



PROGRESS OF ASSAM TOWARDS SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOAL 5 (SDG 5)

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ABSTRACT

The present paper is an attempt to examine Assam's slow advancement in attaining SDG-5 i.e. Gender Equality. Assam recorded lowest index value of 25 as against 60 for India in the year 2021. For analysis, this study tries to incorporate six indicators of SDG-5 which are integral part of assessing performance ensuring gender equality in the society. They include number and type of crime against women, sex ratio at birth, ratio of female to male in Labour Force Participation Rate (LFPR) (15-59 years), ratio of female to male in average wage/ salary earnings received among regular wage/ salaried employees, number of elected women candidates in state assembly and percentage of currently married women aged 15-49 years who have their demand for modern methods of family planning satisfied. Based on data availability, the study tries to cover district level progress for Assam. The study concludes that the proportion of cruelty by husband is almost 45 percent in the total crimes committed against women in Assam. Even then, district level picture of sex ratio at birth suggests positive advancement towards SDG 5. Women representation in the political spectrum is very low. Female workforce participation rate is more in urban areas than the rural areas of Assam. So, there is a need to revamp the policies to provide cerebral job opportunities to the women of Assam.

Keywords: SDG, Gender Equality, India, Assam; JEL Code: J16, J71, I24.

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INTRODUCTION

In September 2015, the global community developed an agenda “Leave no one behind” considering the well-being of everyone on this planet. This agenda led to the development of 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) with the 169 interlinked Targets replacing the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). These goals cover a broad range of issues like poverty alleviation and quality education to climate action and gender equality. The target to achieve these goals was set to 2030.

The SDGs are universally agreed upon by 193 UN members at a historic summit in New York on September 25, 2015, and came into effect on January 1, 2016. India’s ranking in overall performance of SDGs is 112 out of 166 countries with an index score of 63.4 (Sachs, 2023). Although the progress on SDGs was very slow between 2015 and 2019, it stalled since the outbreak of pandemic COVID-19. As per UN Sustainable Development Goals Report-2023 (Sachs, 2023) progress on more than 50 percent of targets of the SDGs is very slow and on 30 percent of targets either it has stopped or is negative. To achieve these goals by 2030, it is important to analyse and compare the progress made by individual states or regions which will help policy makers to develop tailored strategies to bridge gaps for improved outcomes.

SDG 5 of the UN Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development acknowledges that gender equality is not only a fundamental human right but also a need for creating a more equitable, inclusive, and sustainable world. Empowering women and girls drives economic growth, alleviates poverty, fosters social cohesion, and supports sustainable development in addition to improving their individual well-being.

The Sustainable development report 2023 indicates that India’s progress is on track in only 2 SDGs (1, 12) whereas it is moderate in 9 SDGs (3,4,5,6,7,8,9,14,17), stagnant in 4 SDGs (2, 11,13, 16) and decreasing in SDG10 and SDG15 (Niti Aayog, 2021). As India continues its journey towards economic growth and social transformation, it is crucial to reduce gender inequality and empower women and girls, to contribute to the sustainable development. As per SDG India Index 2021 report (Niti Aayog, 2021) the performance of 14 Indian states is below the national index score of 66. Kerala is top performing with an index score of 75 whereas Bihar is the lowest performing with an index score of 52.

Assam, located in the north-eastern region of India, presents a unique landscape which should be considered for understanding the progress and challenges in advancing gender equality. Historically, Assam has been characterised by entrenched patriarchal norms, socio-economic disparities, and gender-based discrimination, which have hindered the full realisation of women’s rights and opportunities. Assam is the lowest performing North-Eastern state with an index score of 57 (Niti Aayog, 2021). This report also reveals that in SDG 5 the national index score is 48 and Assam is the lowest performing state with an index score of 25. Despite implementation of Assam Agenda 2030 the advancement of Assam is sluggish towards SDG 5.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study is to present a district wise thorough analysis of Assam’s progress toward SDG 5, looking at important metrics, programmes, laws, and interventions that support gender equality and empowerment of women and girls. Furthermore, the study discusses the policies and schemes implemented by Government of Assam to advance gender equality and women’s empowerment to accelerate the progress of SDG 5 in Assam. It contributes towards the larger goal of sustainable development in the state and beyond. The reminder of the paper is as follows. Section 2 provides literature review on India’s progression towards attending SDGs. Section 3 describes data sources and analysis of the indicators covered to assess the progress towards SDG 5 for Assam. Section 4 covers a brief about policy implications and recommendations and concludes the study.

