

IHAT GENDER CHAMPIONS

ADVANCING GENDER EQUALITY FROM WITHIN 2024-2029



ABBREVIATION LIST

AAA	Accredited Social Health Activist, Anganwadi Worker, Auxiliary Nurse Midwife
AICOG	All India Congress of Obstetrics and Gynaecology
ANM	Auxiliary Nurse Midwife
ASHA	Accredited Social Health Activist
AWMS	Anganwadi Mukhya Sevikas
CPHC	Comprehensive Primary Healthcare Centre
ER	Early Registration
FLW	Frontline Worker
FRU	First Referral Unit
ICDS	Integrated Child Development Services
ICRW	International Center for Research on Women
IGPH	Institute of Global Public Health
IHAT	India Health Action Trust
KPA	Key Performance Area
NHSRC	National Health Systems Resource Centre
RI	Routine Immunization
RRTC	Regional Resource and Training Centre
SBA	Skilled Birth Attendant
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SOP	Standard Operating Procedure
TB	Tuberculosis
ToT	Training of Trainer
TB-STSU	Tuberculosis – State Technical Support Unit
TSU	Technical Support Unit
UP TSU	Uttar Pradesh Technical Support Unit
WHO	World Health Organization



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

India Health Action Trust (IHAT) launched the Gender Champions Initiative as a key mechanism to operationalise the IHAT Gender¹ Equality Strategy (2024-2029)². Aligned with Strategy Objective 2 – *strengthening staff understanding and application of gender-transformative approaches*, the initiative builds internal leadership and embeds gender- responsiveness³ across programmes and operations.

Nearly 30 Gender Champions⁴ from technical, managerial, and operational teams have been nominated and trained to serve as internal advocates, facilitators, and resource persons. They support their units and teams in integrating gender-responsive components into programme design, implementation, and policy engagement, while closely collaborating with the IHAT Gender experts on content development, peer learning, and organisation-wide gender mainstreaming efforts.

The 2024 internal assessment confirms the initiative's contributions:



Ninety-five percent of Gender Champions reported increased confidence in addressing gender integration queries.



Eighty-eight percent applied their learning directly to programme/operations work;

Reported benefits include

improved facilitation skills

A stronger understanding of intersectionality

Enhanced peer collaboration



The Gender Champions initiative is strengthening IHAT's institutional capacity, nurturing peer-led accountability, and driving sustainable adoption of gender-equitable practices across the organisation.

¹ IHAT Gender Equality Strategy – <https://www.ihat.in/wp-content/uploads/2025/09/IHAT-Gender-equality-Strategy.pdf>

² Gender Equality refers to the state in which people of all genders have equal rights, responsibilities, and opportunities. In the strategy, this is framed as the ultimate vision, where all people, regardless of gender identity, have the agency and opportunity to realise their right to health and well-being. It emphasises equal access and outcomes across health systems, research, programming, and operations. (IHAT Gender Equality Strategy, 2025)

³ Gender Equity- Achieving true equality often requires equity—providing differentiated support to counteract existing biases and disadvantages. IHAT's approach focuses on addressing disparities arising from gender roles, norms, and other social determinants, ensuring tailored interventions that enable all individuals to thrive. Gender Equity, though not always explicitly defined as a standalone term in the document, is understood in line with global best practices: as the process of fairness and justice in the treatment of all genders, which may involve different treatment or resources to address historical and structural disadvantages. In IGPH's work, this translates into addressing power imbalances, gendered barriers in healthcare access, and other determinants of health to achieve fair health outcomes. (IHAT Gender Equality Strategy, 2025)

⁴ Gender Champions comprise of technical, managerial and operational team members from staff, associates, technical partners, and stakeholders dedicated to advancing gender equality across policies and programmes in IHAT. They act as advisors, providing guidance to integrate gender perspectives into project design, implementation, and evaluation. (Terms of Reference-Gender Champions, IHAT Gender Equality Strategy, 2025)



EMBEDDING GENDER EQUALITY IN IHAT OPERATIONS AND PROGRAMMES

Embedding Gender Equality within organisational systems is essential for building inclusive, equitable, and effective health programmes. IHAT recognises that advancing gender equality is both a matter of equity and a prerequisite for improving health outcomes and addressing structural inequalities.

