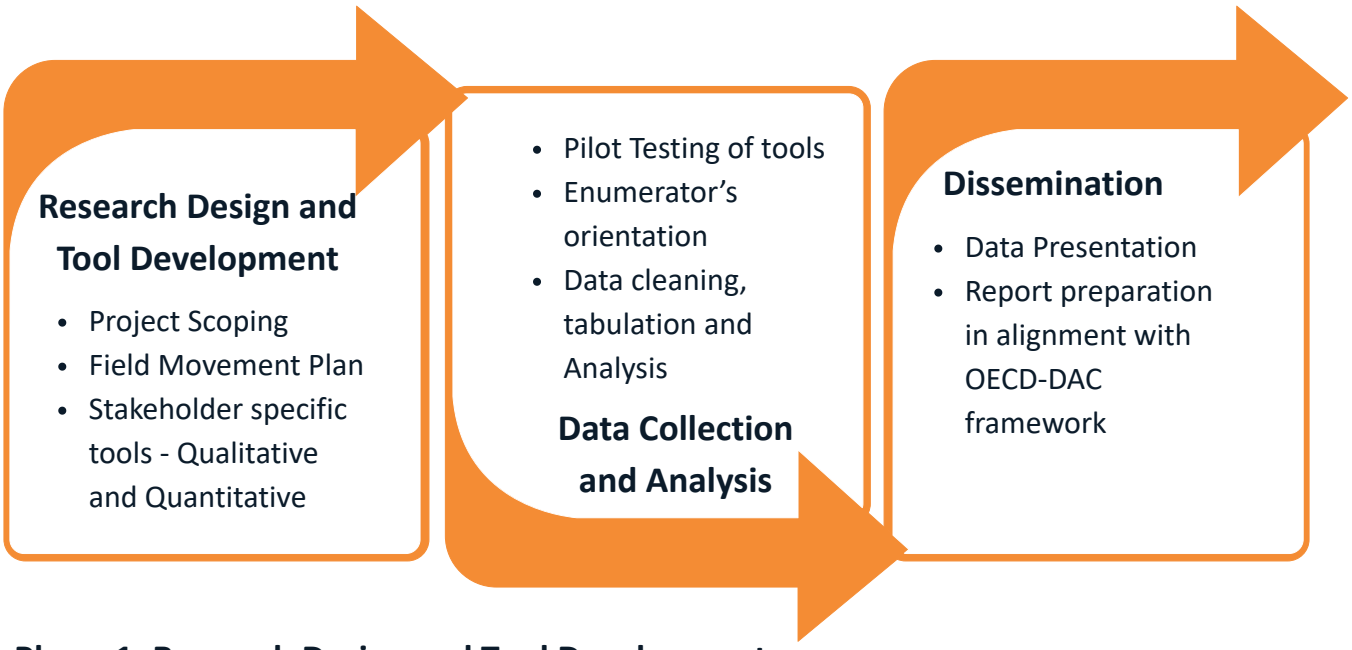


STATE/DISTRICT WISE PROJECT STATUS

State	District	Total Target	Total Trained
Madhya Pradesh	Chhindwara	440	440
	Shihor	800	800
	Sahjapur	240	240
	Khargone	80	120
	Singrauli	280	280
	Sidhi	520	520
	Shahdol	640	640
	Rewa	560	600
Uttar Pradesh	Sonbhadra	600	600
	Chandauli	880	880
	Ghazipur	120	120
	Agra	640	640
	Barabanki	720	720
	Balrampur	320	320
	Gonda	120	120
	Ambedkar Nagar	40	40
Total		7000	7080

APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY

The evaluation was conducted in three distinct phases, each designed to systematically capture the reach, effectiveness, and outcomes of the intervention on the target beneficiaries. The study adopted an integrated and cohesive assessment approach, combining quantitative and qualitative methodologies to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the project's influence on women trained under the Millet Food Processor initiative. This blended approach enabled the research team to examine not only the immediate outputs of the training but also its effect on knowledge enhancement, behavioural changes, livelihood improvements, and adoption of hygienic and safe food-processing practices. By triangulating insights from field interactions, survey responses, stakeholder consultations, and observational data, the assessment framework ensured that the findings accurately reflect the real-life experiences and transformations witnessed by the beneficiaries.



Phase 1: Research Design and Tool Development

The project evaluation commenced with a kick-off meeting with the FICSI team to discuss the overall scope of work, gain a comprehensive understanding of the project activities, and align on expectations for the assessment process. Based on the desk review, the SGS team initiated stakeholder mapping for the evaluation. Key stakeholders were identified to enable both quantitative and qualitative interactions. Following this mapping exercise, and in consultation with the FICSI team, the research tools for data collection were developed.