LITERATURE REVIEW

According to NITI Aayog report, India’s performance in SDG 2 (Zero hunger) and SDG 5 (Gender Equality) is very poor with an index score of 47 and 48 respectively which is far below the National average of 66 (Niti Aayog, 2021). David (2018) highlighted several obstacles hindering the implementation of SDGs in India, including the creation of indicators, ownership and monitoring, progress measurement, and SDG financing. Choudhuri concluded that the SDG 5 (gender equality), SDG 10 (Reduced inequalities), SDG 12 (responsible consumption and production), and SDG 16 (peace, justice, and strong institutions), open significant avenues for future research (Choudhuri, 2019).

Bangera (2020) identifies that except Kerala, Himachal Pradesh and Jammu & Kashmir, all other states of India score below 50 in SDG 5 that addresses Gender equality. Dhar (2018) discussed about the issues of economic empowerment of women and ending violence against women in India. She further suggested the ways these



issues can be addressed by effective implementation of SDG 5 in India. Hasan and Parveen (2020) throw light on the various schemes and policies initiated by government of India for social, economic, and political development of women. Anand *et al.* (2022) shed light on performance of Bihar on SDGs and issues hindering the progress of SDGs. They further discussed the strategic policies and plans adopted by the central government and Bihar state government related to each SDG.

Chatterjee (2018) discussed steps taken by Assam state government since 2015 to develop a vision of an SDG-fulfilled Assam in 2030. He further emphasises a comprehensive strategy prepared by Assam to achieve its vision and steps taken to implement and monitor the strategy. As per North-eastern Region District SDG Index Report & Dashboard 2021-22 (NITI Aayog, 2021), all the districts of Assam are in the category of front runners with a score ranging from 65 to 99. This report excludes the 6 districts of Assam namely Biswanath, Charaideo, Hojai, Majuli, South Salamara-Mankachar, West Karbi Anglong.

As against this background the study tries to examine progression of Assam in achieving SDG 5. The study explores the indicators of SDG 5 in which Assam is displaying sluggish improvement compared to other states of India. Moreover, with the available data, the study tries to assess district level progress of Assam which enables policy makers to implement policies and make budgetary allocations as per the needs of the region.

DATA SOURCES AND ANALYSIS

The objective of this paper is to investigate Assam's progress in achieving SDG 5. For this purpose, the study has used various statistical reports published by government of Assam, Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS –2023) and National Family Health Survey (NFHS -4 and NFHS-5). Table - 1 suggests Assam's performance in achieving all seventeen SDGs in comparison with India. It depicts comparison of Assam with respect to India in achieving SDGs. It illustrates that Assam has been successful in achieving SDG 7 (Affordable and clean energy) with the index 98 due to the successful implementation of Ujjwala scheme and expanding network of solar energy (Economic Survey, Assam 2022-23). The performance of Assam is equal to India in attending SDG 10 and SDG 13. However, Assam is an under achiever in realising rest of all SDGs. The table - 1 highlights Assam is failing miserably with the index 25 in accomplishing targets for SDG 5. The paper attempts to study performance of Assam at district level in SDG 5 and district-wise performance of Assam based on the indicators mentioned in Table 2.