In line with its Gender Equality Strategy (2024-2029), IHAT is integrating gender considerations across all dimensions of its work - programmes, research, policy engagement and operations. The Strategy, aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) - SDG 5 (Gender Equality), SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-being), and SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities) - provides a robust framework for embedding gender-responsive and gender-transformative approaches into IHAT's mission to strengthen population health.



THE GENDER CHAMPIONS INITIATIVE

To advance its commitment to gender integration, IHAT launched the Gender Champions Initiative, a strategic effort to strengthen internal leadership and capacity for embedding gender-responsive and gender-transformative approaches across programmatic and operational functions. This initiative directly supports Strategic Objective 2 of IHAT's Gender Equality Strategy, which aims to enhance staff understanding of gender dynamics and improve the application of gender-transformative practices in their daily work.

Gender Champions are staff selected from technical, managerial, and operational teams, who serve as internal resource persons and facilitators. They provide practical support to ensure gender considerations are embedded in programme design, implementation, monitoring, evaluation and operational decision-making. Through their engagement, Champions help identify and address gender-related barriers, whether in organisational systems, community-facing interventions, policy engagement or monitoring and evaluation (M&E) processes.

Their contributions include facilitating reflective team discussions, encouraging gender-sensitive programme design, promoting equitable participation in capacity-building efforts, and addressing context-specific gender norms that shape access to health services. By enabling timely identification and resolution of operational and programmatic challenges, they help ensure IHAT's work remains inclusive, equitable and contextually grounded.

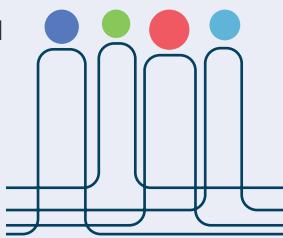
Overall, the initiative demonstrates IHAT's sustained commitment to building a workforce that is aware, equipped, and supported to promote gender equity - advancing progress toward broader global goals of gender equality and improved health outcomes.



The Role of Gender Champions at IHAT

Gender Champions are nominated by team leads based on their:

- Ability to influence team practices and decision-making
- Commitment to gender equality



- Interest in applying gender integration within programmes and operations
- Strong communication and facilitation skills

IHAT currently has nearly 30 Gender Champions representing diverse technical areas, including Nutrition, Family Planning, Health Systems Strengthening, Monitoring & Evaluation, and Operations. Each Champion strengthens internal systems and fosters accountability within their respective functions/verticals.

In practice, Gender Champions facilitate cross-functional collaboration and provide hands-on support for integrating gender-responsive approaches. Their structured engagement with Gender and Inclusion Experts enables a two-way learning model where field insights inform programme and operational improvements, and organisational guidance strengthens field-level implementation.

Purpose:

To strengthen gender integration across IHAT's operations and programmes by building internal leadership, capacity, and accountability for gender-responsive practice.

Who They Are:

Gender Champions are staff from technical, managerial, and operational teams, nominated by their leads based on their:

- Influence in team practices and decision-making
- Interest in applying gender integration
- Commitment to gender equality
- Strong communication and facilitation skills

Where They Work:

A cohort of 30 Gender Champions based across IHAT's offices in *Delhi, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, and Karnataka*

What They Do:

Gender Champions:

- Serve as resource persons within their teams and verticals (e.g., Nutrition, Family Planning, Health Systems Strengthening, Monitoring & Evaluation, and Operations)



- Provide hands-on support for integrating gender considerations into programme design, implementation, and operations
- Promote equitable participation and inclusive practices in daily workflows
- Facilitate two-way learning between field teams and IHAT's Technical Leads and Gender Experts, ensuring field insights inform organisational strategies and vice versa.

