



## A MONTHLY E-NEWSLETTER BY CENTRE FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS ASSAM ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF COLLEGE, GUWAHATI ISSUE III: OCTOBER- DECEMBER 2017

### Highlights:

- Common Questions on SDGs
- SDG Events
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### SOME COMMON THOUGHTS REGARDING THE SDGs

#### 1. Why are SDGs important to our work?

SDGs break down silos of working on related issues but separately like poverty, education, gender and environment but rather brings them together to create interlinkages and structural transformation and can assist in creating a holistic system of planning for achieving all goals in a systematic and synergized manner.

#### 2. Can SDGs involve all stakeholders to participate to achieve it?

SDGs are not just a means for governments to realign their policies for achieving these goals but rather are an important tool for creating transparent public governance systems with the help of all members of society. By engaging everyone; from businesses to promote sustainable practices and engage in SDG centric CSR programmes., to youth who can understand and participate through innovative ideas and thoughts and assist in the development of their region, NGOs and CSOs by integrating these goals into their work .

#### 3. Are all goals important to us?

Most goals have a direct linkage to the work we do, in whichever sphere of life may it be. In the case of Assam, almost all goals have a link except in goals which focus on oceans based phenomenon's such as ocean acidifications. However, all goals play an important role in our lives. These goals help in increasing impact of any activity towards long term sustainability and advance the accountability of institutions.

## SDG Events in Assam

### Youth Innovations for a Brighter Assam

**2nd and 3rd November 2017:** The T&D Department, Government of Assam, CSDGs in collaboration with UNDP, and the CIFS organized a two-day event titled, **Ideathon: Youth Innovations for Brighter Assam**, at Assam Administrative Staff College, Guwahati on 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2017. 26 teams participated and each team presented their ideas and innovation by addressing one of the seven problem statements given to them on health, livelihoods, unemployment, agriculture, nutrition deficiency, poverty and natural disasters and environment. The event aimed at engaging the youth in the process of development and creating innovative solutions keeping SDGs in mind. The CSDG will incorporate 8 innovative ideas into their SDG based Solutions Bank and give scope to the winning teams to develop their prototypes and apply these solutions working closely with the departments in the state and the SDG model villages. The main objectives of this event were to integrate innovative process and thinking into the current structural and governance process in Assam by engaging other stakeholders especially the youth for creating scalable solutions for the development of Assam.

### Gender, Inequality and other Deprivations; No-one Left Behind

**7<sup>th</sup> November: 2017:** This conclave dealt with issues pertaining to Gender and inequality which largely encompasses the Goals 5 and 10. Thematic discussions on Goal 5 i.e. Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls ranged from trafficking, witch hunting, violence against women, prevention of early marriage, participation of women in elected bodies and affirmative action. The lead department was Social Welfare and supporting departments were Education, Home, Revenue & Disaster Management and P&RD. This conclave also witnessed the participation of representatives from UN Women and NGOs like North East Network. The Goal 10 conclave held on the same day dealt with issues ranging from the promotion of welfare of SC/ST, promotion of welfare of TGL/Char areas people/ border areas people, reducing inequalities for people with disabilities, reducing inequalities for Children, reducing inequalities for the Elderly. The lead department was Transformation and Development and WPT & BC and the supporting departments were Social Welfare, Finance (Financial Inclusion), Revenue (inequality in land holdings) Border Area Development Department, Char Area Development Department, Minority Area Development Department, Development Councils, Sixth Schedule Councils. Other stakeholders were Sishu Sarothi,, NGOs and Philanthropic organisations.

### Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions

**9<sup>th</sup> November 2017:** SDG 16 focuses on promoting peaceful, inclusive societies for sustainable development and provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels. To create a peaceful society especially in a state like Assam, with its rich cultural diversity, it is important to engage people in the dialogue towards building peace. Engaging public in building local governance, ensuring the implementation of laws through both governmental monitoring but a robust system which identifies the gaps in the systematic processes are important to achieve peace and harmony in society. Reducing violent conflict is another critical aspect in Assam. For SDG 16 to be fully achieved it is imperative that effective, accountable and inclusive institutions are there to cater to the needs of everyone. This conclave was organized by Home and Political Department, Government of Assam in collaboration with T & D Department and CSDG. The conclave focused on group wise thematic discussions among the 6 thematic groups ranging from reduction of violence and organized crime, reduction of trafficking and all forms of violence against children and women, rule of law and access to justice for all, substantially reduce corruption and bribery in all forms, provide legal identity for all, including birth registration, ensure public access to information and protect fundamental freedoms in accordance with national legislation.

