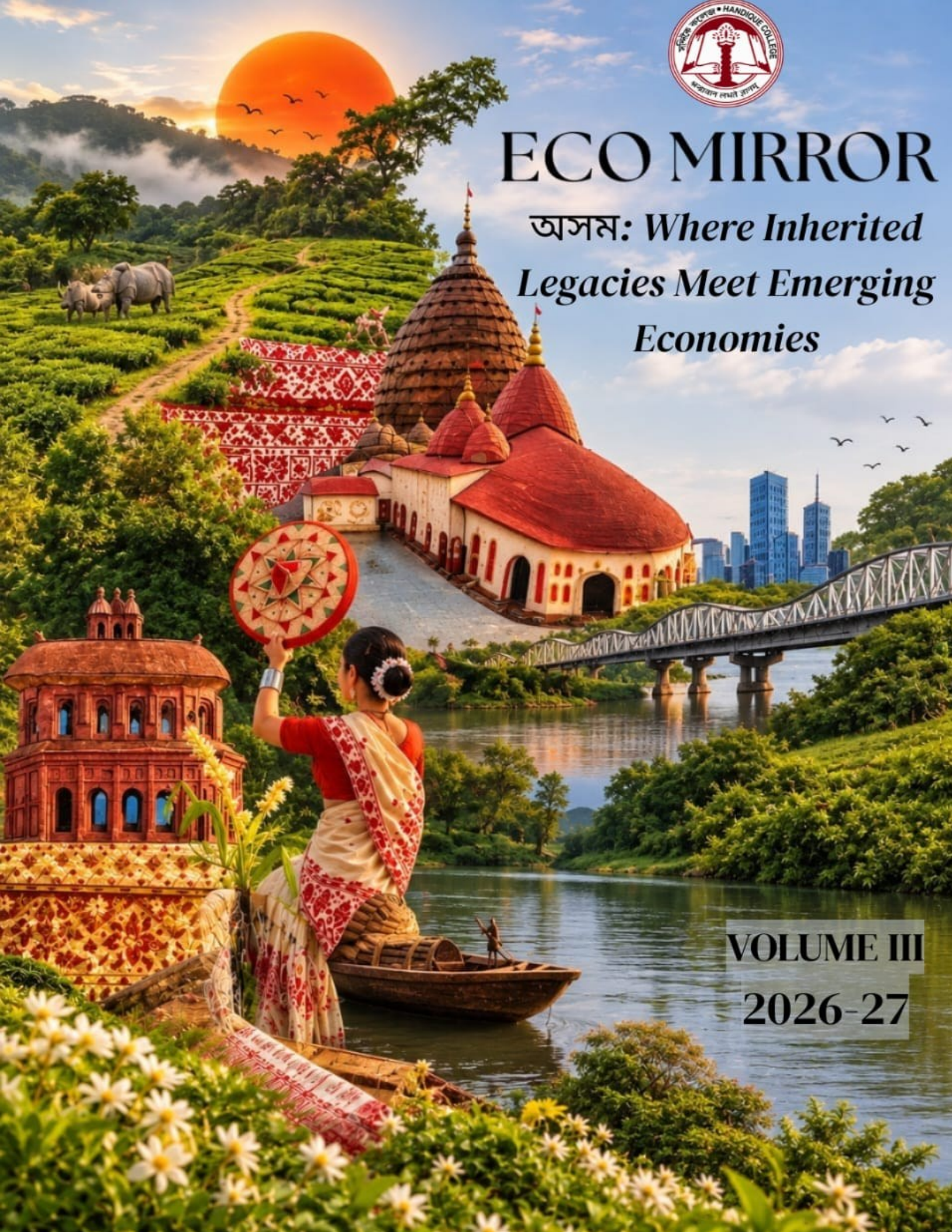

ECO MIRROR
অসম: Where Inherited Legacies Meet Emerging Economies
VOLUME III
2026-27



TRIBUTE TO THE LEGEND

ZUBEEN GARG

(18 November, 1972 - ∞)

Remembering the voice that became the heartbeat of Assam.

“কিতাপ নপঢ়া জাতিক গামোচাই বচাব নোৱাৰে।”

Zubeen Garg: The Voice of Assam

Zubeen Garg (18 November 1972 – 19 September 2025) was one of Assam's most beloved singers, composers, lyricists, actors, and filmmakers. Born in Tura, Meghalaya, he became a cultural icon whose music touched millions of hearts across Assam and beyond. With his remarkable versatility, he sang in numerous languages and gained national recognition through the popular Hindi song "Ya Ali" from the film Gangster (2006). However, his greatest legacy lies in Assamese music, where his songs became an inseparable part of the state's cultural identity. Though he is no longer with us, his voice, artistic brilliance, and deep connection with the people will continue to live on for generations.



