

MAY
2025

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER “XIX” EDITION

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Celebrating International Women's Day: Empowering Women, Empowering Change

This year's International Women's Day celebrations were a resounding success. FST hosted three impactful events that highlighted the importance of gender equality and women's empowerment. The theme of International Women's Day 2025, "Invest in Women: Accelerate Progress," resonated deeply with our initiatives, which aimed to inspire change and promote a more equitable society.

Puppetry show spreads awareness



On March 8, FST organized a puppetry show, "Akou notun probhat hobo," performed by PuppetPeople Assam (NAAT Foundation), at City Centre Mall, Guwahati. The show used colourful puppets to tell empowering stories based on real-life incidents, highlighting the importance of gender equality and honouring women's contributions to society.

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In Hatigaon and Uzan Bazar, we brought together 73 women to celebrate International Women's Day on 7th March, 2025. The program featured:

- A thought-provoking movie screening of "Ghar ki Murgi," sparking meaningful discussions and reflections.
- A powerful awareness drama performed by the community people on sexual harassment in the workplace, emphasizing the importance of safe spaces for women.
- Sharing of inspiring stories by collective members showcasing their strength and resilience.

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Young change-makers take center stage

On February 28, our young girls and boys in Khorichala Khoyarbagan, Barpeta, organized dramas that showcased their vision for an ideal school and life. The performances were a testament to their creativity and commitment to creating positive change. Highlights included:

- Awareness plays on child marriage and menstrual health and hygiene performed by the young leaders.
- Innovative model of ideal school presented by young minds.
- Shared powerful stories of change by the community leaders.

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Capacity-building workshop on digital literacy



On March 24, 2025, we held a workshop on enhancing digital literacy for residents of the Uzan Bazar area. Inspector Arbil Hojai from the Panbazar Cyber Crime Cell provided essential insights regarding the significance of digital literacy, the consequences of cybercrime, and various online scams, such as digital arrest, parcel scams, Over the Phone (OTP) fraud, and others. He also educated the attendees on legal recourse to combat scams and distributed helpline numbers for assistance. Around 20 individuals participated in the workshop, and attendees shared their own experiences with online difficulties.

FST's strategic plan: a roadmap for inclusive development

Foundation for Social Transformation (FST) is pleased to announce the completion of its strategic plan for 2025-2030. This roadmap was developed through a participatory process, involving board members and staff, to create a collective vision for the organization's future. The plan focuses on addressing the unique challenges of the North East region, promoting inclusive development, and empowering local communities. Key thematic areas include:

- Informal Economy: Supporting women and marginalized groups in the informal sector.
- Reducing Gender and Patriarchal Barriers: Promoting equality, diversity, and inclusion.
- Conservation of Environment: Encouraging climate-smart practices and natural resource management.

With this strategic plan, FST is poised to deepen its engagement with priority groups, including women, marginalized communities, and young adolescents and work towards a more equitable and sustainable future for the North East region.

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From 6th- 8th April, we conducted a three-day training on beautician training for the women's collective of Uzan Bazar and the Hatigaon area. Our participants learned various skills such as:

- ~Threading
- ~Facial
- ~Hair Spa
- ~Hair Strengthening
- ~Hair Cuts

A total of 14 individuals from the collectives participated in the training session. These skills will not only boost their confidence but also open up new opportunities for them to earn a living.

Empowering women, one skill at a time



Skill-building training on tailoring



We recently conducted a three-day skill-building training on tailoring for the women's collectives of the Uzan Bazar and Hatigaon areas at the Usha Anupa Training Centre, Bamunimaidam, Guwahati, from 9th to 11th April. A total of 16 enthusiastic individuals from these areas participated in the training session. Our resource person, Shantana Sharma, covered topics including:

- Basic blouse cutting
- Kurta cutting
- Basic stitching methods

The participants showed great interest in learning and expressed their desire to use this skill to earn money. Some participants even attempted to stitch blouses and kurtas with guidance, demonstrating their eagerness to develop their skills.

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Skill-building session on food hygiene and sanitation measures

On 12th April, FST successfully conducted a skill-building session on food hygiene and sanitation measures for the women collectives of Hatigaon at Hotel Rajdhani Regency, Dispur, Guwahati. The session, led by Dr. Bhabesh Ronghang, Food Safety Officer, Kamrup Metro, also covered online registration procedures under the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI).



A total of 17 participants benefited from this informative session, gaining valuable knowledge to promote food safety and hygiene practices in the informal sector

Skill-building training on basic mehendi



From 23rd to 25th April, we conducted a three-day skill-building training on basic mehendi for the Hatigaon and Uzan Bazar collective members. About 14 enthusiastic participants learned Bail, Box, and Line designs from expert Anowara Begum, a renowned makeup and mehendi design artist.

This three-day skill-building initiative aims to empower women with valuable skills, promoting economic independence and community development.

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Capacity building workshop on gender-responsive education

A capacity-building workshop on gender-responsive education was held on May 13th and 14th, 2025, in Kalgachia, Barpeta. Over the two days, a total of 13 teachers and SMC members from 10 schools actively participated and shared valuable insights. Nitumani Kalita from Aide et Action successfully facilitated the workshop, whose support ensured its smooth execution and overall success.



Story of change



Meet Manjuwara, a young married woman from Bolaipathar village, Barpeta, who defied societal norms and family expectations to reclaim her right to education. Married at 15 and a mother at 16, Manjuwara's dreams of pursuing her studies seemed lost forever. However, her life took a transformative turn when she began attending FST meetings under the Young Girls Education and Empowerment project.

Through these meetings, Manjuwara discovered the power of education and its impact on her life. She learned about essential topics like menstruation, good touch, and bad touch, but it was the importance of education that resonated with her the most. Manjuwara shared, **"I thought my life was over, and I wouldn't be able to start it again."** But attending FST meetings gave her a new purpose.

Determined to pursue her dreams, Manjuwara decided to enroll in Class 9 again in this year, despite her husband's initial disapproval and societal pressure. She faced many barriers, but her resolve remained unshaken. Now, she and her daughter both of them attends school together.

As she prepares to take her Class 9th exam, she says, **"Education is not just a right, but a key to unlocking a brighter future."** Her journey serves as a powerful reminder that it's never too late to start a new and that education can transform lives.

"Education is the spark that ignites the flame of hope, even in the darkest of times."

Manjuwara's story is a shining example of the impact of our Young Girls Education and Empowerment project. We continue to support and empower girls like Manjuwara, helping them break barriers and achieve their dreams.