

CSIR-North East Institute of Science & Technology (CSIR-NEIST) endeavour to promote local rural women entrepreneurship

CSIR-North East Institute of Science & Technology (CSIR-NEIST), Jorhat has taken the message in letter and spirit conveyed by the honourable prime minister of India Shri Narendra Modi on “Atma Nirbhar Bharat Abhiyan” or “Self-reliant India campaign” and “go vocal for local” while he was announcing the lockdown 4. Thus, keeping in concurrence with the mission to revive the beleaguered economy of the country and to arrest the issue of unemployment triggered by the COVID-19 pandemic, CSIR-NEIST is catapulted in the trajectory of economic resurrection of the local society at large with a zeal and zest to serve this great societal mission. Tuning with the mission of the ambitious STINER project of the institute which has the potentiality to be a flagship project of the institute, the director CSIR-NEIST, Dr G. Narahari Sastry had called for an introductory meeting of some local rural women aspiring entrepreneurs on 18 May, 2020 to apprise them with the readily available plethora of rural technologies lying at the disposal of the institute for ready-to-translation to the rural masses. The meeting was attended by rural women entrepreneurs of a local Self-Help Group (SHG) christened as “Prerona”. Dr Sastry addressed the aspiring entrepreneurs and assured that CSIR-NEIST is ready to adopt the serious individuals for a stipulated period of time and facilitate them to make a foray into the local market with the institute’s rural technologies. He also categorically mentioned that the institute is ready to render all support and help them start their enterprises by guiding them to avail the rural development schemes of the government of India and bank loans, to train them up in adding value to their products by training them on attractive packaging skills, link them to supply chain, develop skills for marketing strategy, scaling up etc. which would ensure value-addition and raise the income level of the households. Dr Sastry further added that full support can be given to develop self-reliant model villages with CSIR-NEIST ready to facilitate this endeavour by providing ample space within the campus to showcase their products and develop their market. He urged upon the future rural entrepreneurs to choose among the available technologies so that a planned strategy can be adopted for imparting proper training to develop the skills in mushroom cultivation, floriculture with emphasis on orchids and other ornamental plants and grass, bamboo artifacts, candles with mosquito repellent properties, soap, medicinal plants, banana fibre utilization, low dust chalk pencil, products from flower wastes, vermicompost, paper bag making, etc. Dr Sastry exemplified some new avenues for augmenting their living by stating that CSIR-NESIT can help them rope in supply orders for producing PPE kit with their home sewing machine which

can be later marketed with antiviral coating. Earlier in the commencement of the programme Dr Mantu Bhuyan, Principal Scientist and PI of the STINER project welcomed the participants and along with Dr Dipul Kalita and Mr Dipankar Neog, both Principal Scientist essayed the nitty-gritty of rural technology market avenues and its scope in developing social entrepreneurship as per the MSME norms.

Some research scholars of Academy of Scientific & Innovative Research (AcSIR) of CSIR-NEIST also played a pivotal role in demonstrating the art of mosquito repellent candle making so as to arouse the interest and curiosity among the budding women entrepreneurs. It may be mentioned that this is also a component of their PhD societal project under CSIR-800 programme. The aspiring women entrepreneurs were also gifted with samples of CSIR-NEIST products like antifungal herbal ointment, anti-arthritis herbal ointment and soap, so that they can disseminate the available avenues on skill development among their peers in the rural areas.

The rural women group expressed their interest on mosquito repellent and decorative candle making process and has started to come to institute in a group of two to three from 20 May, 2020 onwards for gaining hands-on training on candle making. It may be mentioned that CSIR-NEIST has already made a stride in this direction by setting up a Rural Women Technology Park sponsored by SEED, DST, Government of India which is a project lead by Dr Jatin Kalita, Principal Scientist and Head, Research Planning & Business Development Division (RPBDD), CSIR-NEIST.

Prepared by Bijit Kumar Choudhury (PhD),
Senior Scientist, GSTD,
CSIR-NEIST, Jorhat, Assam

Concluded.

Photographs:



Inspiring Introduction by Director, CSIR-NEIST on Scope of Women Entrepreneurship



Lecture given by Scientists, CSIR NEIST



Field trip to Orchid House, NEIST



Demonstration on the preparation of mosquito repellent candle and soap etc.