Founder of
Handique Girls' College



Rajabala Das

A Pioneer of Women's Education

Rajabala Das was a visionary educationist and social reformer who played a pioneering role in advancing women's education in Assam. In 1939, she founded Gauhati Girls' College, now known as Handique Girls' College, with just two students, becoming its first Principal. At a time when higher education for women faced considerable social barriers, she remained steadfast in her belief that education was essential for women's empowerment and independence. With determination and perseverance, she laid the foundation of an institution that would open doors to countless young women. Her remarkable contribution continues to inspire generations of students, making her an enduring symbol of courage, progress and educational excellence in Assam.

Late Prof. Pramod Ch. Barman

The Founder Head of the Department of Economics

The history of the Department of Economics at Handique Girls' College is incomplete without remembering Late Prof. Pramod Ch. Barman, who became its Founder Head when the department began functioning independently in 1959. Initially part of the Department of Civics, along with Political Science, Economics gradually emerged as an independent academic discipline under his leadership. His role in establishing the department laid an important foundation for the growth of economics education in the institution. His legacy continues through the generations of students who have pursued their academic journeys in the department. As we honour the intellectual heritage of Assam, we pay tribute to his contribution to the development of higher education.

Ph. : 0361-2970214 (O)

OFFICE OF THE PRINCIPAL

HANDIQUE GIRLS' COLLEGE

GUWAHATI - 781001, ASSAM



Dr. Ranjit Sarma, M.Sc.,M.Phil,Ph.D.
Principal-cum Secretary

e-mail : hgcollege75@gmail.com
Website : www.hgcollege.edu.in

Ref. No.: ..... *Date :* .....

MESSAGE FROM THE PRINCIPAL

It gives me immense pleasure to learn that the Department of Economics, Handique Girls' College, is bringing out its departmental magazine, Eco Mirror, on the theme "Assam: Where Inherited Legacies Meet Emerging Economies."

Assam's rich heritage, traditional wisdom and abundant resources provide a strong foundation for its emerging economic opportunities. I hope this publication will encourage young minds to explore contemporary economic challenges, think creatively and contribute towards a sustainable and prosperous future.

I congratulate the Department, the editorial team and all the student contributors on this initiative. I wish Eco Mirror great success.

Best wishes!

Principal

Handique Girls' College
Guwahati-01

Principal
Handique Girls' College
Guwahati-781001

Message from Vice-Principal

Handique Girls' College



It is heartening to know that the Department of Economics is bringing out volume III of their departmental magazine named, *Eco Mirror* for the session 2026-27. The subject chosen for the journal is, **"অসম: Where Inherited Legacies Meet Emerging Economies"** which indeed is a broad canvas on which the young contributors will have ample chances to explore various aspects of the state.

The literary initiative of the Department of Economics will serve several welcome purposes. It will help students get into the business of putting their thoughts coherently in black and white, give them an opportunity to try their hands in research based writing and, in light of Sir Francis Bacon famous opinion, writing for the journal will *maketh* the students exact ladies.

I wish it many years of glorious existence!

Shakeel Zamal

Vice Principal
Handique Girls' College
Guwahati-01

Message from Head of Department



Department of Economics

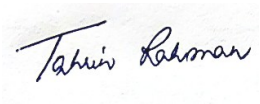
Handique Girls' College

It gives me immense pleasure to share a few words on the occasion of the publication of the 3rd edition of the Journal *'Eco Mirror'* from the Department of Economics. The Theme of this year's Magazine **অসম*: Where Inherited Legacies Meet Emerging Economies***, beautifully captures the significance of understanding of Assam's rich cultural heritage and traditional knowledge in the context of a rapidly changing global economy. The work of the authors reminds us that the wisdom inherited from previous generations can serve as a valuable foundation for addressing contemporary economic challenges.

In today's world, characterised by technological advancements, globalisation, and changing patterns of production and consumption, it is essential for young learners to develop a deeper understanding of the relationship between heritage and economic transformation. '*Eco Mirror'* is an important platform for students to express their ideas, engage in critical thinking, and explore the interconnections between economic theory and real-world experiences. Such academic initiatives nurture curiosity, creativity, and a spirit of enquiry among students while encouraging them to look beyond conventional perspectives.