Support Structure:

IHAT's Gender Experts anchor this initiative by providing:

- Capacity strengthening and mentoring
- Technical guidance
- Content and learning resources
- Ensuring alignment with the Gender Equality Strategy 2024-2029

Outcome:

A strong internal network driving gender integration in IHAT's systems and programmes—resulting in more inclusive, equitable, and gender-responsive health interventions.

FROM AWARENESS TO ACTION: A GENDER CHAMPION'S JOURNEY

Reflections from a Gender Champion

TAPASWINI SWAIN

Senior State Specialist – Nutrition, UP TSU



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“I was always aware of gender as a concept; however, becoming a Gender Champion allowed me to explore it more deeply and apply it in meaningful ways.

Following this, our team integrated gender perspectives into the Mukhya Sevika training module, reaching over 320 supervisors and helping them adopt a more inclusive gender lens. Encouraged by the impact, we later adapted a shorter gender session for the Anganwadi Worker Training of Trainers (ToT) module, tailored to their needs.

“This experience has taught me that gender sensitivity is not just a concept—it's a mindset that shapes how we engage, act, and lead in our everyday work and interactions.”

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2.1 KEY OBJECTIVES OF THE INITIATIVE

Gender Champions play a critical role in translating IHAT's gender commitments into everyday programme implementation and operational practice. They ensure that gender-responsive approaches are applied consistently across planning, delivery, and monitoring processes. While strategic direction rests with the Gender Task Force and Steering Committee, Gender Champions act as catalysts at the execution level – driving dialogue, strengthening capacity, and providing real-time operational feedback that enhances gender integration.

2.1.a Strengthen Capacity on Gender-Transformative Approaches

Build the knowledge, skills, and confidence of IHAT staff, technical partners, and key stakeholders — including programme managers, supervisors, and frontline workers — to effectively apply gender-transformative approaches across programmes, operations, and routine work and workplace practices.

