

# PRESS RELEASE



## Workshop on Women in North Eastern Agriculture

### Highlights Entrepreneurship and Livelihood Opportunities

**Tura, February 4, 2026:** A one-day workshop on “Women in North Eastern Agriculture: Breaking Barriers and Building Businesses” was organised by the All India Coordinated Research Project on Women in Agriculture (AICRP-WIA), Tura Centre, at the College of Community Science, Central Agricultural University (Imphal), Tura, Meghalaya. The programme aims to highlight the pivotal role of women in agriculture in the North Eastern Region with a focus on entrepreneurship development, capacity building and livelihood enhancement.

The workshop was inaugurated by the Deputy Commissioner, West Garo Hills District, Shri Vibhor Aggarwal, IAS, who emphasised that women constitute nearly 50 percent of the population and play a crucial role in the workforce. He stressed the need for government institutions and departments to provide sustained handholding support to women agri-entrepreneurs, particularly in areas of product development, marketing and scaling up of enterprises, to ensure long-term sustainability.



As part of the programme, an exhibition of stalls showcasing products, innovations and start-ups led by women entrepreneurs was inaugurated by the Chief Guest, providing a platform for interaction with scientists, officials and stakeholders.



The inaugural session commenced with the traditional lighting of the lamp and felicitation of dignitaries. Dr. Namita Singh, Unit Coordinator, AICRP-WIA, delivered the welcome address, followed by opening remarks from Dr. Jyoti V. Vastrad, Dean, College of Community Science, Tura. Smt. Minha Riyaz Khan, Project Lead, PRIME (PSREF), Shillong, addressed the gathering as the Guest of Honour. The inaugural address was delivered by Shri Vibhor Aggarwal, IAS, highlighting policy support and institutional collaboration for women-led enterprises. The session concluded with a vote of thanks by Dr. Anupama Mishra, Principal Investigator, AICRP-WIA.

During the programme, two books titled “Cultivating Prosperity: Export-Oriented Agriculture in North East India” and “Knowing Each Other, Growing Together: Journey of AICRP from Home Science to WIA” were released by the dignitaries, marking an important milestone in documenting and promoting women-centric agricultural research and development initiatives.



The workshop featured three technical sessions focusing on policy support, value chain and entrepreneurship development, and government initiatives and financial support for women entrepreneurs in agriculture. Experts from MSME, CAU-KVKs and financial institutions delivered lead lectures, while women entrepreneurs from Meghalaya, Manipur, Mizoram and Tripura shared their experiences in value addition and processing of fruits, vegetables, spices, millets and traditional textiles.



Interacting with the media, Dr. Jyoti V. Vastrad, Dean, CCS, Tura, highlighted the diverse avenues for women's involvement in agriculture, including food processing, mushroom cultivation and handicrafts, and emphasised the importance of skill development and entrepreneurship opportunities. She also underscored the potential for women-led enterprises in the North East, aligning with initiatives such as “Vocal for Local”, while noting the need to address challenges related to food processing, branding and market linkages.

An interactive roundtable discussion on “Local to Scalable: Challenges, Innovations, and Policy Pathways in Women Led Agri-Entrepreneurship in the North Eastern Region” was held in the afternoon. The session was convened by Dr. Jyoti V. Vastrad and Dr. Namita Singh, and moderated by Dr. Bijaya Laxmi Sahu, Senior Scientist, AICRP-WIA. Key challenges faced by women agri-entrepreneurs and start-up founders were discussed, along with possible solutions and policy pathways.

The programme concluded with a presentation on the highlights of the technical sessions and outcomes of the roundtable discussion, followed by participants’ feedback, marking the successful culmination of the workshop.