Phase 2: Data Collection and Analysis

This phase involved field-based data collection across six locations—three districts each in Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh—to ensure representative coverage. A team of trained field enumerators, selected for their gender sensitivity, local language skills, and community-survey experience, collected the information using structured questionnaires and brief qualitative interactions.

A total of 379 beneficiary samples were gathered, providing a strong dataset to assess the project's reach, effectiveness, and early outcomes. The diverse sample allowed the team to capture variations in training experience, adoption of practices, and livelihood-related changes. Following data cleaning, quantitative data was analysed for patterns and trends, while qualitative inputs were reviewed to understand beneficiary perceptions and contextual insights.

Table 1: Sample Size Coverage

State	District	Sample
Uttar Pradesh	Agra	62
	Barabanki	63
	Chandauli	62
Madhya Pradesh	Rewa	62
	Sidhi	63
	Singrauli	67
Total		**379**

Phase 3: Dissemination

In the final phase, the findings from the analysis were consolidated into a comprehensive project evaluation report. The results, insights, and recommendations were documented and shared with FICSI and project stakeholders to support informed decision-making and future planning.

The evaluation was conducted using the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) evaluation framework, which enabled a structured review across key dimensions such as relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability. This approach provided a systematic lens to examine the intervention's design and implementation, highlighting its strengths, challenges, and opportunities for improvement and scale-up. The methodology was tailored to support FICSI in assessing progress against project objectives and in generating evidence to inform future decision-making.

SGS team interaction with beneficiaries

KEY FINDINGS

Demographic Details

This section presents the demographic profile of the respondents engaged for the impact assessment. Since the project is designed specifically for women, all 379 beneficiaries consulted are female. To ensure diverse representation, respondents were selected from six centres—three in Madhya Pradesh and three in Uttar Pradesh, capturing variations across geographic and operational contexts.

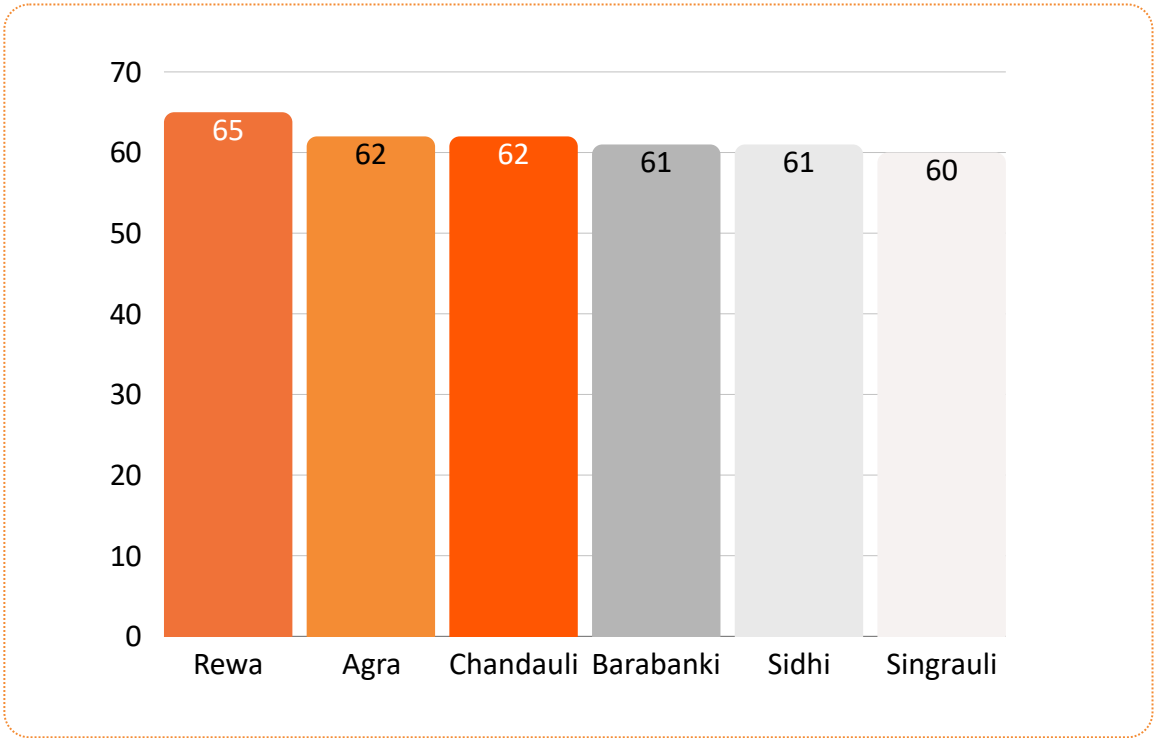


Fig 2: Location wise samples collected

The age distribution of respondents shows that a majority of participants (64%) fall within the 18–35 age group, indicating that the project is engaging a relatively younger cohort of women who are more likely to adopt new skills and practices quickly. Another 30% of respondents are in the 36–45 age bracket, representing a mature segment with substantial household and livelihood responsibilities, which may positively influence their motivation to upskill for income enhancement. Only 6% are above 46 years, suggesting limited participation from older women. Overall, the distribution reflects a strong presence of young and middle-aged women who form a productive and adaptable demographic for capacity-building interventions. All of the women are associated with SHGs/ FPOs.

