

## BUILDING SUSTAINABLE WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS IN ASSAM AND WEST BENGAL

In the past two years, COVID-19 pandemic has adversely impacted the already low women labour force participation in the country. American Indian Foundation (AIF) has entrusted IIBM to conduct a research study which is focused on strengthening the collective potential of rural women entrepreneurs (RWEs) to favorably influence relevant stakeholders in the states of Assam and West Bengal. The objective is for devising a 4-year long strategy toward developing and promoting a robust, adaptable & sustainable rural women entrepreneurship model, to bring substantial impact on the level of Female labour force participation rate in the economy in Assam and West Bengal.

The broad objective of the study are;

- i) Identifying the current policies, programs, schemes, regulations and other interventions influencing rural women entrepreneurs' participation in the respective value chains.
- ii) Identify the current participation of rural women in the value chains in Assam and West Bengal.
- iii) Providing rationale for selection of intervention in the value chains and program districts.
- iv) Understand the current engagement of women in the SHGs, collectives, FPOs of the selected value chains.

The study was conducted across the states of West Bengal and Assam and an extensive field work was undertaken in five districts in Assam and three districts in North Bengal.

Based on the analysis, six value chains have been identified which has the potential for rural women enterprise. These are : i) Handloom, ii) Tea, iii) Floriculture, iv) Mushroom, v) Piggery and vi) Dairy.

A value chain analysis report has been prepared for the above six value chains where women participation is high and has the potential for Rural Women Entrepreneurs to grow.