### Innovation Summit for Initiating an Innovation Lab

**22nd and 23rd November 2017:** CSDGs, T&D Department in collaboration with UNDP and CIFS organized a two-day Innovation Summit on 22<sup>nd</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2017. This summit saw participation from all departments of Government of Assam who engaged in the process of co-creation, foresight and experimentation with the assistance of facilitators and came up with the blueprint for setting up an Innovation Lab in Assam. The Innovation Lab will evolve new governance model for different problematic areas/ sectors for transformation.

### Partnerships for achieving the SDG s in Assam

**12th December 2017:** The T&D Department along with the Centre for SDGs, Finance Department, AR&T Department and IT Department organized the final conclave on achieving all the SDGs by strengthening capacity of government functionaries, generating financial resources through various means for achieving the goals, to develop a monitoring dashboard which will assist in understanding the progress of the different SDGs in the state and the process of integrating innovation through technology and other inputs as a crucial aspect of developing and achieving SDGs in Assam. The discussions were held in sub-groups were intensive deliberations were held on the above points. Strategies were developed which would be incorporated into the upcoming Assam Agenda 2030, for ensuring proper implementation of all the goals.

## SDG IN FOCUS

### SDG 5 ON GENDER EQUALITY

Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls

#### Targets under Goal 5

- End all forms of discrimination against all women and girls everywhere
- Eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation
- Eliminate all harmful practices, such as child, early and forced marriage and female genital mutilation
- Recognize and value unpaid care and domestic work through the provision of public services, infrastructure and social protection policies and the promotion of shared responsibility within the household and the family as nationally appropriate
- Ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life
- Ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights as agreed in accordance with the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development and the Beijing Platform for Action and the outcome documents of their review conferences
- Undertake reforms to give women equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to ownership and control over land and other forms of property, financial services, inheritance and natural resources, in accordance with national laws
- Enhance the use of enabling technology, in particular information and communications technology, to promote the empowerment of women
- Adopt and strengthen sound policies and enforceable legislation for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls at all levels

For more information: <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdg3>

#### The innovative route to gender equality

**Taru Bahl:** "How can we discipline children without punishing them, and how do you expect us to talk about a taboo subject like sexual abuse without diluting the respect students and parents have for us?" These were at first the anxious concerns of teachers, many of them male, in the remote villages of Jharkhand during trainings held as part of the Gender Equity Movement in Schools (GEMS) initiative.

Launched in 2014 in Ranchi and Khunti districts by the International Centre for Research on Women (ICRW), with support from the state government and partner voluntary organisations like Child in Need Institute (CINI) and Life Education and Development Support (LEADS), the project initially found that many schools were reluctant to openly talk about gender discrimination, body changes and abuse.

In the ten-odd years of the programme in Maharashtra and, later, Jharkhand, the trainers are used to volatile discussions as teachers question the concept of violence and what constitutes abuse. At the government middle school in Dudri, Murhu block, Khunti district, Jyoti (14) looks forward to it. In just a few sessions she has understood the different dimensions of violence. She now knows that even if a group of boys whistle as she walks past, the sexual act is to be condemned. And if her teacher rubbishes her work, asking her to stay home instead, this is nothing but intimidation.

