

REPORT ON THE POPULAR TALK

“Mainstreaming Grassroots Innovations and Traditional Knowledge: NIF’s Experience”

Theme	Mainstreaming Grassroots Innovations and Traditional Knowledge: NIF’s Experience
Date	23 June 2026
Time	10:30 AM
Venue	Smart Classroom, NGC
Organized by	Department of Botany, North Gauhati College
In association with	National Innovation Foundation (NIF)-India
Keynote Speaker	Dr. Vivek Kumar , FES, FAPT, Scientist-F, NIF-India
Speaker	Dr. Rajiv Mili , Scientist & Coordinator, NIF-India, Guwahati Cell
Co-ordinator	Dr. Ruby Doley Assistant Professor, Dept.of Botany North Gauhati College

The Department of Botany, North Gauhati College, organized a Popular Talk on “Mainstreaming Grassroots Innovations and Traditional Knowledge: NIF’s Experience” on 23 June 2026 at 10:30 AM in the Smart Classroom of the college. The programme was organized in association with the National Innovation Foundation (NIF)-India, an autonomous institution under the Department of Science and Technology, Government of India, dedicated to promoting grassroots innovations and preserving valuable traditional knowledge systems.

The programme was organized with the objective of creating awareness among students and faculty members about the importance of grassroots innovations, traditional knowledge, ethnobotanical practices, scientific documentation, and opportunities for research and innovation. The interaction provided an academic platform for students to understand how knowledge generated by local communities can be identified, documented, scientifically explored, protected, and brought into the mainstream.

The programme featured Dr. Vivek Kumar, FES, FAPT, Scientist-F, Sectional Head of the Scouting, Documentation and Database Management Department (SDDM), and Regional Head (North East Region), NIF-India, as the keynote speaker. The programme also welcomed Dr. Rajiv Mili, Scientist and Coordinator, NIF-India, Guwahati Cell, who has been actively associated with the scouting and documentation of grassroots innovations and traditional knowledge practices in North-East India.

The programme began with a warm welcome to the Principal, Head of the Department, distinguished guests, faculty members, and students of the Department of Botany. An introductory overview of NIF-India was presented by Dr. Ruby Doley, highlighting that the organization was established in March 2000 with the support of the Department of Science and Technology, Government

of India, with the vision of transforming India into a creative and knowledge-based society. The organization works towards identifying, documenting, validating, protecting, and disseminating grassroots technological innovations and traditional knowledge practices developed by individuals and local communities.

The keynote session was delivered by Dr. Vivek Kumar, who possesses more than two decades of experience in grassroots innovations, ethnobotanical explorations, biodiversity documentation, and traditional knowledge systems across India. His professional profile includes his role as Scientist-F, Sectional Head of SDDM, and Regional Head for the North Eastern Region of NIF-India. He is also a recipient of the Dr. S. K. Jain Medal awarded by the Society of Ethnobotanists, Lucknow, and has contributed more than 50 research papers and scientific articles to reputed national and international journals. He also holds a U.S. patent and serves as an expert member in various innovation and incubation programmes.

During his talk, Dr. Kumar discussed the significance of scouting and documentation of grassroots technological innovations and traditional knowledge practices, along with possibilities for academic collaboration in this field. His presentation emphasized the meaningful connection between scientific inquiry, community knowledge, traditional practices, and societal needs. The examples and experiences shared during the session helped broaden the participants' understanding of grassroots innovation and highlighted the importance of systematic scientific documentation and research.

The second academic interaction was delivered by Dr. Rajiv Mili, a Principal Associate associated with NIF-India since 2010 in various capacities within the Scouting, Documentation and Database Management Department. His extensive field experience includes the identification and documentation of grassroots innovations, traditional knowledge practices, natural resource management, and activities related to intellectual property rights. Based at the Guwahati Cell of NIF-India, he coordinates activities across the North-Eastern states and facilitates collaborations with universities, science and technology institutions, educational departments, and other stakeholders.

The interaction was particularly relevant to the students of Botany as it demonstrated the close relationship between plant-based traditional knowledge, ethnobotany, biodiversity, community practices, scientific research, and innovation. It encouraged students to look beyond conventional laboratory-based approaches and recognize the enormous knowledge base present within local communities. The programme also highlighted the importance of documenting traditional practices before valuable knowledge is lost and exploring appropriate avenues for scientific validation, intellectual property protection, and responsible dissemination.

The programme concluded with a Vote of Thanks delivered by Dr. Ipsita Bhattacharjee, Assistant Professor, Department of Botany, North Gauhati College. The organizers expressed their sincere gratitude to the distinguished speakers, college authorities, faculty members, and students for their valuable participation and contribution towards the successful organization of the programme.

Department of Botany
North Gauhati College

Photos of the Event