I congratulate the editorial team, faculty members, and all student contributors for their sincere efforts in bringing out this publication. Their initiative reflects the academic enthusiasm and intellectual potential of our students. I am confident that this journal will encourage further research, promote meaningful discussions, and inspire innovative ideas on how inherited knowledge and emerging economic opportunities can complement each other for a more equitable and sustainable future.

I extend my best wishes to the entire team for the success of this endeavour and hope that *'Eco Mirror'* will continue to grow as a platform for knowledge, reflection, and innovation in the years to come.



Tahrin Rahman

HOD, Department of Economics
Handique Girls' College
Guwahati, Assam.

From the Desk of the Teacher-in-Charge



It is with great pride and heartfelt gratitude that I pen this message for this year's edition of *Eco-Mirror,* the annual magazine of the Post-Graduate Department of Economics, Handique Girls' College.

Having once served this magazine as its Secretary, to return to it now as Teacher-in-Charge is a privilege that words can scarcely express. I am sincerely thankful to the department for bestowing upon me this honour and for reposing such faith in me.

This year, our students have chosen a theme close to our hearts — Assam: its economy, heritage, culture, growth, challenges, and boundless future possibilities. Each page reflects their imagination, insight, and love for our land. It gives me immense joy that this edition will reach our readers both in print and as an e-journal.

I extend my warmest thanks to the college authority, the editorial board, our talented students, and every well-wisher whose dedication and hard work have made this journal possible.

Regards

Sourav Deuri

Sourav Deuri

Messages From Faculty



Dr. Jayashree Chowdhury

"I am delighted to be a part of this wonderful initiative that reflects the enthusiasm, creativity and intellectual spirit of our students. My appreciation goes to everyone who has contributed to making this edition possible. I extend my heartfelt congratulations to the entire team and wish Eco Mirror many more successful editions ahead."



Mrs. Moumita Dutta

"The theme "অসম: Where Inherited Legacies Meet Emerging Economies" beautifully captures Assam's journey of balancing its rich cultural heritage with emerging economic opportunities. I hope this journal inspires students to explore, question and reflect on the changing dimensions of our society and economy while valuing the legacy we have inherited. Wishing all the contributors a meaningful and enriching experience."

Ms. Bidisha Hazarika



"It gives me immense pleasure to be a part of the Department of Economics and to witness the enthusiasm, creativity and commitment of our students. A departmental magazine provides a wonderful platform for expressing diverse ideas, sharing perspectives and encouraging learning beyond the classroom. My heartfelt appreciation to all the contributors and the editorial team for their sincere efforts in bringing this edition to life."

"I am truly delighted that this year's edition of Eco-Mirror is going to be published. I heartily appreciate our students for their creativity, hard work and dedication that have made this magazine so beautiful. My best wishes to all of them."



Mr. Sourav Deuri

Mr. Swapnabh N. Bharali



"To my dear students, explore economics, not just in equations, but in actions and intentions. Keep questioning, keep learning, and let your curiosity lead the way. I am always proud to be a part of your journey. May you find the inspiration to dream big and the practical wisdom to bring those dreams to fruition. The future is waiting for your imprint."

Dr. Unmilan Kalita



"It gives me immense joy to see our "Eco-Mirror" ready for publication I am proud of our students for their wonderful ideas and sincere efforts. I congratulate the entire team and wish the magazine great success."



Editor's Note

"From learning to making — the journey begins where curiosity dares to go further."

A magazine is, in many ways, a reflection of the thoughts, ideas and experiences of the people who bring it to life. As we present the third volume of Eco Mirror, I feel privileged to have been entrusted with the responsibility of bringing together this edition. Being its Editor-in-Chief has been a meaningful experience, allowing me to understand that a publication is not merely a collection of written pieces, but a space where different voices find expression and individual perspectives become part of a shared narrative.

This year's theme, "**অসম: Where Inherited Legacies Meet Emerging Economies**," invites us to look at our state through a perspective that connects its past with its possibilities for the future. Assam's traditions, indigenous knowledge, cultural practices and local enterprises are not simply legacies to be preserved; they are also sources of knowledge, livelihood and opportunity. As students of Economics, this gives us a reason to look beyond conventional measures of development and recognise the economic significance of the people, practices and resources that shape our society. Through this edition, we have tried to explore these connections and understand how what we inherit can continue to influence what we create.

Putting this edition together has also been a reminder that meaningful work is rarely accomplished alone. Every contribution, whether an article, a poem, a review or a creative expression, has added something of its own to these pages. I extend my sincere gratitude to our respected Principal, the Head of the Department, Teacher-in-Charge and faculty members for their guidance and encouragement. My appreciation also goes to the editorial board and all the contributors whose time, ideas and efforts have helped shape this volume. Their collective involvement has made this edition possible.