For more information: <http://www.thehindubusinessline.com/specials/india-interior/the-innovative-route-to-gender-equality/article9869174.ece>



Image courtesy: Business Line

#### Do check out!

**Facts and figures on ending violence against women by UN Women**

Access: <http://www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/>

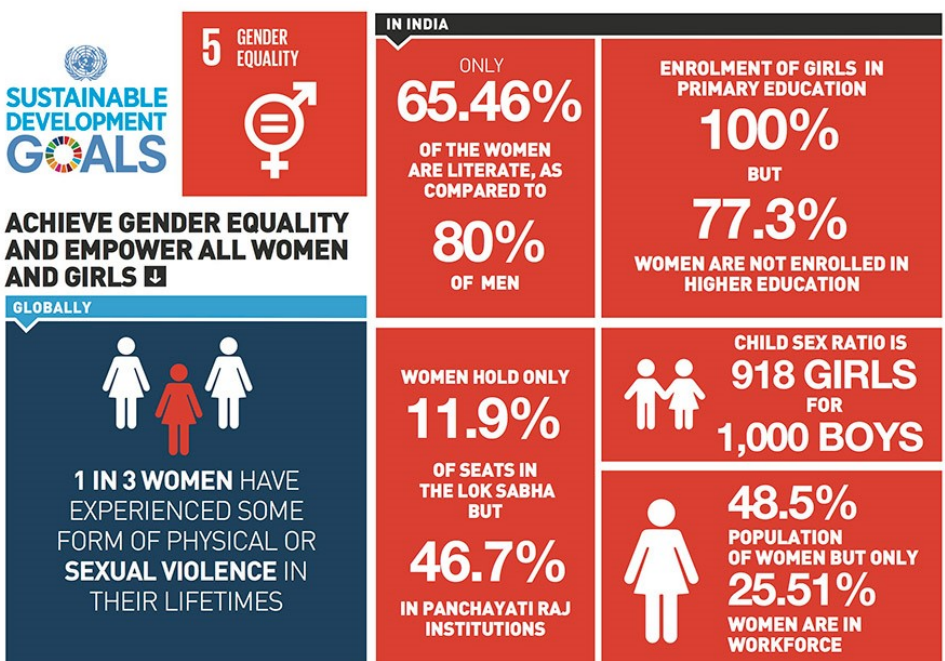
### The Indian Labour Market: a gender perspective

Authors/ editor(s): Govindan Raveendran, UN Women

Extract: 'Gender inequalities in respect of education and employment curtail the productive capabilities of women and hence impede the process of development of nations. This is particularly the case in developing countries such as India, where women are subjected to a number of restrictive social norms and ethos despite the principle of gender equality being enshrined in the Constitution. The Constitution also empowers the State to adopt measures of positive discrimination in favour of women, which has led to several laws, policies and development plans/ programmes being put in place specifically for the advancement of women in different spheres'.

<http://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2016/2/the-indian-labour-market-a-gender-perspective>

PDF Access Link: <http://www.unwomen.org/-/media/headquarters/attachments/sections/library/publications/2016/indianlabourforceanalysis.pdf?la=en&vs=3510>



## Readings

### Article: Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals - From Agenda to Action

**Author:** Institute for Global Environmental Strategies

This book joins a timely discussion on how the SDGs can be implemented. It deals with how the globally agreed goals can be adapted to national and local circumstances, and what actions can pave the way for achieving them. More specifically, the book focuses on how reforms in governance—the way in which authority is exercised and decisions are taken and executed—can bring the SDG agenda into action.

Link: <https://pub.iges.or.jp/pub/achieving-sustainable-development-goals-agenda>

### UN Women Evaluation Handbook: How to manage gender-responsive evaluation

This handbook is designed as a resource to help those initiating, managing and/ or using gender-responsive evaluations. Gender-responsive evaluation is more important than ever as a means for building strong systems for generating and using evidence to improve the work UN Women does to achieve gender equality.

Download: <http://www.unwomen.org/-/media/headquarters/attachments/sections/library/publications/2015/un-women-evaluation-handbook-en.pdf?la=en&vs=1401>

## **This Team Is Eradicating Gender Based Violence & Inequality By Doing Something**

### **Very Different**

**Written by Tanaya Singh**

“After I started attending the weekly classes, I genuinely began to appreciate what was being taught. It completely changed me as a person. Equal Community Foundation taught me to look at women, all women, with respect,” says 18-year-old Goureesh from Prem Nagar, a low-income community in Pune.

