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“There is no ‘Plan B’ because we do not have a ‘Planet B.’ We have to work and galvanize our action.”
- Ban Ki Moon, Former Secretary General, United Nations

SDGs in Action in Assam

Assam Agenda 2030: Strategies and Actions for Achieving the SDGs in Assam

Guwahati 26th and 27th February 2018: The Hon'ble Speaker of the Legislative Assembly Shri H. N. Goswami organized a two-day 'Interaction with Members of Legislative Assembly', on understanding the Sustainable Development Goals and the detailed discussion on the 'Assam Agenda 2030: Strategies and Actions for Achieving the SDGs in Assam.' Understanding the need for achieving these goals, the two-days interaction focused on bringing together the leaders of the state to envision a better future and sustainable world by 2030 through the SDGs. This political will is one of the cornerstones for the achievement of these goals as it will directly impact the implementation and localization of the goals to every individual in the state.

The interaction was designed for the MLAs to interact closely with experts from around the country like Dr. Usha Jumani (Consultant and Research Scholar), Dr. Devi Prasad Shetty (Chairman, Narayana Healthcare), Dr. Mihir Kanti Choudhury (Advisor, Government of Assam), Shri Anurag Goel (SDGs Advisor to UNDP), Prof.

Sebastian Morris (IIM Ahmedabad), Dr. Navroz K. Dubash (Centre for Policy Research), Justice Hrishikesh Roy, and Shri Ashok Lahiri (Chairman, Bandhan Bank) and Dr. Shiladitya Chatterjee, Advisor, Centre for SDGs, Assam interacted with the MLAs on understanding these Goals. Senior Officials from across the Departments presented their Strategies and Actions through convergence for achieving the Goals by 2030.

The Hon'ble speaker during the two-day interaction stressed on the need for the political leaders to be able to engage more closely with the SDGs for achieving these by 2030. He focused on the need for MLAs and bureaucrats to work together and the need for more regular meetings and interactions among them. Hon'ble Minister Dr. Himanta Biswa Sharma, stressed on the need to look at the finance and its components through the SDG lens to increase accountability in terms of finances. Shri V. K. Pipersenia, Chief Secretary, reinstated how Assam is 'moving well ahead of the rest of the world' in terms of SDGs and this needs to be kept up. Many Hon'ble MLAs from across all parties interacted closely with the speakers and asked questions to the resource persons for deeper understanding on these issues.

The two-day programme ended with the Hon'ble Speaker declaring formulation of a Legislator's Forum for SDGs which will comprise of members of all political parties and will meet once in every quarter. He also declared that every session of the Assembly at least one SDG Goal will be discussed on the floor of the house. He declared that one SDG Youth Fellowship Programme will be launched where one young person will be designated to each MLA through a process of selection for assisting them and integrating SDGs in their constituencies.

The SDGs which have 193 countries as signatories is a landmark agreement which set forth a set of seventeen goals which are to be achieved by 2030 and Government of Assam was the first state in the country to adopt these 17 goals and to come out with a Vision Document which lays down the strategies for achieving these international goals. The Government of Assam has already started the process of integrating SDGs into their policies by training officials on the SDGs and developing Strategies and Actions for achieving these goals by 2030. It has started the process of localising by taking it to the districts and integrated it into the outcome budgeting process. The Government has set up a Centre for SDGs for coordinating the activities of the state and the Transformation and Development Department is the nodal department for the SDGs in Assam.



Localizing the SDGs in Assam

The process of taking the SDGs to the Grassroots started with a series of *District Level Sensitisation Programmes* which were completed in 17 out of 33 districts in the first phase from October 2017 to January 2018. Currently the second phase of sensitization is being undertaken in the remaining districts of Assam. The **purpose of these trainings** are:

- i. Contextualise SDGs to the local understanding.
- ii. Sensitise all officials from Districts and Blocks on what are the SDGs and the work happening at the state level towards integrating SDGs in the State.
- iii. Create awareness and understanding on how the various Districts are doing in terms of the different indicators.
- iv. Assist in prioritizing the different Goals based on current understanding of problems and situations in the Districts.
- v. Engage in Group Discussions and generate inputs on the way forward for localizing SDGs to the Grassroots.

Some inputs from the first phase of discussions highlighted the following:

- i. In hill areas some of the critical issues raised were on livelihood generation and unemployment.
- ii. In riverine areas, floods and natural disasters and its effect on health and education seem to be a key focus.
- iii. In districts with rich flora, fauna and diversity issues around protection of environment and community based protection measures were highlighted.
- iv. Most districts highlighted the lack of accessibility to markets and linkages.
- v. Local handicrafts, weaving and agriculture stood to be some of the biggest strengths in most districts but most admitted that their potential in terms of providing adequate income through these sectors is limited.
- vi. Adopting one model village to implement and understand the SDGs in each district was suggested by many districts themselves.

After the first phase of sensitization a more detailed District Manual is being developed to further assist districts/ blocks and Gaon Panchayats to prioritise the various SDGs and develop integrated SDG –centric plans which integrate all the other plans and programmes such as participatory exercises like 'Amar Gaon, Amar Asoni' and create a holistic and sustainable planning process.



Participants at the Nalbari SDG Sensitisation Training held on 9th March 2018



SDG Sensitisation Training on 6th December 2017 at Baksa District



Discover tools and methodologies for localizing SDGs at:

<http://localizingthesdgs.org/discover-tools>

SDG in focus:

Goal 4: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all

GUNOTSAV IN ASSAM

Gunotsav is a quality enhancement initiative of the State for bringing about improvement in learning levels of students at Elementary level. Hon'ble Minister, Education, Assam has already announced the implementation of the programme in his budget speech. It aims to evaluate schools and students of schools in order to assess their performance and design strategies to bring about quality improvement in levels of learning as well as in the school environment. Assessment will be done on four core areas viz Academic achievement of children of Class-2 to 8 , Co-scholastic activities, Availability and Utilization of School Infrastructure and other facilities and Community Participation.