The income distribution shows that a majority of respondents (65%) belong to households earning less than ₹5,000 per month, indicating that the programme predominantly serves women from economically vulnerable backgrounds. Another 16% fall within the ₹5,001–10,000 range, reflecting lower-middle-income conditions. Only 17% of respondents report household incomes between ₹10,001–15,000, and a very small segment (2%) earn above ₹15,000. Overall, the data suggests that the initiative is effectively reaching women from low-income and marginalised households who stand to benefit the most from livelihood enhancement interventions.

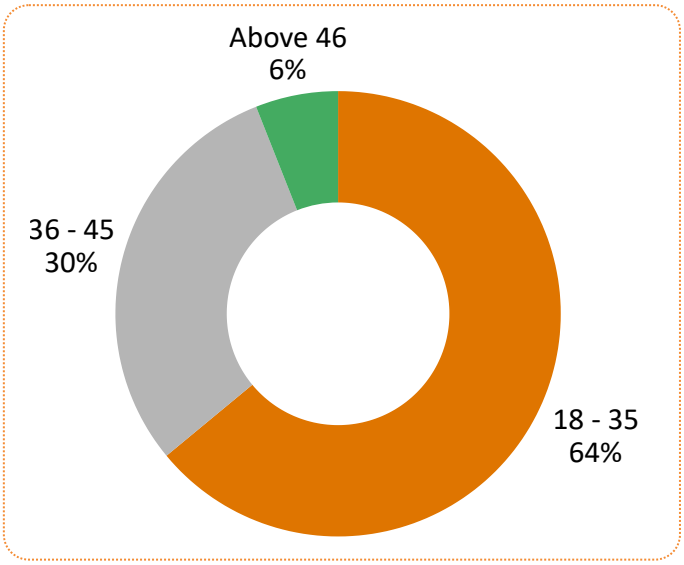


Fig 3: Age Distribution

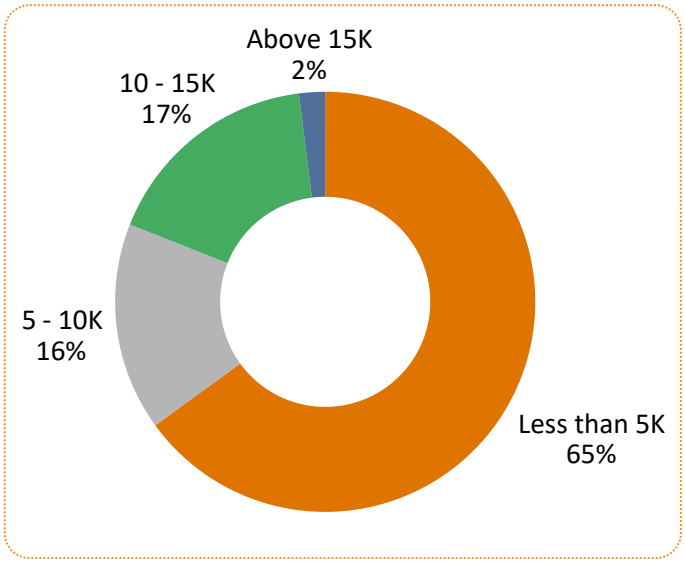


Fig 4: Income Distribution

The education profile shows that 14% of the respondents have no formal schooling, indicating the presence of a segment that may require more hands-on and visual training approaches. Around 9% have completed graduation, demonstrating the inclusion of a small but capable group with higher learning readiness. The remaining majority have schooling backgrounds—primary, middle, or secondary—suggesting that most participants possess basic literacy levels that enable them to comprehend training content, though simplified and practice-oriented methods remain essential for effective learning.

Beneficiary Feedback on Training Access and Quality

An overwhelming majority of beneficiaries reported a positive training experience. Nearly 97% of respondents confirmed that the training centres were easily accessible, indicating that location and travel requirements were not a barrier to participation. Furthermore, when asked to rate the quality of the training, 92% of the participants rated it as 'Very Good' or 'Excellent', reflecting strong satisfaction with the delivery, content, and overall training environment.

