

Office of the Chief Public Relations Officer
Jamia Millia Islamia

Press Release

Three-Day National Consultative Meet on Skilling Initiatives in Assam's Tea Gardens Inaugurated at Jamia Millia Islamia

New Delhi, 29 September 2026

The Three-Day National Consultative Meet on *"Understanding Field Access and Skilling Initiatives in Assam's Tea Gardens and Sharing/Discussion on Preliminary Findings and Methodology"* was inaugurated on 28 September 2026 at Mir Anis Hall, Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi. Organised under the ICSSR Longitudinal Research Project titled *"Empowerment of the Tea Tribes of Assam through Digital and Non-digital Skill Development Programmes"*, the initiative focuses on tea-garden communities in Dibrugarh and Lakhimpur districts of Assam, with particular emphasis on field access, mapping tea gardens, examining existing skilling initiatives, and developing appropriate training methodologies.

The inaugural session began with a Qirat by Md. Inzemamul Haque, setting a dignified tone for the gathering. Prof. Kaushal Kishore welcomed the distinguished guests and participants, presenting the traditional Assamese tribal gamocha as a gesture of respect and hospitality. Eminent dignitaries graced the occasion, including Prof. Vinoj Abraham, Ministry of Commerce Chair, Centre for Development Studies, Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala, who delivered the Keynote Address and provided valuable perspectives on skill development, livelihoods, and socio-economic dimensions. Dr. M. Ariz, Additional Chief Secretary, Government of Assam, attended as the Special Guest of Honour, underscoring the importance of research engagement with tea-garden communities and their livelihood needs. The Vice-Chancellor of Jamia Millia Islamia delivered the Presidential Remarks, highlighting the significance of the initiative, while Prof. Anita Rastogi, Dean, Faculty of Education, Jamia Millia Islamia, also addressed the gathering, emphasising the importance of integrating academic perspectives, field experiences, and research-based understanding.

Dr. Quazi Ferdoushi Islam, Project Coordinator, provided an overview of the research project and elaborated on the rationale for organising the Meet. She emphasised the importance of consultation and dialogue in refining methodology and identifying relevant skilling opportunities. The project team includes Dr. Quazi Ferdoushi Islam as Project Coordinator, and Prof. Kaushal Kishore, Prof. Ahrar Husain, Prof. Nivedita Goswami, Dr. Sameer Babu, and Dr. Zeba Tabassum as Project Directors. The project sites are located in the tea gardens of Assam, specifically in Dibrugarh and Lakhimpur districts. The consultative discussions aim to contribute to the mapping and selection

of tea-garden sites, while strengthening field-access strategies and training methodologies for the main study.

The programme was further enriched by the participation of academicians, professionals, industry leaders, field experts, and practitioners from across India, including Dibrugarh University, Assam; Gauhati University, Assam; the OKD Institute of Social Change and Development (OKDISCD); reputed NGOs working in tea gardens and at grassroots levels; the Sikkim University, and experts from Jamia Millia Islamia.

The inaugural programme concluded with a Vote of Thanks delivered by Prof. Ahrar Husain, who expressed gratitude to dignitaries, guests, project team members, and participants for their presence and support. The session ended with the National Anthem, marking a dignified close to the proceedings. The inaugural programme laid the foundation for academic consultation and collaborative discussion on field access, skilling initiatives, and research methodology concerning the tea-garden communities of Assam.

Prof. Saima Saeed
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