2.1.b Integrate and Mainstream Gender in Programmes and Systems

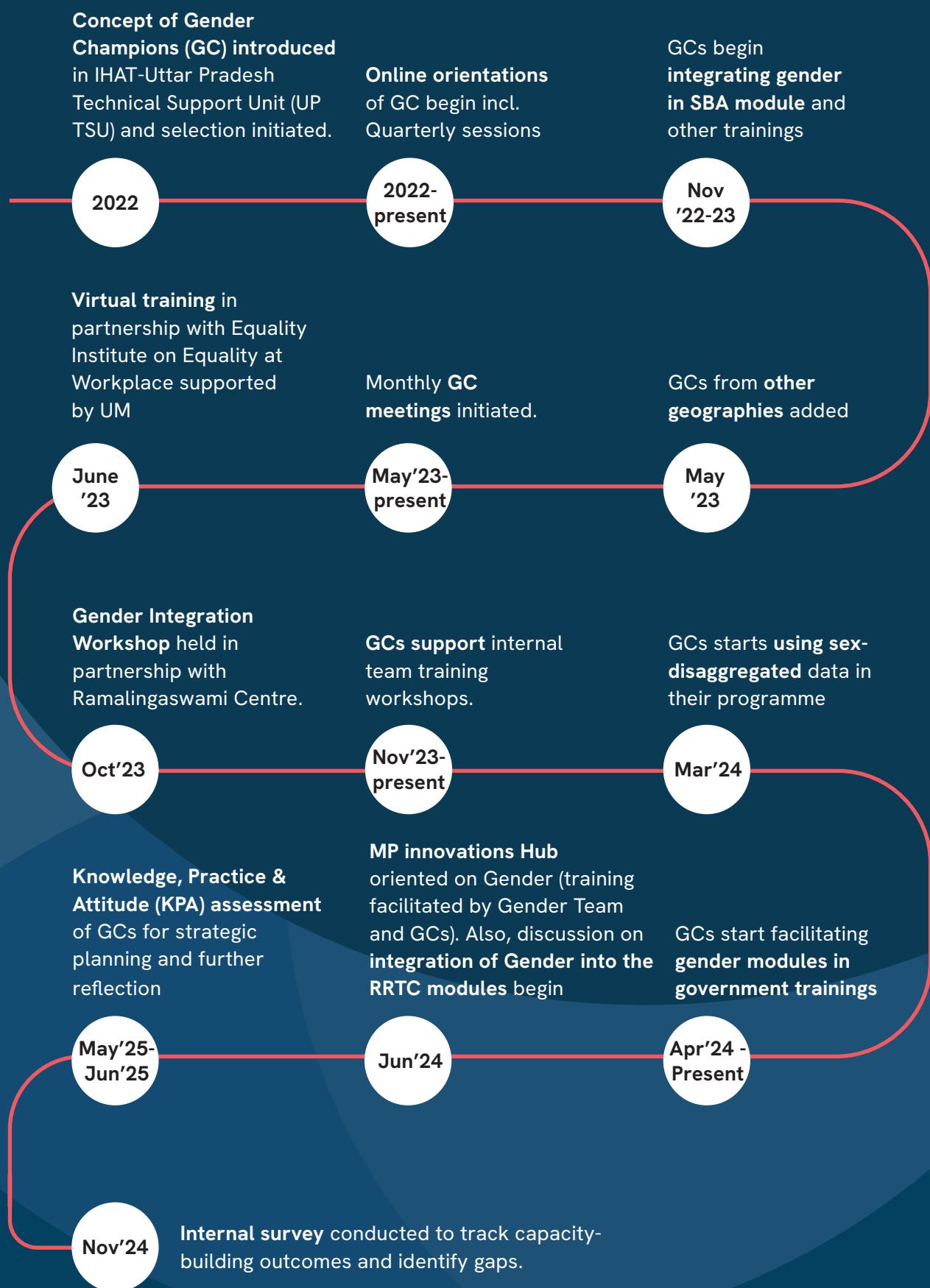
Support teams to embed gender considerations into programme design, implementation, and monitoring, and ensure that gender equity is systematically reflected in policies, Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), operational procedures, and programme guidelines.

2.1.c Foster Peer Learning and Communities of Practice

Create and sustain peer learning networks and communities of practice that enable Gender Champions to share experiences, exchange insights, and continuously strengthen gender integration within and across teams.



2.2. IHAT'S GENDER CHAMPIONS JOURNEY: A TIMELINE



DR VIBHOR JAIN,
Deputy Director, FRU



“Working at the facility level, I always believed that good service delivery is about treating everyone with respect. But becoming a Gender Champion opened my eyes to just how differently people experience the health system and how small actions on our part can create big shifts in dignity and trust.

During my training, I realised how gender biases often unintentionally shape communication, privacy, and even decisions made during care. This learning journey has helped me become more aware of the subtle ways in which health cadres and beneficiaries' experiences are influenced by gender norms and expectations. I now pay closer attention to how people speak, who feels comfortable asking questions, and who hesitates to share concerns. I am learning to question my assumptions, listen more intentionally, and recognise where more supportive and gender-sensitive approaches are needed.”

Aligned with the objectives above, a range of key activities has been undertaken by the Central Gender team and actively supported by the Gender Champions. These activities translate the initiative's objectives into practical action across IHAT's programmes and operations. The Gender Champions, in collaboration with the Central Gender team, have played a pivotal role in leading, facilitating, and sustaining these efforts across their respective teams and programme areas. The key activities carried out under each objective are outlined below.