A majority of respondents reported strong clarity in training delivery, with 72% stating that trainers always explained concepts clearly, and an additional 13% confirming that this occurred often. This indicates consistently high-quality facilitation across sessions

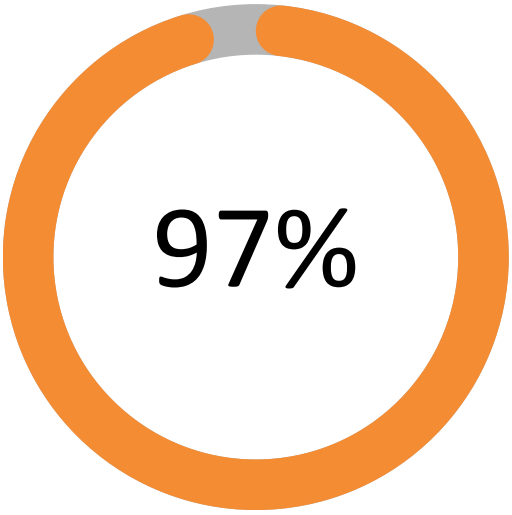


Fig 5: Training centers were accessible

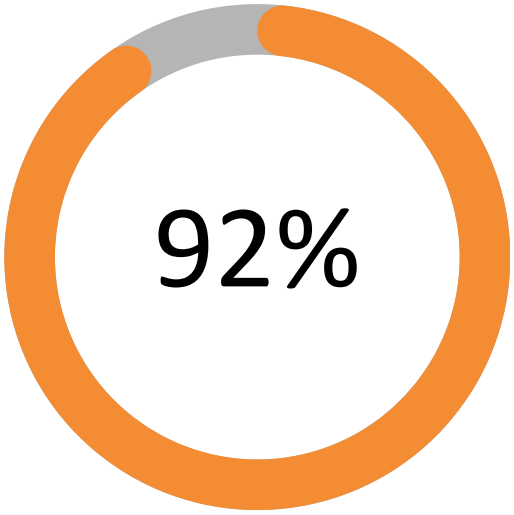


Fig 6: Rated quality of training as Excellent/ Very Good

The responses indicate very high satisfaction with the training experience. The average rating for overall training quality (Mean 4.41) and knowledge enhancement (Mean 4.39) reflects a strong positive perception among participants. Median scores remain consistently at 4 or 5, with very low variability, signalling uniform delivery across centres. Participants also confirmed that trainers explained concepts clearly, evidenced by high frequencies in "Yes" responses across clarity-related questions. This suggests strong trainer competence and a well-structured instructional approach.

Change in Hygiene Practices Before and After Training

Before the training, only 15% of respondents always followed basic hygiene practices, while the majority—61%—reported doing so only sometimes. A further 21% followed hygiene often, and 3% stated they never practiced hygiene measures consistently.

After the training, there was a remarkable improvement: 83% of beneficiaries reported always following hygiene practices, demonstrating a significant behavioural shift. Only 1% reported never following hygiene practices, and the proportion of respondents following hygiene "sometimes" dropped sharply from 61% to just 2%. Overall, the data reflects a strong and positive impact of the training in reinforcing regular hygiene compliance among participants.