Table - 1: SDG index for India and Assam, 2021

SDGs	India	Assam
SDG 1 No Poverty	60	51
SDG 2 Zero Hunger	47	41
SDG 3 Good Health and Well-being	74	59
SDG 4 Quality Education	57	43
SDG 5 Gender Equality	48	25
SDG 6 Clean Water and Sanitation	83	64
SDG 7 Affordable and Clean Energy	92	98
SDG 8 Decent Work and Economic Growth	61	50
SDG 9 Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure	55	39
SDG 10 Reduce Inequalities	67	65
SDG 11 Sustainable Cities and Communities	79	55
SDG 12 Responsible Consumption and Production	74	66
SDG 13 Climate Action	54	53
SDG 14 Life Below Water	NA	NA
SDG 15 Life on Land	66	78
SDG 16 Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions	74	62
SDG 17 Partnerships for the Goals	NA	NA
Total SDG Index	66	57

Note: For the details list of SDGs refer Annexure 'A,' Table A1

**Table - 2: Indicators to assess performance of SDG5 with targets**

Indicator	Target*
Rate of crimes against women per 1,00,000 female population	0
Sex ratio at birth	950
Ratio of female to male average wage/ salary earnings received among regular wage/ salaried employees	1
Per 1,00,000 women, those who have experienced cruelty/ physical violence by husband or his relatives during the year	0
Percentage of elected women over total seats in the state legislative assembly	50
Ratio of female to male Labour Force Participation Rate (LFPR) (15-59 years)	1
Proportion of women in managerial positions including women in Board of Directors, in listed companies (per 1,000 persons)	245
Percentage of currently married women aged 15-49 years who have their demand for modern methods of family planning satisfied	100
Operational land holding, gender wise (percentage of female operated operational holdings)	50

Source: NITI Aayog (2022) (Aayog, SDG INDIA - Index & Dashboard 2020-21)

Note: * Target corresponds to the global SDG 5 target.

Table - 3: Indicators for Assessment of Assam for SDG 5

Indicator	Data Source
Number and type of crime against Women	Government of Assam
Sex ratio at birth	NFHS-5
Ratio of female to male average wage/ salary earnings received among regular wage/ salaried employees	Periodic Labour Force Survey
Number of elected women in the State assembly	Government of Assam
Ratio of female to male Labour Force Participation Rate (LFPR) (15-59 years)	Periodic Labour Force Survey
Percentage of currently married women aged 15-49 years who have their demand for modern methods of family planning satisfied	NFHS-5

Analysis

This sub-section covers the progress of Assam in achieving SDG 5 based on indicators in line with the UN's list and constraint to data availability for Assam.

a) Number and types of crime against women

Crimes against women are harming the process of women empowerment in the society. Violence against women is the obstacle in achieving gender equality, development and peace. Table - 4 represents number and type of crime against women in Assam.

Table - 4: Number and Type of crime against Women

Crime Against Women	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
Rape	1773 (5.91)	1736 (6.59)	1914 (6.55)
Kidnapping and Abduction	6989 (23.28)	4792 (18.18)	5739 (19.63)
Sexual Harassment	781 (2.60)	620 (2.35)	688 (2.37)
Cruelty by Husband	11943 (39.78)	11389 (43.22)	12950 (44.58)
Dowry Death	156 (0.52)	124 (0.47)	198 (0.68)
Dowry Prohibition Act.	1377 (4.59)	469 (1.78)	582 (2.00)
Immoral Traffic Prevention Act.	12 (0.04)	53 (0.20)	22(0.08)
Importation of Girls	NA	NA	NA
Indecent Representation of Woman	NA	NA	NA
Molestation	4619 (15.38)	3820 (14.50)	4499 (15.49)
Other	2375 (7.91)	3349 (12.71)	2635 (9.07)
Total	30025	26352	29229

Source: Statistical Yearbook, Assam 2021-22

Note: Figures in the parenthesis are in the percentage.



It is observed that out of total number of crimes committed against women, cruelty by husband is the most common in the regions of Assam. The incidence of cruelty by husband is increasing for last three years. A persistent pattern is seen throughout the years where women are not found secure and cruelty against them is shown by their husband. This is followed by kidnapping and abduction; out of total number of cases such crimes accounted for 19 percent (5739) in the year 2021-22. The cases of assaults on women with intent to outrage her modesty are 15 percent and rape, 6 percent during 2019-20 to 2021-22. The district level data available shows 1914 number of cases of rape. According to district level data on rape incidents as displayed in Table – 5, suggests Barpeta had recorded the highest number of rapes which is followed by Dhubri (159), Hailakandi (123), Nagaon (116) and Morigaon (9). These five districts were responsible for 41 percent of all the cases of rapes filed in the state of Assam.

