

Jorhat lady wins acclaim

WASIM RAHMAN



Members of the women self-help group at the Rain Forest Research Institute on Monday. Telegraph picture

on macro-proliferation and clump management technique of bamboo to the self-help groups to improve their livelihood.

Jorhat, Sept. 13: It was stock-taking time for members of the women self-help groups of Karbi Anglong at the Rain Forest Research Institute at Sotai on the eastern outskirts here today.

This year's President's Award winner in the Best Entrepreneur category, Meghali Bora of Jorhat, was invited as the special guest to inspire more than 35 women from Rongbong Ghat under Nilip block of Karbi Anglong.

Bora's Meghali Food Products, including pickles, squashes and bamboo shoots, have won acclaim for their high quality.

The programme was organised to mark the conclusion of a NABARD-funded project implemented for the last 30 months by the institute for imparting training

Explaining the project, the director of the Rain Forest Research Institute, N.K. Vasu, said for the first time in the northeastern region a project about increasing bamboo cultivation — a technique evolved by the institute in 2002 — had been directly imparted to farmers through field training and participatory research.

Vasu said to provide a sustainable alternative to *jhum* cultivators and augment their income, the institute had taken the over Rs 3.5-lakh project funded by NABARD to give the knowhow of increasing bamboo culm and shoot production to two all-woman self-help groups.

Vasu said the technique involves doing clump cutting of two nodes of a bamboo plant and inserting chemicals.

Over 40 saplings in a year could be gained by this technique instead of only one or two saplings from a bamboo clump (cluster of bamboo trees) by using traditional method.

In a PowerPoint presentation about the project the institute's scientist and coordinator of the project, P.K. Kaushik, said as the shoot of *Bambusa balcooa*, known as *Bholuka baah* in Assam, had great demand for processing food products like pickles, it was chosen to be planted in the nursery set up at Rongbong Ghat.

Several training sessions were held at the sites to train members of self-help groups of Sahar Langso and Rongbong Ghat Mahila, each group having about 25 members.