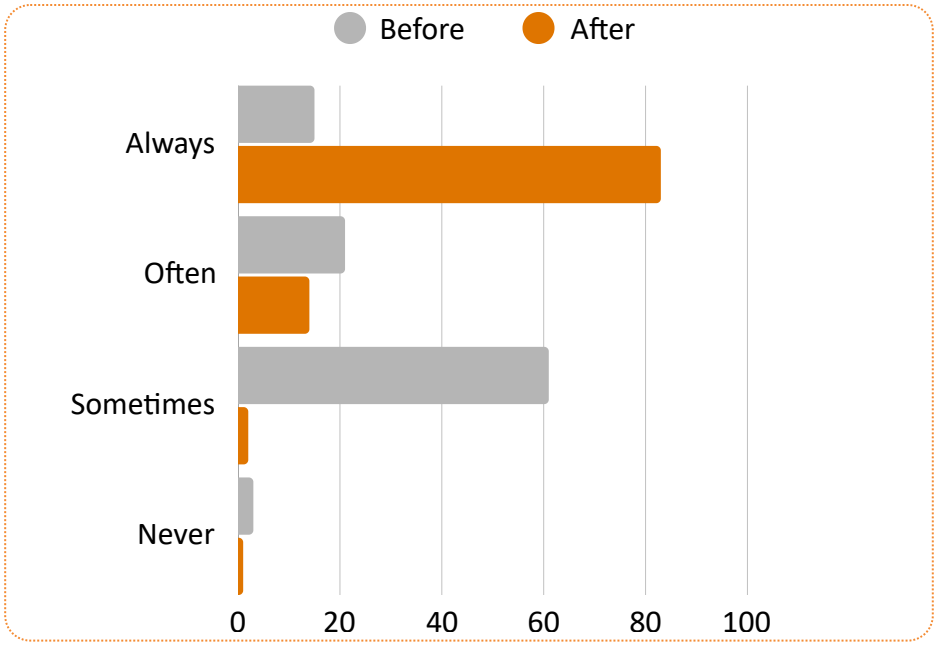


Fig 7: Change in Hygiene Practices Before and After Training

"Before the training, I didn't pay much attention to hygiene and followed it only sometimes. Now, after learning the right methods, I make sure to follow proper hygiene every day."

Shivani Sharma, Barabanki

"I never realised how important hygiene was. After the sessions, it has become a strict daily routine for me and my family."

Sushila Kushwala, Sidhi

Adoption of Food Safety & Hygiene Practices

A large proportion of respondents report following three or more practices together, indicating not only awareness but actual behavioural integration. The most commonly adopted combination—reported by 126 participants (34%)—includes: wearing a hairnet or head cover, wearing disposable gloves, washing hands before and during food preparation, cleaning utensils and surfaces properly, storing ingredients properly, and checking expiry labels.

This reflects comprehensive adherence to the full recommended hygiene practices. Additionally, 35 participants frequently reported other high-quality combinations such as wearing protective gear along with handwashing, cleaning utensils, and checking expiry labels. This suggests that the training has effectively strengthened multi-step hygiene routines rather than isolated practices. Basic but important practices—such as wearing hairnets (reported in >85% combinations) and washing hands during food preparation—appear consistently in the majority of responses, reinforcing their adoption as standard habits.

Overall, the data indicates that most trainees are following layered, reinforced hygiene behaviours, with only a very small fraction reporting minimal or no hygiene practice combinations.

85%

Respondents have adopted 2 or more practices

"Training changed my routine completely. I went from following hygiene ‘sometimes’ to doing it ‘always.’ Now I clean surfaces, store ingredients properly, and check expiry labels every time. My family also feels the difference in the food I prepare."

Sheela, Reva, MP

"Before the training, I didn’t realise how important each hygiene step was—I used to follow them only sometimes. But after learning the right methods, I now follow all hygiene practices every single time. It has become a habit for me, and I feel more confident and responsible while preparing food."

Phulwati, Sidhi, MP

Participant Ratings on Knowledge Improvement

The majority of respondents reported a high level of improvement in their knowledge after the training. About 50% rated their improvement as 5 out of 5, indicating excellent enhancement in understanding millet-based food processing. A further 39% rated it as 4 out of 5, reflecting very good improvement. Only 10% rated their improvement as moderate (3 out of 5), 1% rated it as 2 out of 5, suggesting that very few participants experienced minimal improvement. Overall, 89% of all beneficiaries reported strong to excellent knowledge gains (ratings 4 and 5), reinforcing the effectiveness of the training module.