Table - 5: District-wise Number of Rapes in the Assam

District	2020-21	Percentage	2021-22	Percentage
Kokrajhar	27	1.56	41	2.14
Dhubri	140	8.08	159	8.31
Goalpara	38	2.19	41	2.14
Barpeta	198	11.43	199	10.40
Morigaon	96	5.54	98	5.12
Nagaon	77	4.45	116	6.06
Sonitpur	41	2.37	70	3.66
Lakhimpur	53	3.06	50	2.61
Dhemaji	23	1.33	28	1.46
Tinsukia	75	4.33	67	3.50
Dibrugarh	21	1.21	28	1.46
Sivasagar	8	0.46	15	0.78
Jorhat	45	2.60	31	1.62
Golaghat	31	1.79	38	1.99
Karbi Anglong	24	1.39	112	5.85
Dima Hasao	2	0.12	3	0.16
Cachar	57	3.29	51	2.66
Karimganj	85	4.91	92	4.81
Hailakandi	92	5.31	123	6.43
Bongaigaon	46	2.66	53	2.77
Chirang	19	1.10	30	1.57
Kamrup	94	5.43	22	1.15
Kamrup Metro	39	2.25	60	3.13
Nalbari	49	2.83	51	2.66
Baksa	35	2.02	29	1.52
Darrang	89	5.14	73	3.81
Udalguri	28	1.62	21	1.10
Biswanath	28	1.62	24	1.25
Charaideo	22	1.27	14	0.73
Hojai	59	3.41	64	3.34
Sadia	16	0.92	16	0.84
South Salmara	61	3.52	77	4.02
Majuli	8	0.46	2	0.10
Hamren	6	0.35	6	0.31
Bajali	NA	NA	10	0.52
Total	1732	100.00	1914	100.00

Source: Statistical Yearbook, Assam 2021-22

b) **Sex ratio at birth**

The sex ratio at birth (SRB) is the ratio of female to male live births. The imbalance of SRB in parts of India over the past decades is a direct consequence of sex-selective abortions due to the preference of son over daughter. Traditional belief that a male child would carry forward the family name and look after the parents in their old age, while daughters would leave them for their matrimonial homes and cost them dowries. The abortions are driven by readily available technology of prenatal sex determination.

Table - 6: Sex ratio at birth for children born in the last five years (Females per 1,000 males)

District	2015-16	2019-21
Baksa	968	1097
Barpeta	906	1007
Biswanath	-	1014
Bongaigaon	895	881
Cachar	942	991
Charaideo	1040	-
Chirang	1106	906
Darrang	1001	757
Dhemaji	887	1022
Dhubri	-	914
Dibrugarh	931	1002
Dima Hasao	953	908
Goalpara	851	1027
Golaghat	1017	1145
Hailakandi	962	1054
Hajai	-	1017
Jorhat	-	833
Kamrup	751	986
Kamrup Metro	961	701
Karbi Anglong	-	882
Karimganj	952	885
Kokrajhar	863	1003
Lakhimpur	1010	985
Majri	-	754
Morigaon	1081	1070
Nagaon	-	969
Nalbari	891	994
Sivasagar	-	915
Sonitpur	-	1325
South Salama	-	911
Tinsukia	883	884
Udalguri	898	1255
West Kabri	-	1105
Assam	929	964
India	919	924

Source: NFHS 4 and NFHS-5



Table - 6 examines the pattern of variation of sex ratio at birth. It demonstrates that Assam has the higher sex ratio at birth than that of India. District wise sex ratio for the years 2015-16 and 2019-21 NFHS survey is considered to study the sex ratio at birth in the state. In the year 2019-21, Kamrup Metro has recorded lowest ratio (701), followed by Darrang (757), Majri (754), Jorhat (833), Karbi Anglong (882), Tinsukia (884) and Bongaigaon (881). All these districts in Assam displayed lowest sex ratio at birth compared to Assam and Indian national average. However, all other districts registered favourable sex ratio for women. For the state of Assam, it is a positive indicator for the improvement in status of women in Assam.

c) **Ratio of female to male Labour Force Participation Rate (LFPR) (15-59 years):**

The greater economic integration and free competition due to globalisation have created job opportunities for the labour market in India. According to United Nations, gender equality and the empowerment of women, confirms that “when more women work, economies grow. An increase in female labour force participation – or a reduction in the gap between women’s and men’s labour force participation – results in faster economic growth” (United Nations, 2017). Women’s positive contribution to the economic life and economic productivity is crucial for the economic development and growth of a country.