TRANSLATING OBJECTIVES INTO ACTION

To operationalise the initiative's objectives, IHAT's team of Gender Experts, working closely with the Gender Champions and multi-disciplinary programme teams – has implemented a series of targeted activities across IHAT's programmes and operations. These efforts translate organisational commitments into practical, actionable steps that strengthen gender integration at the field and systems levels.

Through sustained collaboration, Gender Champions have played a central role in initiating, facilitating, and supporting gender-responsive practices within their respective teams and units. The key activities implemented under each objective are outlined below.





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IMPLEMENTATION OF THE GENDER CHAMPIONS INITIATIVE UNDER THE IHAT GENDER EQUALITY STRATEGY

3.1 CAPACITY STRENGTHENING ON GENDER- RESPONSIVE APPROACHES

IHAT has adopted a structured capacity-strengthening model to equip staff and frontline health workers with the skills and confidence to apply gender-responsive approaches in their day-to-day roles. The model enables teams to identify gender biases, address structural inequalities, and promote inclusive and equitable practices across programmes and operations.





KEY ACTIVITIES

3.1.a Capacity Building for Gender Champions

- **Nomination and Selection:** Gender Champions were identified through a structured process based on interest, influence, and facilitation skills, ensuring diverse functional and geographical representation.
- **Foundational Training (June 2023):** All Gender Champions completed the virtual “Equality at the Workplace” course conducted by the Equality Institute.
- **In-Person Workshop (October 2023):** In partnership with the Ramalingaswami Centre for Equity and Social Determinants of Health, IHAT organised an intensive workshop on ‘Gender and its Implications for Health’.
- **Learning Assessments:** Pre- and post-training assessments demonstrated improved understanding of gender norms, intersectionality, and power dynamics. Participatory methods such as Power Walks and contextual analysis-helped translate concepts into programme-specific application.
- **Key Performance Areas (KPAs) Assessment:** The KPA Assessment tool was administered at the beginning of the sessions to understand participants’ baseline levels of gender knowledge and their initial ability to integrate gender considerations into their work, and a follow-up assessment will be conducted at the end of the year to measure the extent of improvement in gender knowledge and the enhanced capacity to effectively integrate gender perspectives as a result of the programme.

3.1.b Training of IHAT Internal Teams

Gender Champions have helped decentralise gender knowledge by facilitating:

- **Team Workshops:** Sessions in Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh to help staff integrate gender-responsive practices into their daily work.
- **Leadership Training (April 2024):** Technical Support Unit (TSU) Leadership in Uttar Pradesh received training on integrating gender into health systems, facilitated by experts from the International Center for Research on Women (ICRW) and co-designed with IHAT Gender Champions.

3.1.c Training of Frontline Health Workers (FLWs)

Gender Champions trained 500+ FLWs, including

- Training of Trainers (ToT) for Accredited Social Health Activists (ASHAs) and Auxiliary Nurse Midwife (ANMs)
- Direct sessions for Anganwadi Mukhya Sevikas (AWMSs).

These trainings strengthened FLWs’ understanding of gender-related barriers in service delivery and equipped them with practical strategies to address them during counselling, outreach and community interactions.



3.2 GENDER INTEGRATION AND MAINSTREAMING

A central focus of the initiative is to embed gender perspectives into programme planning, implementation, and monitoring. Through continuous collaboration with programmes and operations, Gender Champions help ensure that gender is integrated into design frameworks, SOPs, and health systems strengthening processes.



KEY ACTIVITIES

3.2.a Integration of Gender in Uttar Pradesh State Level Orientation Manuals

Gender Champions supported the inclusion of gender-responsive content in orientation (training) manuals for the public health workforce and addressed gaps related to gender norms, household power dynamics, and barriers faced by marginalised women during service delivery. The integration equipped frontline workers with practical knowledge and skills to identify and address gender barriers effectively in their day-to-day roles.