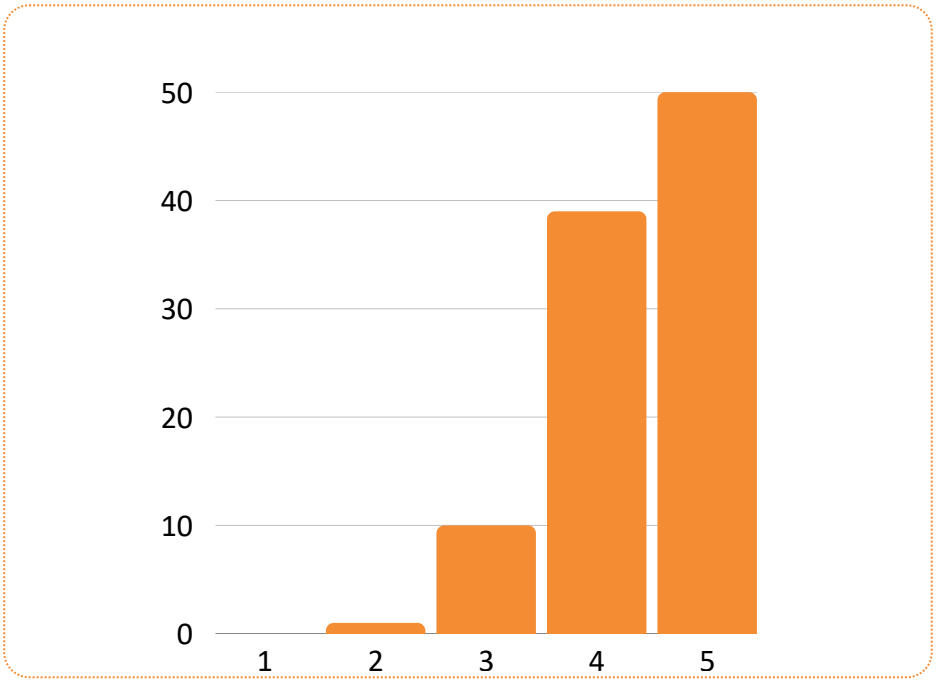


Fig 8: Rating on Knowledge improvement

Dual Certification

During the time of assessment, the majority of candidates were still undergoing training, with 34% already having received dual certification (FSSAI FoSTaC and Skill India). Importantly, nearly all beneficiaries demonstrated clear awareness that certificates would be awarded upon completion of the training, indicating strong communication and expectation-setting within the programme.

Beneficiaries with certificates

Understanding of Key Concepts After Training

Post-harvest handling of millets

- Nearly 88% of respondents rated their understanding between 3 and 5, indicating a strong grasp of key post-harvest handling steps such as cleaning, drying, and storage.

Food safety and FSSAI guidelines

- Understanding was the strongest in this category, with over 92% rating between 4 and 5, reflecting excellent clarity on hygiene norms, contamination risks, and regulatory compliance after the training.

Basic packaging and shelf-life improvement

- Close to 90% of the trainees rated their understanding between 4 and 5, demonstrating improved knowledge on packaging.

Quality control in food preparation

- Around 88% rated their understanding between 3 and 5, suggesting that the majority of participants gained good clarity on maintaining consistency, checking ingredients, and adhering to safety parameters in food preparation.

"This training changed my understanding completely. I now clearly know how to handle millets after harvest, how to follow FSSAI safety rules, and how to package food properly."

Shaily Kumari, Barabanki

Entrepreneurial Uptake of Millet-Based Product Making

31% of the trained beneficiaries have already initiated income-generating activities, demonstrating early signs of livelihood enhancement. A few women were seen actively producing millet-based laddus, while others have begun preparing millet cookies, indicating diversification and practical application of training outcomes. This reflects growing confidence and emerging market-oriented behaviour among participants.

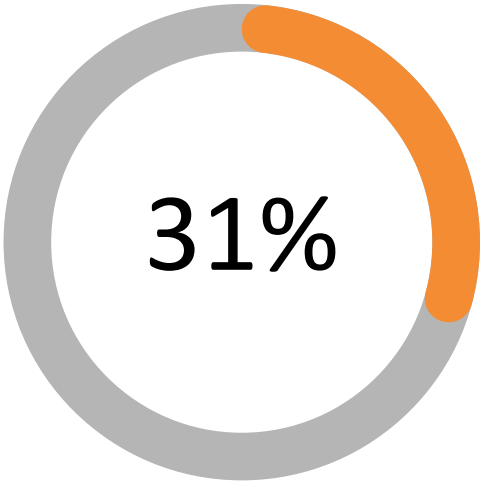


Fig 9: Initiated income generating activities

Readiness for Advancement and Market Participation

The findings show a clear inclination among beneficiaries to deepen their skills and participate more actively in millet-based enterprises. A remarkable 94% of participants expressed interest in receiving advanced training, indicating strong motivation and openness to continued capacity building. Additionally, 55% reported feeling confident to sell or market millet-based products, suggesting that over half the trainees have gained sufficient knowledge and self-assurance to engage in income-generating activities. This combination of high interest in further learning and growing market confidence signals strong potential for scaling livelihood opportunities and supporting women-led micro-enterprises in millet processing.

“Earlier, I never imagined I could run a small business, but now I feel confident to market my millet snacks. The training has truly opened a new path for us.”

Nirmala Devi, Chandauli

QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS

Using qualitative analysis across all focus group discussions and field notes, key themes were systematically identified to understand participant motivations, behavioural changes, challenges, and outcomes of the training.

Theme	Summary
Motivation to Join	Women joined to gain stable income, move beyond seasonal farm/daily-wage labour, and learn millet processing skills.
Changes in Hygiene & Food Handling	Significant improvements in hygiene practices: washing millets thoroughly, using gloves and hairnets, maintaining cleanliness, safer storage and packaging. Hygiene emerged as the strongest behavioural outcome across all districts.
Skill Application After Training	Some women have started making laddus, biscuits, rotis, and snacks at home; a few began selling small batches locally. However, most are applying hygiene skills more consistently than business skills. Commercial activity remains limited due to resource gaps.
Confidence & Empowerment	Training boosted confidence substantially. Women now feel capable of running small businesses, communicating better, and participating more actively in SHGs and community discussions. Strong psychological empowerment observed.

