

Office of the Chief Public Relations Officer
Jamia Millia Islamia

Press Release

JMI's National Conclave on Empowerment and Skilling, Education, Digital Interventions and Welfare Schemes for Tea Garden Communities concludes at Guwahati, Assam

New Delhi, October 9, 2026

The Department of Educational Studies, Faculty of Education, Jamia Millia Islamia (JMI), in collaboration with the Omeo Kumar Das Institute of Social Change and Development (OKDISCD), Guwahati, Assam, organized a three-day National Conclave on "Empowerment, Skilling, Education, Digital Interventions and Welfare Schemes for Tea Garden Communities" from 5–7 October 2026 at Guwahati, Assam. The conclave was organized as part of the ICSSR-sponsored longitudinal research project titled "Empowerment of Tea Tribes of Assam through Digital and Non-digital Skill Development Programmes" (ICSSR-LSS-2025-1495).

The inaugural session was held on 5 October 2026 at the Indian Institute of Entrepreneurship (IIE), Lalmati, Guwahati. The event brought together academics, researchers, government officials, skill-development practitioners and other stakeholders to deliberate on educational, livelihood, skill-development and digital opportunities for tea garden communities. Hanif Noorani, ACS and Mission Director, Assam Skill Development Mission (ASDM), and Prof. Saswati Choudhury, Director, OKDISCD, were the Guests of Honour. Dr Quazi Ferdoushi Islam, Project Coordinator of the ICSSR project, Dr Rajdeep Singha, Associate Professor, OKDISCD, and Prof. Nivedita Goswami, Project Director of the ICSSR project, were also present. Faculty members and researchers from JMI included Prof. Kaushal Kishore, Prof. Ahrar Hussain, Dr Sameer Babu M., and Dr Zeba Tabassum. Other participants included Pinku Choudhury, Skill Project Manager, ASDM; Dr Dhiraj Singha, IIT Guwahati; Keshabananda Haloi, Kanoi Commerce College, Dibrugarh; and Jyotirmoy Hazarika, academician and career counsellor.

The first plenary session, titled "Preparing Tea Garden Youth for a Viksit Bharat," was chaired by Prof. Saswati Choudhury and Prof. Kaushal Kishore. Mr Jyotirmoy Hazarika spoke on "Preparing Tea Garden Youth for the Future: Expanding Aspirations and Opportunities among the Tea-Tribe Youth," while Dr Kamal Kumar Tanti, HOD, Physics, Mahapurusha Srimanta Sankaradeva Viswavidyalaya, Nagaon, addressed "From Aspirations to New Horizons: Possible Pathways for Empowering Tea Garden Youth."

The first technical session, "From Skills to Enterprise: Creating Entrepreneurial Opportunities for Tea-Garden Youth," featured presentations by Dr Dhiraj Singha, IIT Guwahati, on "AI Capital, Digital Divide and Youth at the Margins," and Dr

Keshabananda Haloi, Kanoi College, Dibrugarh, on "Enabling Entrepreneurship: Services, Support and Emerging Opportunities for Tea Garden Youth."

The second technical session focused on education among tea tribes. Dr Sultana Begum, Assistant Professor, Dudhnoi College (Autonomous College), Gauhati University, spoke on "Education among the Children and Adolescents of Tea Tribes of Lakhimpur," followed by Prof. Nivedita Goswami, Head of the Department, Gauhati University, who shared "Experiences from the Ground."

On 6 October 2026, the third technical session, titled "From Field Experience to Collective Dialogue: Exploring Pathways to Empowerment of Tea Garden Youth," began with Dr Rajdeep Singha, Associate Professor, OKDISCD, presenting "Experiences from the Ground: Discussing a Field Study." This was followed by an Open Forum on "Experiences, Challenges and Possible Pathways," moderated by Dr Quazi Ferdoushi Islam, Department of Educational Studies, JMI. The forum provided an opportunity for participants to share experiences and discuss challenges and possible pathways for tea garden youth empowerment.

The Special Lecture Session IV focused on "Skilling Opportunities for Tea Tribe & Adivasi Youth." The session was addressed by Mr Pinku Choudhury, Skill Project Manager, Assam Skill Development Mission, Government of Assam. The afternoon sessions on 6 October included Paper Presentation Session V, chaired by Prof. Saswati Choudhury, Director, OKDISCD, and Paper Presentation Session VI, chaired by Prof. Ahrar Hussain.

On 7 October 2026, Paper Presentation Session VII was chaired by Prof. Kaushal Kishore, Department of Educational Studies, JMI, and Prof. Ahrar Husain, Former Head and Dean, JMI. This was followed by Paper Presentation Session VIII, which included a Question and Answer Session. The three-day conclave concluded with the Valedictory Session, held on 7 October from 2:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. Prof. Ahrar Hussain chaired the session, while Dr Zeba Tabassum served as the Master of the Programme. Prof. Kaushal Kishore welcomed the gathering. Participants reflected on the proceedings and outcomes of the conclave. Dr Rajdeep Singha and Pinku Choudhury addressed the gathering, while Dr Quazi Ferdoushi Islam delivered the concluding remarks and proposed the vote of thanks.

The National Conclave provided an important platform for academics, researchers, government representatives, skill-development professionals and other stakeholders to deliberate on education, skill development, digital literacy, entrepreneurship, livelihood opportunities and welfare interventions for tea garden communities. The discussions emphasized the need to connect research with policy and grassroots implementation and to develop inclusive and sustainable pathways for the empowerment of tea garden communities in Assam.

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