3.2.b Support to Gender e-Module Rollout: Skilled Birth Attendant (SBA) Training

- Champions conducted observation visits during the Skilled Birth Attendant gender e-module rollout, identifying training gaps and supporting facilitators in enhancing participant engagement and clarity on gender-responsive components.
- Gender Champions supported the inclusion of gender-responsive content in AAA (ASHA, Anganwadi Worker, ANM) + platform for Comprehensive Primary Healthcare Centre (CPHC) integration.

3.2.c Training Highlights on Gender-Responsive Health Systems

- Gender Champions supported the training of Level 4 MOs in the 8th Batch of the Mid-Career Training Programme on "Transforming Systems for Gender-Responsive Service Delivery."
- At the national level, two batches of training for over 60 public health professionals were conducted in collaboration with National Health Systems Resource Centre (NHSRC).

3.2.d Integration of Gender in Training and Digital Platforms

- Integration of the Gender e-module into the Pharmacist Induction Training Module on the e-Kshamata Platform
- Integration of Gender in Digital Innovation Interventions

3.2.e Integration of Gender into Routine Immunization (RI) and Early Registration (ER) Interventions.

Working with programme teams, Gender Champions co-developed gender-integrated Interventions for RI and ER, addressing issues such as women's mobility restrictions, decision-making power, and socio-cultural barriers affecting timely service uptake.



3.2.f Facilitate Gender Reflections in Programme Teams

Gender Champions led quarterly reflection sessions within their teams to analyse programme-level gender gaps and co-develop practical solutions – for example addressing gender-barriers in immunization of children, strengthening counselling approaches, and understanding challenges faced by ASHAs during early registration, leading to tailored solutions within each programme context.

3.2.g Review and Enhancement of Training Content

Building on their observations, Gender Champions contributed to reviewing and refining gender training content, ensuring it strengthened participant engagement and was tailored to the realities of programme implementation. These contributions strengthened the internal capacity of teams to apply a gender lens more effectively in their activities following the workshops.

3.3 ONGOING CAPACITY STRENGTHENING THROUGH PEER LEARNING FORUMS

Peer learning and shared accountability are central to sustaining gender integration in programmes and operational functions. The initiative has established active networks and communities of practice where Gender Champions exchange insights, troubleshoot challenges, and co-create solutions to advance gender equity within and beyond their teams.



KEY ACTIVITIES

3.3.a Peer Learning Network

IHAT convenes regular learning sessions on topics identified collaboratively by Gender Champions and Gender Experts. Sessions combine peer exchange, expert input, and reflective practice.

Themes covered include:

- Gender integration in health systems
- Gender identity and sexuality beyond the binary
- Gender in crisis and humanitarian contexts
- Power, privilege, and justice
- Gender-based violence prevention
- Participatory facilitation techniques

These dialogues enable Champions to share real-time implementation experiences, highlight persistent barriers, and document strategies that enhance gender-responsive programming.



3.3.b Representation in National and Global Forums

Gender Champions have showcased IHAT's work at the GenderCollab Summit (2024) in New Delhi and presented a poster on gender analysis at the 8th Global Symposium on Health Systems Research (2024) in Japan. Engagement in these platforms strengthens cross-learning and brings global perspectives back to IHAT's programmes. Also, an abstract on the IGPH Gender Champions Initiative was submitted to the Women Deliver Conference, and another abstract focused on assessing the National Health Policy in alignment with the World Health Organization (WHO) Gender Assessment Framework was selected for presentation at the All India Congress of Obstetrics and Gynaecology (AICOG Conference) 2026.

