

UDGAM

EMPOWERING GIRL LEADERS: FST'S WORKSHOP PROMOTES GENDER EQUALITY AND EDUCATION ACCESS

FST organized a two-day workshop under project *Ankuran – Young Girls Access to Education* in Guwahati, with a special focus on life skills and transformative leadership on gender and patriarchy. The workshop took place on June 13 and 14 and saw the active participation of fifteen Girl Leaders from Barpeta, Assam.

During the workshop, the attendees engaged in interactive sessions facilitated by resource persons, Pragati Kalita and Kayia Ashuli from the Institute of Development Action (IDeA). They emphasized the significance of life skills and self-awareness in building the necessary confidence to face challenges and overcome obstacles in life.

The workshop also featured a session led by Nilanju Dutta, a gender rights specialist from the North East Network (NEN), a women's rights association. The session shed light on gender and patriarchy, bringing attention to the gender-based restrictions that exist in society. Discussions revolved around social barriers that affect both girls and boys, importance of educating young girls and understanding the gender dimensions present in the society.



Project *Ankuran* has identified 24 girl leaders across 12 villages in Barpeta district of Assam. These young leaders have willingly stepped forward to bring positive changes in their communities and raise awareness about the importance of educating the girl child.

The workshop aimed to equip these girl leaders with essential life skills, transformative leadership qualities, and a deeper understanding of gender-related issues. The hope is that they will take the knowledge gained from the workshop and apply it in their respective villages to create a positive impact and promote the education of young girls in the region.



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PROJECT AWAHAN HOLDS IMPACTFUL WORKSHOPS ON GENDER EQUALITY & FEMINIST IDEOLOGY TO STRENGTHEN WOMEN FROM MARGINALIZED GROUPS

In June, we organized a series of impactful workshops under our project *Awahan- Collectivising the voices of unorganised workers from Assam*, aimed at promoting gender equality and empowering women from marginalized groups. These workshops were conducted in various clusters in Guwahati.



The first workshop, held on June 8 and 9 at the Hatigaon cluster, featured a session titled “Gender Balance and Feminist Ideology,” led by Nilanju Dutta from NEN. Through relatable examples from everyday life, Nilanju highlighted the social barriers faced by women. The workshop utilized interactive activities such as presentations, drama, and discussions to sensitize women about their basic rights.

On June 18 we conducted a follow-up session to reinforce the learnings. Another workshop, which took place on June 23, targeted women from the unorganized sector in the Uzan Bazar cluster of Guwahati. With 43 participants, this workshop focused on exploring concepts - identity, power dynamics, suppression, and the patriarchal system. The resource person encouraged the participants to challenge societal expectations and redefine traditional gender roles. Interactive sessions further helped them understand their fundamental rights and the importance of gender equality.

On June 25, we held another awareness initiative on the Building and Other Construction Workers

(Regulation of Employment & Conditions of Services) Act, 1996. 24 workers from the informal sector in Guwahati's Hatigaon area participated in the session. It was led by social worker Pooja Nirala, who has been actively working with the unorganized sector. The focus was to sensitize about the acts that protect the interests and rights of these occupational groups.

These workshops under *Awahan* are to foster a deeper understanding of gender-related issues and empowering women with the knowledge and tools to advocate for their rights. By breaking down social barriers and promoting feminist ideologies, our aim is to create a more equitable and inclusive society.



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Empowering Single Mothers



Through our ongoing project, *Economic Empowerment for Single Mothers in Meghalaya*, FST is dedicated to enhancing the capacity of single mothers, advocating for their rights, and placing special emphasis on nurturing their entrepreneurial skills. Our primary objective is to provide assistance and support to 50 single mothers, enabling them to find hope and empowerment in their lives.

During our interactions with some of the identified single mothers, we have witnessed the positive impact of our entrepreneurial training on their lives. Dory (name changed) from Nongmensong, Shillong, attended one of our capacity-building workshops where she gained valuable insights into sales techniques and received moral support from fellow single mothers.

Recalling her challenging journey to support her children after her husband left, Dory shared how she explored various avenues of work, starting with a small-scale tea stall and later transitioning to door-to-door sales of products. However, her lack of knowledge about strategic business planning hindered her progress. With FST's trainings, she gained a deeper understanding of entrepreneurship, which ultimately contributed to her success. Dory also highlighted the project's impact when she participated in a sales event in Shillong, where they sold homemade wine, barbeque meat, and other products.

Rose (name changed), another single mother, expressed how our trainings significantly benefited her small grocery shop. Initially, she struggled to make the ends meet each month, as it was her first venture into entrepreneurship. However, through our training sessions, she learned effective ways to manage and expand her shop's offerings, which subsequently increased demand and boosted her monthly earnings. Rose now takes pride in her ability to independently support her family.