As you explore these pages, I hope you find ideas that interest you, perspectives that challenge you and stories that bring you a little closer to the world around you. More than anything, I hope Eco Mirror encourages us to remain curious, to question what we often take for granted and to recognise the many stories that exist beyond the classroom.

Because every idea begins with a perspective, and every perspective has the power to reveal a world we may not have noticed before.

Regards,

Snigdho Jonak Kashyap

Snigdho Jonak Kashyap

Editor in chief

Eco Mirror

The Editorial Board



Editor-in-chief

Snigdho Jonak Kashyap

Jilari Boro

Content Reviewer





Mandira Smita Borah

Content Reviewer

Niharika Nath

Content Reviewer





Shresta Acharjee

Content Reviewer



Zahin Ali

Creative Designer

About "Eco Mirror"

Every publication has a beginning, and Eco Mirror began with an idea — to create a space where the Department of Economics could share its thoughts, experiences, knowledge and creativity beyond the classroom. What started as an initiative to bring together the voices of students, faculty members and alumni has gradually become a part of the department's journey. The first volume laid the foundation for this endeavour, under the leadership of Dr. Ajanta Khaund Bezbaruah, the then Head of Department of the Department of Economics, which helped in bringing together academic writings, thoughtful articles and creative expressions that reflected the many dimensions of Economics and the people who study and teach it. Over the years, Eco Mirror has continued to carry forward this vision, reminding us that Economics is not confined to textbooks, theories or statistical figures. It is equally about people, their livelihoods, their aspirations and the world we live in.

The third volume of Eco Mirror, presented this year, takes this journey forward with the theme "**অসম**: **Where Inherited Legacies Meet Emerging Economies**." The theme draws attention to a part of Assam that is often best understood through its people, their traditions and the knowledge passed down through generations. Our state's identity is deeply rooted in its cultural heritage, but these legacies are not simply a part of history that we look back upon. They continue to find meaning in our everyday lives, in the occupations we practise, the skills we inherit and the livelihoods that sustain our communities. From the intricate traditions of handloom and handicrafts to indigenous knowledge, agriculture and local enterprises, there is an economic story behind much of what makes Assam unique. This edition seeks to explore these connections and bring attention to how the things we have inherited continue to hold relevance in a world that is constantly changing. The theme also reminds us that development is not always about creating something entirely new; sometimes, it is about recognising the possibilities that already exist around us. As Assam moves through changing economic circumstances, it becomes important to understand how its traditional strengths can find a place in an emerging economy. The knowledge and skills that have sustained generations can also create opportunities for innovation, entrepreneurship, employment and sustainable livelihoods. For us as students of Economics, this offers an opportunity to look beyond conventional ideas of growth and understand development in a wider sense — one that considers people, communities, their resources and the realities of their lives.

As we bring out this third volume, we do so with an appreciation for the initiative that made this journey possible and for everyone who has contributed to keeping it alive. Each edition carries forward a shared effort while making room for fresh voices, changing perspectives and new possibilities. More than a departmental publication, Eco Mirror is a reflection of the people and ideas that shape our department — a space where learning meets expression and where every contribution becomes a small part of a larger story. With this edition, we hope to look at our past with respect, our present with understanding and our future with curiosity. *Perhaps that is what Eco Mirror ultimately hopes to achieve: to encourage us to look beyond what we already know, question what we often take for granted and discover new meaning in the world around us. Because sometimes, understanding the world begins with simply learning to see it differently.*

List of HODs

1. AJIT KR. SARMA (**1947-67)**
2. PRAMOD CHANDRA BARMAN (**1954 – 1961) (founder head)**
3. HEM GOSWAMI (**01.02.1961-31.12.1996)**
4. ANANTA KR. LAHKAR (**01.07.1963-07.10.1986) (HOD from 1967)**
5. BINITA BARUA (**15.07.1963-31.05.2000) (HOD from 1986)**
6. ANIL K. BORDOLOI (**01.09.1972-31.08.2006) (HOD from 01.06.2000)**
7. GOPAL BORDOLOI (**01.09.1975-30.06.2010) (HOD from 01.09.2006)**
8. RAJIB KR DAS (**18.10.1989-31.01.2024) (HOD from 01.07.2010)**
9. AJANTA KHAUND BEZBARUAH (**25.04.1997-31.03.2025) (HOD from JANUARY 2024)**
10. BEDABRAT SAIKIA (**24.04.2008-28.02.2026) (HOD from APRIL 2025- FEBRUARY 2026)**
11. TAHRIN RAHMAN (12.01.2001- Ongoing) **(HOD from FEBRUARY 2026- Till Present)**