Female to male Labour force participation ratio portrays two different pictures in rural and urban areas. In rural areas it is much lower than that of India. Interestingly, in the urban areas it is more than that of national average of India. Lack of access to employment, economic and other productive opportunities is the reason behind low labour participation rate in the rural areas of Assam.

Table - 7: Labour Force Participation Rate (in percent) in July-Dec 2022

	Rural			Urban			Total		
	Male	Female	F/M	Male	Female	F/M	Male	Female	F/M
Assam	93.2	20.0	0.21	81.7	32.7	0.40	92.7	20.5	0.22
India	84.2	44.3	0.53	80.8	28.3	0.35	83.2	39.8	0.48

Source: PLFS, 2023

d) **Ratio of female to male average wage/ salary earnings received among regular wage/ salaried (RWS) employees:**

Gender discrimination is generally in favour of men. Unequal pay and gender pay gap are two different things to be considered to assess the situation. Unequal pay is inequality in wage rate for the same work. Gender pay gap measures overall gap in the overall earnings of men and women. This indicator RWS workers are hired for fixed periods of time (could be for a few months or years) and receive regular wages and/ or salaries, as opposed to daily wages or piece rate wages that casual workers would receive. The reduction in the wage gap can change economic and social landscape. **Table - 8** represents the wages paid to the female and male workers in India and Assam.

Gender discrimination in terms of unequal pay in India is observed. A large gap is seen in Assam where women’s wage rate is 55 percent of men in rural areas. Even So, in urban areas the gap is almost equal to the national average. Overall, in Assam recent data evidently suggests that female employees were paid a lower wage/ salary than male indicating prevalence of gender biased wage/ salary gap in India and Assam as well. Despite all efforts from policy makers and social activists, equal pay in rural areas is still a long way off for Assam.

Table - 8: Ratio of female to male average wage/salary earnings received Among RWS employees for the period July-Dec 2022

	Rural			Urban			Total		
	Male	Female	F/M	Male	Female	F/M	Male	Female	F/M
Assam	12,052.99	6,402.01	0.55	23,069.27	17,567.21	0.76	13,539.29	7,381.79	0.55
India	16,205.83	10,367.33	0.63	23,148.86	17,952.21	0.78	20,097.80	14,722.75	0.73

Source: PLFS, 2023

e) **Number of elected women in the State assembly:**

Political participation of women is another indicator of ensuring gender equality and women empowerment in the society. Politically empowered women have the capacity to take decisions at community level which can accelerate the process of advancement of women. The representation of women in politics ensures harmony in the community and enables gender balance and justice. However, political participation of women in India can be the result of strong political families and women representing as a proxy for men in their family. In this type of structure women are not in the position to take independent decisions and hence, political participation of women in India can portray a wrong picture.

In 2021, out of total 941 candidates only 76 (8 percent) was represented by women and out of which only 6 women candidates were winners out of 126 total number of electoral constituencies. Women have always been underrepresented in Assam. Table - 9 suggests, in 2006, 14 number of women MLA's were elected. Since then, there has been a constant decline in the number of elected women candidates. The main reason for this lower participation of women is that political parties are giving very few tickets to the women candidates (Bharadwaj, 2023).