Even as the media reports about violence against women and the country debates how to fight gender discrimination, there is one organization that is quietly working on the root cause of these problems – the attitude of young men and boys towards women. The Equal Community Foundation (ECF) has already worked with more than 3,000 boys and its impact on their lives is visible. Because of the impressive work of Equal Community Foundation (ECF), this young man has not only experienced a change in his perspective and mind set but has also put his newly acquired knowledge into action. Based on his learning, Goureesh protested against the dowry being asked for his uncle’s marriage. He took his mother’s help in convincing the family to share half the wedding expenses with the bride’s family. This was a huge step forward not just for him but for the local community he belongs to where taking dowry is considered normal. Founded by Will Muir and Rujuta Teredesai in 2009, ECF was started with a view to including men in the fight for gender equality. The mission of the organization is to ensure that Indian men get the opportunity to understand and practice gender equitable behaviour in order to end violence and discrimination against women. Hence, this 22-member organization provides young men and boys in about 20 communities of Pune with the knowledge and skills that can help change their behaviour towards women. Today, ECF is working towards this objective through three different programs:

**Action for Equality:** Under this program, members of the team organize sessions for young men in the age group of 14-17. The sessions are conducted inside the communities and ECF members talk to the participants about different aspects of gender equality. So they cover a wide range of topics in the 15 sessions they conduct with these young men. The subjects include gender, gender stereotypes, construction and deconstruction of gender norms, patriarchy, discrimination, sexual and reproductive health, sexual orientation and sexuality, and above all, respect and the importance of consent. The sessions also deal with providing the boys with the required skills to instigate change. For example, what are the steps they should take if they have to go out and challenge someone in their family on a gender related issue? Or if they have to speak up against a wrong being done to a woman? The participants get a chance to learn how to face these challenges in skill development lessons. This is followed by leadership development where some strong candidates from the community are recognised and nurtured as leaders, with a view to taking the knowledge forward. This is done because ECF wants the communities to operate by themselves.

**Project Raise:** This is the second aspect of the programme and it basically deals with scaling the project. In the next five to seven years, ECF is looking forward to working with about 100 organizations across India in order to build their capacity in such a way that working with men and boys on the issue of gender equality gets embedded in their present line of work.

**Research:** This is the third leg of the program that resulted from the co-founders facing a major challenge when starting the programme. There was absolutely no evidence or any kind of research on whether this approach with men and boys works or not. And if it does, what are the contributing factors and barriers? While there was research on why we need to engage men, not many were talking about how to do so. Now, with about six years of experience, ECF wants to fill that gap and create a knowledge base with case studies, steps taken, the kinds of sessions organized, etc., that can be accessed by one and all. With these three programmes in place, ECF is confident about impact. They have worked with 3,400 boys and 1,700 of them have graduated from the program. There are also many who are volunteering on an on-going basis. Currently, ECF sustains itself with the help of donations from individuals and other organizations.

## **SDG News from Around the World**

- **COP23: UN chief urges more ambition, leadership and partnerships for the climate change:** via UN News Centre, Link: <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=58090#.Wg5wDTvhXIU>
- **Asia-Pacific leaders support ESCAP-ADB-UNDP partnership to achieve 2030 Agenda for sustainable development in the region:** Link: <https://www.adb.org/news/asia-pacific-leaders-support-escap-adb-undp-partnership-achieve-2030-agenda-sustainable>
- **Syria brings the number of Paris Agreement ratifications to 170:** Link: <http://sdg.iisd.org/news/syria-brings-the-number-of-paris-agreement-ratifications-to-170/>
- **Pacific Island Leaders sign Lofoten Declaration:** Link: <http://sdg.iisd.org/news/pacific-island-leaders-sign-lofoten-declaration/>
- **Solidarity across generations is vital for sustainable development, UN special event hears:** Via UN News Centre, Link: <http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/blog/2017/08/solidarity-across-generations-is-vital-for-sustainable-development-un-special-event-hears/>

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\*Disclaimer: This newsletter is only for internal circulation and uses material and resources from around the world with sources cited for spreading information on SDGs.



- **Breastfeeding is 'smartest investment' families, communities and countries can make – UN:** Link: <http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/blog/2017/08/breastfeeding-is-smartest-investment-families-communities-and-countries-can-make-un/>
- **How scientists can help make the sustainable development goals a reality: The Conversation, August 29th 2017.** Link: <http://theconversation.com/how-scientists-can-help-make-the-sustainable-development-goals-a-reality-81488>
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