Theme	Summary
Community Recognition	Women gained respect and visibility. SHG members and neighbours now seek their advice on millet recipes, hygiene practices, and training details. Their identity as “skilled women” has strengthened.
Most Valuable Training Components	Hygiene practices, hands-on product-making, packaging techniques, learning product ratios, and understanding millet value addition were most valued.
Income Changes	Income improvements are minimal and early-stage. A few women reported small earnings (₹1,000–₹2,000), but most have not seen significant changes yet due to lack of equipment, market linkages, and pending certificates.

ALIGNMENT WITH OEDC - DAC FRAMEWORK

RELEVANCE

The project demonstrates a strong alignment with the socio-economic realities and needs of the target communities in Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh. The participant profile predominantly women from low-income rural households, many earning less than ₹5,000 monthly highlights the project's focus on vulnerable groups engaged in informal food-handling and micro-enterprise activities. The training content, covering food safety, processing, hygiene, packaging, and entrepreneurship, directly addresses critical knowledge and skill gaps that inhibit income generation in these settings. The high demand expressed for advanced training further confirms that the intervention is valued, necessary, and contextually relevant. By building capabilities in a high-potential sector such as millet value addition, the project responds to both immediate livelihood needs and national priorities such as the millet mission and women-led rural entrepreneurship.

COHERENCE

The intervention exhibits strong coherence with national, state, and local development ecosystems. By integrating FoSTaC and FICSI certification, the project aligns itself with India's formal skill development and food safety regulatory framework, ensuring both credibility and compliance. It complements the goals of the International Year of Millets, Poshan Abhiyaan, and broader government efforts to promote nutritious, climate-resilient crops. The project also reinforces and leverages the self-help group (SHG) ecosystem, which plays a central role in women's collective entrepreneurship. Participants' expressed need for such training—and the absence of similar programs previously—shows that the initiative fills a critical programming gap rather than duplicating existing efforts. Its clear linkage to value chain strengthening further situates it coherently within local market development efforts.

EFFECTIVENESS

The training program has been highly effective in achieving its intended outputs and outcomes. Attendance rates were exceptionally high, and the majority of participants found the training location convenient, indicating efficient access to centers.

Quality-of-training indicators were consistently strong, with most respondents rating both session quality and trainer clarity between 4 and 5 on a 5-point scale. Learning outcomes were similarly robust: participants demonstrated strong understanding of post-harvest handling, food safety and FSSAI guidelines, packaging, shelf-life, and quality control. Behavioural transformation was particularly noteworthy—an analysis of pre- and post-training hygiene practices revealed a significant shift toward “Often” and “Always,” statistically validated through the Wilcoxon signed-rank test. Together, these results indicate strong effectiveness in skill transfer, knowledge absorption, and behavioural change.

EFFICIENCY

The training locations were widely perceived as accessible, a sign of efficient geographic clustering and planning. High attendance throughout the full 50-hour duration indicates effective scheduling and minimal participant drop-off, which is a strong metric of delivery efficiency in rural skilling programs. The program also delivered FICSI and FoSTaC certifications at scale, reflecting efficient coordination.

IMPACT

Participants expressed higher confidence in selling and marketing their products, an essential precursor to enterprise expansion. Statistical tests reinforce these impact pathways—Spearman correlation shows a positive association between training quality and overall satisfaction, while the Chi-square test reveals that education levels do not significantly constrain enterprise uptake, suggesting the training successfully acts as an equalizer.

SUSTAINABILITY

The improvement in hygiene practices—validated statistically—suggests that new behaviours are likely to persist beyond the training period, especially because they are reinforced by certification standards. Skills in processing, packaging, and quality control are durable and transferable, enabling participants to continue producing marketable products without external support.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The project demonstrates strong potential for advancing women's livelihoods through structured skill development, enhanced hygiene practices, and improved technical understanding of millet-based processing. The assessment results provide clear evidence of the programme's effectiveness in reaching women across diverse socio-economic backgrounds and enabling them to adopt safer, more efficient, and more market-aligned production practices.

Participants exhibit strengthened knowledge levels, increased confidence, and an improved ability to standardize processing workflows. Early associations between training inputs and improved practices indicate that the project is moving in the right direction toward building sustainable, community-led micro-enterprises.

However, to maximize long-term impact, the project will benefit from targeted reinforcements—especially in areas of refresher training, enterprise development, market linkage facilitation, and ongoing mentoring frameworks. With these enhancements, the intervention is well positioned to create lasting economic opportunities for women, expand millet-based product markets, and contribute meaningfully to rural livelihood diversification.

Overall, the project's outcomes align strongly with CSR objectives of empowerment, skill development, and sustainable community progress, making it a replicable and scalable model for similar rural livelihood initiatives.