Table - 9: Female participation in the state assembly of Assam

Year	Total number of Female Candidates	Total Number of Winners
1996	45	6
2001	55	10
2006	70	13
2011	85	14
2016	91	8
2021	76	6

Source: Election Commission of India, 2022

f) **Percentage of currently married women aged 15-49 years who have their demand for modern methods of family planning satisfied:**

Family planning is a comprehensive concept which deals with services, policies, information, attitudes, practices, and use of contraceptives. Contraceptives give couples, men and women and adolescents ability to avoid unintended pregnancy and to choose when to have a child. Family planning advances human rights by giving men and women the mandate to decide and exercise their rights freely as to how many children they would want to have. It supports the rights of the women to remain unmarried and childless, until she is physically, psychologically, and economically ready and desires to bear children. Involvement of both the partners in opting for family planning methods is essential. The accurate and unbiased information can help couples to have well informed choice. Women's access to their chosen family planning method and their ability to negotiate use of the method strongly supports gender equality and empowerment. Table - 10 depicts that out of 33 districts, 7 performed better than Indian National average of 67.5 percent. 15 districts have achieved a score less than National average but better than Assam and showcased improvement over the previous round of NFHS. Four districts demonstrated performance lower than Assam but had experienced sluggish improvement over previous NFHS. However, 7 districts had lower performance than in previous NFHS cycle.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The government of Assam has demonstrated its proactive commitment to empowering women through the implementation of various women's empowerment programmes. To empower women, reduce poverty, and promote socio-economic growth by forming Self Help Groups (SHGs), government of Assam launched 'Kanaklata Mahila Sabalikaran Yojana' (KAMS) a flagship programme on 1st April, 2018 with Assam State Rural Livelihoods Mission (ASRLM) as the nodal agency and renamed it as 'Vistarita Kanaklata Mahila Sabalikaran Yojana' (KAMS-V) on 11th November, 2020. The aim of the scheme was to provide financial support to strengthen the SHGs and their network. The financial aid under this scheme is provided in five stages. Table - 11 exhibits the number of SHGs that received capital subsidies under KAMS-V. National Rural Economic Transformation Project (NRETP) was introduced in 2019 by Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD), Government of India to create a platform for start-up financing options for poor women in rural areas to build their own or collectively owned enterprises. Presently, NRETP has been implemented in 5 districts and 20 blocks of Assam.



Table - 10: Current Use of Family Planning Methods

District	2015-16	2019-20
Baksa	58.1	59.20
Barpeta	56.7	57.30
Biswanath	--	72.40
Bongaigaon	59.0	57.60
Cachar	54.4	48.00
Charaidev	-	67.00
Chirang	62.6	65.80
Darrang	65.7	46.80
Dhemaji	54.8	72.60
Dhubri	-	64.10
Dibrugarh	53.8	64.60
Dima Hasao	48.7	65.50
Goalpara	43.7	66.80
Golaghat	46.0	61.60
Hailakandi	54.2	66.80
Hajai	-	61.10
Jorhat	-	63.80
Kamrup	46.3	56.80
Kamrup Metro	35.9	38.70
Karbi Anglong	-	66.30
Karimganj	52.1	64.30
Kokrajhar	56.7	72.30
Lakhimpur	49.1	67.30
Majri	-	63.70
Morigaon	51.3	70.60
Nagaon	-	58.60
Nalbari	63.3	53.30
Sivasagar	-	67.30
Sonitpur	-	74.40
South Salama	-	71.50
Tinsukia	56.1	59.20
Udalguri	63.9	50.20
West Kabri	-	69.90
Assam	52.4	60.80
India	60.1	67.50

Table - 11: Number of SHGs that received capital subsidies under KAMS-V

Year	Number of SHGs received Capital Subsidies
2018-19	1,26,000
2019-20	44956
2020-21	50541
2021-22	38589

Since NRETP implementation, Assam State Rural Livelihoods Mission (ASRLM) has taken various initiatives. To earn their daily livelihood Mahila Kisans under ASRLM are involved in various innovative farm activities other than normal agricultural activities.