CULTIVATING CONTINUOUS GENDER AWARENESS AND EMPATHY IN PRACTICE

ROOPALI SAWHNEY

Senior Public Health Specialist



“As a Gender Champion, it has been a privilege to learn from esteemed experts about gender, its significance, and its profound impact on individuals. This role offered valuable insight into the internal team’s understanding of gender, revealing a need for deeper awareness and continuous learning. Often, behaviours perceived as normal are, in fact, gender-biased—something that only becomes evident through open discussion, their work, routines, talk, and reflections/actions. A key step toward gender inclusion is sensitising the internal team, observing their reactions to gender concepts, and encouraging them to incorporate these learnings into their daily practices. While many team members display sensitivity during workshops and trainings, real-world application often reveals gaps, highlighting the need for ongoing self-awareness and empathy to avoid unintentional harm. Gender component training for the internal team has been conducted twice, yet there remains continuous scope for deeper engagement and understanding. On the programmatic front, in Shahdol, an in-depth gender analysis has been initiated to explore community-level barriers—particularly those affecting pregnant women and mothers—and how these impact their health outcomes. Similarly, under the Regional Resource Training Centre (RRTC) initiative, efforts have begun with Medical College Indore to assess and incorporate gender perspectives within institutional systems. This will pave the way for broader integration of gender-responsive approaches in future activities, ultimately aiming to enhance service delivery at the First Referral Units (FRUs) and strengthen respectful maternity care.”

KEY INSIGHTS FROM THE 2024 INTERNAL ASSESSMENT OF GENDER CHAMPIONS' INITIATIVE

An internal assessment conducted in 2024 shows strong progress in advancing the capacity, confidence, and engagement of IHAT's Gender Champions. The findings highlight meaningful early impacts as well as learning areas requiring continued organisational support.



KEY INSIGHTS

4.1.a Enhanced Confidence

Ninety-five percent (n=25) of Gender Champions reported increased confidence in facilitating gender related discussions and trainings – demonstrating a significant improvement in their ability to lead and influence gender integration within their teams.

4.1.b Practical Application

Eighty-eight percent (n=25) of Gender Champions applied their learning to at least one programme component –such as training modules, programme design, or implementation processes.

While these applications mark important steps toward embedding gender equity, the depth and consistency of integration vary across teams and technical areas, underscoring the need for continued support, structured follow-ups, and cross-team collaboration to move from isolated actions to systemic practice.

4.1.c Improved Team Engagement

Ninety-two percent (n=25) of Gender Champions observed greater openness and participation from team members during gender discussions. Champions noted that reflective sessions and informal dialogues helped build deeper awareness and inclusive team environments.

4.1.d Challenges and Areas for Strengthening

Despite positive shifts, the assessment identified key challenges:

- **Completing programme priorities** limited Champions' ability to carry out their responsibilities fully.
- **Structured follow-up mechanisms** are required to track progress and provide needs-based support.

These findings affirm the initiative's early impact and highlight the need for stronger institutional mechanisms, prioritisation, and sustained engagement to scale and deepen gender integration across IHAT.



GENDER CHAMPION'S REFLECTION ON BRINGING LIGHT TO WOMEN AND THE THIRD GENDER IN TUBERCULOSIS (TB) CARE

NASEEB KHAN

Public Health Expert, Tuberculosis – State Technical Support Unit (TB-STSU)



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“My previous work with women’s self-help groups and on the Pre-Conception and Pre-Natal Diagnostic Techniques (Prohibition of Sex Selection) Act profoundly shaped my understanding of gender’s importance. Becoming a Gender Champion felt like a natural second innings in this learning journey. It expanded my perspective beyond just women to encompass the full spectrum of gender identities.

This broader understanding has been invaluable in my current projects on tuberculosis (TB). It’s allowed me to develop a crucial gender lens to analyse TB prevalence, particularly among the third gender. While TB interventions have established indicators, incorporating a gender perspective has led to vital questions about women’s participation in treatment and the disproportionate impact of TB on women and transgender individuals. The insights gained from the Gender Champions meetings and learning sessions have truly enriched both my professional and personal life.”

