


Key Indicator - 7.3 Institutional Distinctiveness (20)

Metric No.		Weightage
7.3.1 QIM	<i>Portray the performance of the Institution in one area distinctive to its priority and thrust with in 1000 words</i>	20
	<p><u>Empowering Rural Women : Key to Empower New India</u></p> <p>As envisaged in its vision of sound, viable, vibrant and sustainable rural development, the university firmly believes that it is not possible without the empowerment of rural women. The university is working tirelessly towards empowering and mainstreaming rural women. The distinctiveness of the university is explicated through the whole hearted commitment of scientists and students towards this mission.</p> <p>Sugarcane and wheat cultivation, alongside animal husbandry, forms the backbone of agricultural practices in Western Uttar Pradesh, with women actively participating in around 80 percent of these activities. Despite their significant contributions to farm income and livestock management, rural women face pervasive discrimination and lack decision-making authority within their families.</p> <p>The scientists and students of the university, who work closely in the adopted villages, identified the following challenges for rural women:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Financial Dependence: Women lack financial independence, with their contributions to family income often overlooked. They are relegated to dependency on male relatives for their monetary needs, limiting their autonomy and agency. 2. Nutritional Deficiencies: The prevalent milk-based diet in Western Uttar Pradesh households leads to inadequate intake of essential nutrients. 3. Drudgery-Related Problems: Women shoulder the burden of labour-intensive tasks such as milking and pre/post-harvest activities, exposing them to musculoskeletal problems and long-term health issues. 4. Social Evils and Lack of Awareness: They are subject to social evils such as the dowry system, female foeticide and domestic violence, exacerbated by their 	


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limited awareness of their rights.

Proactive measures implemented by the university to address the challenges:

1. Entrepreneurial Empowerment: Women were empowered through skill-oriented training programs aimed at fostering entrepreneurial capabilities for self-reliance and involved imparting necessary knowledge for initiating independent enterprises. Women were grouped after training sessions and received continuous guidance from enterprise development till marketing. 421 trainings benefitted 8420 women across various topics like

- * Processing fruits and vegetables into chutneys, pickles, and jams.
- * Manufacturing bathing soap, detergents, and home cleaners.
- * Producing millet-based products like flour, noodles, pasta, and namkeen.
- * Handicrafts, including decorative items using macro dori, mirror flowers, cow dung-based products, cane baskets/pots, as well as making school uniforms.

Initially, 1738 women embarked on their entrepreneurial journeys at the village level, serving as catalysts for an additional 5133 women to pursue similar paths. Notable success stories include Mrs. Kavita Sharma from Bulandshahar, generating an annual income of approximately Rs. 60,000 and employing 18 women. Similarly, Pratibha from Muzaffarnagar established a unit for manufacturing cleaning products, employing 40 women, each earning between Rs. 4,000 to 5,000 per month. The esteemed Governor's visit to the Krishi Vigyan Kendras and the University underscored these achievements, fostering a renewed commitment to empowering illiterate women. Subsequently, 40 skill-based programmes were organized, drawing 959 women. Of these, 86 successfully launched enterprises, earning an average monthly income of Rs. 4000-5000.

2. Nutri-Garden Initiative: During visits to adopted villages, it became evident that the prevalent diet was predominantly milk-based. This dietary pattern resulted in

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inadequate consumption of fruits and vegetables, failing to meet the Recommended Dietary Allowance. The concept of 'Nutri-gardens' was chosen to promote dietary diversification. Women were provided with seed kits for Rabi, Kharif, and Zayad seasons. **The university students educated them on malnutrition and technical guidance for growing these vegetables.** This initiative reduced expenses on fruits, vegetables, and medicines. The university scientists established 3800 Nutri gardens in villages, yielding an average of 665 kilograms of vegetables per garden across all seasons.

3. Drudgery reduction: Women shoulder the primary responsibility for multiple tasks in animal husbandry, including milking, cleaning and overall animal care. The milking process, lasting 15-20 minutes, frequently causes back and knee pain and musculoskeletal issues due to prolonged squatting. Animal movement during milking occasionally leads to injuries. To mitigate these challenges, farm women in the adopted villages were provided with 40 rotating milking stools, developed by GBPUAT, Pantnagar. These stools feature wheels and a holder for the milk vessel. The rural women like Smt. Sunita from Bidvi village have lauded the initiative, noting that the milking process became more comfortable, with significant reduction in milk spillage, resulting in a saving of approximately 5-7 percent milk.

Women contribute over 60 percent of the labour in sugarcane cultivation. Discussions with female farmers exposed the inefficiencies and hazards of traditional leaf-stripping methods using sickles which is slow and laborious causing frequent cuts and injuries to the hands, decreased efficiency, heightened physical strain and prolonged harvesting times. To combat these challenges, a breakthrough sugarcane stripper developed by IISR Lucknow was introduced in these villages. The women hailed the innovation, emphasizing its user-friendliness and remarkable capacity to significantly reduce harvesting time.

4. Raising Awareness on Women's Social Issues: Under the leadership of the esteemed Governor of Uttar Pradesh,

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initiatives were undertaken to address various social issues, affecting women's rights, education, health, and hygiene and 09 Mahila Adhyan Kendras & 01 Innovative Unit (**Maatrya Chhaya: Rural women Chaupal**) were established. These centres aim to educate women on key issues including domestic violence, dowry system, child marriage, social taboos, malnutrition, hygiene, and sanitation. Special programmes such as World Day on Child Labour, World Population Day, World Literacy Day, Mahila Kisan Diwas, International Women's Day, International Day of the Girl Child etc. were organized involving the students as well as scientists of the university. **The students organised awareness programmes and nukkad naataks etc. in the villages. 177 programs** were conducted, reaching out to **5195** rural women.

Direct engagement with **university faculty and students** enabled rural women to address their concerns effectively. They were provided with information about institutions addressing social issues, enhancing their access to support services and participation in entrepreneurial endeavours for livelihood security, improved health and hygiene practices. **On the other hand this has enabled our students to develop compassion to work for rural areas and become responsible individuals. Such distinct initiatives of the university have heightened its influence and impact in the area.**

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