To strengthen the long-term impact of the millet-processing training programme, it is essential to reinforce continuous learning and standardisation. Periodic refresher trainings—delivered through short in-person sessions or digital micro-learning modules—will help women retain key concepts related to food safety, packaging, and shelf-life enhancement, while advanced training options can support those aiming to scale their operations.

Introducing simple, visual Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), such as laminated step-by-step posters or demonstration videos, will further reduce operational errors and promote uniform product quality. Regular monitoring, supported through mobile-based feedback tools and follow-ups by SHG leaders or trained Community Resource Persons, will ensure timely identification of gaps and sustained behavioural adoption. Additionally, fostering peer-led demonstrations by high-performing trainees will create community ownership, encourage mutual learning, and help sustain good practices beyond the training period.

"As someone coming from a modest background, I never imagined I could learn technical skills like these. The training helped me understand millet processing in a structured way, and now I can produce with better quality and more consistency. The programme has truly empowered women like me—we feel more capable, more knowledgeable, and ready to explore new livelihood opportunities in our communities."

Pushpa Devi, Barabanki

VOICES FROM THE FIELD

Neetu, Agra - Building a Future with Millet Processing

Neetu, a 32-year-old resident of Puramna in Agra, lives with her husband and four children. Her husband works in a shoemaking karkhana, but the income is not enough to support the family's needs. Without a formal degree or vocational skills, Neetu had long struggled to find employment and had always dreamed of doing something on her own.

As a member of an SHG, Neetu learned about the PepsiCo–Shri Anna project through a peer reference and chose to enroll, hoping to acquire skills that could transform her future. When the team visited her village to mobilize women for millet processing training, she immediately saw an opportunity and enrolled in the full 50-hour training programme. For Neetu, this was a turning point, her first concrete step toward building a more secure future for her family.

During the training, Neetu learned a wide range of skills—from food safety and hygiene practices to preparing millet-based items like laddus, tikkiya, cookies, and composite flour. She particularly appreciated the practical, hands-on approach, which helped her understand the use of machinery such as blenders, sifters and basic packaging equipment. The training not only equipped her with technical skills but also introduced her to packaging, labeling and simple marketing practices. Neetu shared that the sessions helped her gain confidence and clarity, especially around maintaining hygiene standards while producing food. She now prepares small batches of millet-based snacks at home and occasionally sells them to neighbors or nearby shops.

Neha Kumari, Barabanki

“Overcoming Seasonal Struggles: Neha’s Journey Toward a Sustainable Livelihood Through Millet Processing

Neha Kumari, a 28-year-old woman from Barabanki, has spent most of her life depending on seasonal farming income from Mentha and rice. Like many rural households, her family’s earnings lasted only a few months, leaving long periods of financial uncertainty. The pressure of irregular income affected not only the household budget but also Neha’s confidence and emotional well-being.

She often worried about how to provide for her children during lean months and longed for an opportunity that could give her financial stability throughout the year. When she heard about the PepsiCo–FICSI Millet Food Processor training, she saw it as a chance to break away from seasonal dependency. Neha shared that she wanted to learn a skill that would allow her to earn year-round and support her family without constant financial worry.

During the 50-hour training, Neha received practical exposure to the complete millet-processing workflow—from cleaning and selecting raw grains to blending, sieving, and packaging the final products. She learned essential concepts in food safety, hygiene, labeling, and the operation of manual and automatic equipment. The hands-on sessions, supported by approachable trainers, helped her confidently prepare millet-based composite flour, biscuits, laddus, and other products while following safe production standards. Neha shared that the training not only taught her to make healthy snacks for her family but also gave her the skills needed to start earning from this work.

Pratibha Shah, Singrauli

A Journey from Uncertainty to Self-Reliance

Pratibha Shah, a 33-year-old resident of Katauli village in Singrauli, lives in a large joint family where her husband works as a daily wage labourer. With an unpredictable income and a large household to support, financial pressures were constant, leaving Pratibha feeling helpless despite her desire to contribute. When she learned about the free PepsiCo–FICSI Millet Products Processor training announced by the Gram Panchayat, she saw it as a long-awaited opportunity. Determined to change her situation, she enrolled in the 50-hour programme while juggling childcare and household responsibilities.

The training exposed Pratibha to every stage of millet processing—from understanding the nutritional value of millets to preparing products like composite flour, biscuits, laddus, and cakes. She also learned essential food safety, hygiene, FoSTaC guidelines, and packaging techniques. With growing confidence and encouragement from trainers, Pratibha realised she had finally found a livelihood path she could pursue independently. Motivated and supported by her husband, she purchased basic equipment using her SHG savings and began making millet products from home. What started with small batches soon gained recognition in her village, as neighbours appreciated the quality and cleanliness of her snacks.

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