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LOOKING AHEAD: NEXT STEPS

Recognising the persistent challenges identified through the 2024 assessment, IHAT has outlined the following next steps to strengthen the Gender Champions Initiative and deepen its organisational impact. These actions aim to institutionalise gender integration, reinforce accountability, and enable Champions to contribute more effectively across programmes.

a) Streamline and Expand the Gender Champions Progress Tracker

 The Gender Champions will enhance the simplified Excel-based Progress Tracker to help Gender Champions systematically document their contributions, identify integration opportunities, and align gender efforts with the team's work plans.

The upgraded version will also capture:

- Types of Gender integration activities (e.g., programme design inputs, content development, capacity building, field-level adaptations, policy or systems support), and
- Observed outcomes or impact (e.g., improved team understanding, programme adaptations, strengthened front-line worker engagement)

This enriched tracker will support ongoing monitoring of both activities and the tangible results of gender integration across IHAT's programmes.

b) Allocate Protected Time in Teamwork Plans

 Senior leadership, together with the team of Gender Experts, will work with Team Leads to incorporate dedicated time for gender-related responsibilities into team-level work plans. This will help Champions balance competing priorities, reinforce IHAT's institutional commitment to gender equity, and ensure Champions can carry out their responsibilities meaningfully and consistently.

c) Formalise Recognition of Gender Champion Roles

 IHAT will recognise Gender Champion responsibilities. This will include mechanisms such as:

- Guidance for managers on reflecting gender-related contributions of staff in annual reviews
- Initiatives where gender equity work is acknowledged, valued, and supported institutionally.

d) Support Champions in Operationalising the IHAT Gender Equality Strategy (2024-2029):

 Gender Champions will play a key role in the rollout of the IHAT Gender Equality Strategy by:



- Leading sensitisation and orientation sessions within their teams
- Identifying context-specific opportunities for gender- responsive approaches
- Acting as liaisons between programmes and Gender Experts to embed gender considerations into operational frameworks, monitoring systems, and review processes.
- Monitor and identify any siloed approaches by efforts such as facilitating cross-team platforms to co-design gender integration strategies, exchange learnings, and strengthen collaborative problem-solving.
- Championing intersectionality, supporting teams to analyse how gender intersects with key social determinants such as education, economic status, caste, religion, and geographic marginalisation, thus ensuring programmes address layered inequities that affect health outcomes.

These next steps collectively aim to institutionalise gender equity, establish sustainable systems of accountability, and empower Gender Champions to drive meaningful, long-term change across IHAT's programmes and operations.

INTROSPECTION ON FOSTERING INCLUSIVE TEAM CULTURE

DIVYA RAJVANSHI
Deputy Director, Digital UP TSU



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“Embracing the role of a gender champion has encouraged me to introspect into prevailing gender norms and fostered a comprehensive understanding of gender dynamics and intersectionality. Engaging in dialogues during meetings and participating in specialised trainings have been instrumental in broadening my perspective, allowing me to appreciate diverse viewpoints and the multifaceted nature of gender-related issues.

In my leadership capacity, I have actively cultivated a culture that prioritizes gender sensitivity and inclusivity within my team. Facilitating gender-focused trainings has further honed my skills in audience engagement and communication. I've learned the significance of tailoring discussions to resonate with participants' unique backgrounds and perspectives, ensuring that complex gender issues are presented in a relatable and comprehensible manner.

Overall, my journey as a gender champion has been marked by continuous learning and growth, reinforcing my commitment to fostering equity and inclusivity in both personal and professional spheres.”

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CONCLUSION

The 2024 internal assessment confirms that the Gender Champions Initiative has strengthened gender-responsive programming and institutional initiatives. Gender Champions are not only applying their learning with confidence, but also driving meaningful change within their teams by supporting internal capacity building, advocating for gender equity, and promoting more inclusive programme practices. Their efforts have helped IHAT advance its gender commitments while also enhancing programme performance. Looking ahead, IHAT will deepen and institutionalise these gains through programmes, processes and systems that embed gender equity into everyday programme implementation, influence and organisational culture.

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