The distribution of scores for these areas will be : scholastic- 60%, co-scholastic areas-20%, availability and utilization of infrastructure and other facilities- 10%, community participation-10%. Classes II to VIII will be covered. Assessment of children from class II to V will be in respect of Skills viz. Reading, Writing and Numeracy. For children of classes VI to VIII, assessment will be done in respect of subject areas in addition to Skills of reading, writing and numeracy.

The exercise will indicate the gaps in learning levels of students of classes-II to VIII. The teachers based on this assessment will provide appropriate intervention to improve learning levels of students. A special coaching package will be designed for remedial teaching by the teachers in the school itself.

The programme is expected to bring about the following results :

- ⇒ Tracking academic performance of each child across all subjects throughout the elementary cycle.
- ⇒ Indication of learning gaps of child
- ⇒ Designing and implementing remedial strategies based on the identified learning gaps.
- ⇒ Enhancing learning of students through timely regular feedback and support and bring about improved learning outcomes.
- ⇒ Increase retention rate and reduce dropout rate.
- ⇒ Generation of awareness and greater participation among all stakeholders.
- ⇒ Ensuring better school functioning.

For more information on the results visit: <http://www.gunotsavassam.org>

Targets under goal 4:

- 4.1 By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and effective learning outcomes
- 4.2 By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys have access to quality early childhood development, care and pre-primary education so that they are ready for primary education
- 4.3 By 2030, ensure equal access for all women and men to affordable and quality technical, vocational and tertiary education, including university
- 4.4 By 2030, substantially increase the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship
- 4.5 By 2030, eliminate gender disparities in education and ensure equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for the vulnerable, including persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples and children in vulnerable situations
- 4.6 By 2030, ensure that all youth and a substantial proportion of adults, both men and women, achieve literacy and numeracy
- 4.7 By 2030, ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development
- 4.a Build and upgrade education facilities that are child, disability and gender sensitive and provide safe, non-violent, inclusive
- 4.b By 2020, substantially expand globally the number of scholarships available to developing countries, in particular least developed countries, small island developing States and African countries, for enrolment in higher education, including vocational training and information and communications technology, technical, engineering and scientific programmes, in developed countries and other developing countries
- 4.c By 2030, substantially increase the supply of qualified teachers, including through international cooperation for teacher training in developing countries, especially least developed countries and small island developing States



4 QUALITY EDUCATION



ENSURE INCLUSIVE AND EQUITABLE QUALITY EDUCATION AND PROMOTE LIFELONG LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL

GLOBALLY

THE GLOBAL LITERACY RATE IS

91%

BUT

57

MILLION CHILDREN REMAIN OUT OF SCHOOL

IN INDIA



73%

ADULTS ARE LITERATE



68%

IN RURAL AREAS



54%

OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES ARE LITERATE



34%

CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS ARE OUT OF SCHOOL

100%

ENROLMENT OF GIRLS IN PRIMARY EDUCATION BUT ONLY

23.2%

IN HIGHER EDUCATION

360 MILLION

LARGEST YOUTH POPULATION IN THE WORLD

24%

GROSS ENROLLMENT IN HIGHER EDUCATION



92%

FEMALE

&



94%

MALE

YOUTH ARE LITERATE

Monthly Reads

- Protect children and their digital footprint,' urges UNICEF on Safer Internet Day. Source: <http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/blog/2018/02/protect-children-digital-footprint-urges-unicef-safer-internet-day/>
- UNESCO advocates quality comprehensive sexuality education to promote health and well-being, respect for human rights and gender equality, and empowers children and young people to lead healthy, safe and productive live. Source: <https://en.unesco.org/news/urges-comprehensive-approach-sexuality-education>
- The Contribution of Science in Implementing the Sustainable Development Goals. Source: <http://unsdsn.org/resources/publications/the-contribution-of-science-in-implementing-the-sustainable-development-goals/>

News from Around the World

- NITI AAYOG LAUNCHES WOMEN ENTREPRENEURSHIP PLATFORM ON INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY: Source: <https://yourstory.com/2018/03/niti-aayog-launches-women-entrepreneurship-platform-international-womens-day/>
- 'INDIA NEEDS TO FIND UNIQUE SOLUTIONS TO ADDRESS CLIMATE CHANGE': Source: <http://www.smetimes.in/smetimes/news/top-stories/2018/Mar/06/india-climate-change-ficci.html>
- CHILD MARRIAGE IN DECLINE IN INDIA. SOURCE: <http://indianexpress.com/article/india/child-marriages-decline-in-india-unicef-5088177/>
- HARYANA BEGINS PROCESS FOR BUDGET 2018-19 KEEPING IN VIEW THE SCHEMES FOR THE UPLIFTMENT OF WEAKER SECTION OF THE SOCIETY AND 17 SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS (SDGS) OF THE UNITED NATIONS. Source: <http://www.dailypioneer.com/state-editions/chandigarh/haryana-begins-process-for-budget-2018-19.html>

Videos on SDGs

- Watch 'We the people': <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RpqVmvMCmp0&t=8s>
- Watch 'How we can make the world a better place by 2030: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o08ykAqLOxk>
- Watch 'Understanding Dimensions of Sustainable Development': <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pgNLonYOc9s>



Image Credit: [Ken Robinson/World's Largest Lesson](#)

* This publication uses sources and cites articles from all around the world to disseminate understanding and knowledge on SDGs.

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