Additionally, a women empowerment programme “Mission Shakti” has been implemented during 15th Finance Commission period 2021-22 to 2025-26 to ensure safety, security, and empowerment of women. ‘Mission Shakti’ is further divided into two sub-schemes, namely, Sambal and Samarthya. Sambal covers existing schemes of One Stop Centre (OSC), Women Helpline (WHL) and Beti Bachao Beti Padhao (BBBP). BBBP was launched in 2015 and in 2021 a new component of “Nari Adalat” has been added in BBBP scheme. From Financial Year 2021-22 this scheme has been implemented in all districts of Assam. One Stop Centre (OSC) provides support and assistance to violence affected women. At present all districts of Assam have OSCs. In the existing Swadhar Greh and Ujjawala schemes with a new name ‘Shakti Sadan’- Integrated Relief and Rehabilitation have been included in ‘Samarthaya’ sub-scheme with an objective to provide services like food, clothing, education, legal services, vocational training etc. to trafficked women and children. As per Economic Survey of Assam 2021-22, there are 17 Swadhar Greh in 12 districts, 19 Ujjawala home in 17 districts, and 16 working women hostels in 11 districts of Assam as shown in **Table - 12**. Hub for empowerment of women (HEW) under “Mission Shakti” was launched from April 2022 to bridge existing gaps in state action, to create an independent identity for women by economic empowerment, remove all types of discriminations to provide equal access to resources. The vision of HEW scheme is to increase women partnership in the process of Nation Building and promote women led development by the year 2025.

Furthermore, Government of Assam runs “State Homes for Women/ Destitute Women” to provide safety, security, empowerment, and vocational training for livelihood to destitute and helpless women.

Table 12: Coverage of Mission Shakti

Scheme	Number of units	Number of District Covered
SwadharGreh	17	12
Ujjawala home	19	17
Working Women Hostels	16	11
Mahila Kisan under Organic Cultivation	5714	-
Bee keeping Centres	38	18

Source: Economic Survey, Assam (Various issues).

The study identified areas where much work is to be done and government can act as facilitator to provide education, initiate economic and productive activities for women in rural areas to accelerate women’s participation in the economy and make women equal partners of men in the process of rural development. Female workforce participation rate is more in urban areas of Assam than that in India due to personal variables such as education and wages which are significant determinants of urban women’s labour force participation (Ahmad, 2009). The analysis in the study depicts huge disparity in terms of wage rate/ salary earnings between urban and rural Assam. The government of Assam need to revamp the policies to provide cerebral job opportunities to women.

CONCLUSIONS

Although Assam is working towards its objective to achieve SDG 5 by supporting women-led development, it is crucial to keep up these efforts with fresh vigour and dedication. Despite implementation of many policies and schemes, a great deal of work must be done in Assam to achieve the goals of gender equality and women's empowerment. Assam can continue its path towards sustainable development and contribute to the larger global agenda of reaching SDG 5 by building on current accomplishments, resolving outstanding difficulties, and developing partnerships for action.



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Annexure A
Table A1: SDG

1. End poverty in all its forms everywhere
2. End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture
3. Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages
4. Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all
5. Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls
6. Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all
7. Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all
8. Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all
9. Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialisation and foster innovation
10. Reduce inequality within and among countries
11. Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable
12. Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns
13. Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts
14. Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development
15. Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss
16. Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels
17. Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalise the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development

Source: United Nations, 2023



Table A2: SDG 5 Indicators

5.1 End all forms of discrimination against all women and girls everywhere	5.1.1 Whether or not legal frameworks are in place to promote, enforce and monitor equality and non-discrimination on the basis of sex
5.2 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	5.2.1 Proportion of ever-partnered women and girls aged 15 years and older subjected to physical, sexual or psychological violence by a current or former intimate partner in the previous 12 months, by form of violence and by age
5.3 Eliminate all harmful practices, such as child, early and forced marriage and female genital mutilation	5.3.1 Proportion of women aged 20–24 years who were married or in a union before age 15 and before age 18
5.4 Recognise 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	5.4.1 Proportion of time spent on unpaid domestic and care work, by sex, age and location
5.5 Ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life	5.5.1 Proportion of seats held by women in (a) national parliaments and (b) local governments
5.6 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	5.6.1 Proportion of women aged 15–49 years who make their own informed decisions regarding sexual relations, contraceptive use and reproductive health care
5.a 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	5.a.1 (a) Proportion of total agricultural population with ownership or secure rights over agricultural land, by sex; and (b) share of women among owners or rights-bearers of agricultural land, by type of tenure
5.b Enhance the use of enabling technology, in particular information and communications technology, to promote the empowerment of women	5.b.1 Proportion of individuals who own a mobile telephone, by sex
5.c 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	5.c.1 Proportion of countries with systems to track and make public allocations for gender equality and women's empowerment

Source: United Nations, 2023