Departmental Activities

Activities and Events of the Department of Economics (2025–2026)

1. Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita and Financial Awareness Conclave 2025

(Date:-21 November 2025)

The P.G. Department of Economics, in association with Assam Co-operative Apex Bank Ltd., Guwahati, organised a one-day conclave to promote awareness of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, cybersecurity, financial literacy and the prevention of narcotics abuse. The programme featured discussions on contemporary governance, legal awareness, financial practices, investment, budgeting and savings, with active participation from faculty members and students.

2. Investor Awareness Programme – Asia Book of Records and India Book of Records

(Date:-24 January 2026)

The P.G. Department of Economics organised an Investor Awareness Programme aimed at promoting financial literacy and empowering girl students to make informed financial decisions. The session familiarised students with effective money management, saving, investing and financial planning, encouraging responsible financial habits. Students actively participated in the programme, making it an engaging learning experience.

3. Candle-Making Workshop

(Date:-18 February 2026)

A candle-making workshop was conducted by Chitrali Phukan, providing students with an opportunity to explore a creative, hands-on skill. The session encouraged practical learning, creativity and an understanding of the entrepreneurial possibilities of handmade products.

4. National Financial Literacy Quiz – NISM

(Date:-18 February 2026)

The P.G. Department of Economics organised the National Financial Literacy Quiz in association with the National Institute of Securities Markets (NISM). The initiative aimed to enhance students' understanding of financial concepts and promote awareness of informed financial decision-making.

5. Essay Writing Competition on MSMEs and Industrialisation

(Date:-6 March 2026)

The Department of Economics, in collaboration with the Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC), organised an essay writing competition on the theme "Empowering Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) for Sustainable Rural and Urban Industrialisation in India." The competition encouraged students to explore the role of MSMEs in promoting entrepreneurship, generating employment and fostering balanced and sustainable economic development.

6. Debate Competition on Small-Scale Industries and Rural Development

(Date:-6 March 2026)

The Department of Economics, in collaboration with the Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC), organised a debate competition on the topic "Small-Scale Industries Are More Beneficial for Rural India than Large-Scale Industries." The competition provided students with an opportunity to examine different perspectives on rural industrialisation, employment generation and the role of small-scale industries in promoting inclusive economic development.

7. Extempore Speech Competition on International Women's Day

(Date:-9 March 2026)

The P.G. Department of Economics organised an extempore speech competition on the occasion of International Women's Day. The activity provided students with a platform to express their views on women's rights, achievements, challenges and role in society, while encouraging confidence, critical thinking and spontaneous expression.

8. Reserve Bank of India – Women's Day Celebration 2026

(Date:-10 March 2026)

Seven students from the P.G. Department of Economics participated as a team in the Women's Day celebration organised by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) at its Guwahati office. They performed a skit highlighting the theme of women's empowerment, reflecting both creative expression and social awareness. In recognition of their performance, the team received a cash award of ₹14,000 from the RBI, which was subsequently distributed among the participating students.

(Skit on International Women's Day, 2026

The students of the Department of Economics presented a skit on the occasion of International Women's Day, organised by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI). The performance highlighted issues concerning women in society and used creative expression to promote awareness, reflection and discussion on women's empowerment.)

9. One-Day People's Education Programme (PEP)

The P.G. Department of Economics and the IQAC of Handique Girls' College, Guwahati, collaborated with the Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC), State Office, Guwahati, to organise a One-Day People's Education Programme (PEP). The programme aimed to promote awareness of rural industries, entrepreneurship and the role of Khadi and village-based enterprises in strengthening local livelihoods and economic development.

10. Talk on Career Opportunities after Graduation and Personality Development

(Date:-12 March 2026)

The P.G. Department of Economics organised a talk on "Career Opportunities after Graduation and Personality Development" by Atanu Choudhury, Retired Professor of Pragjyotish College, Guwahati. The session aimed to guide students in exploring career pathways after graduation while highlighting the importance of personality development, self-confidence and essential skills for future professional growth.

11.Orientation-cum-Workshop on Aviation Management

(Date:-14 March 2026)

The P.G. Department of Economics organised an orientation-cum-workshop on Aviation Management at the Students' Day Home Hall. The programme aimed to familiarise students with the aviation industry, its career opportunities and the various aspects of aviation management, providing them with insights into potential career pathways beyond conventional fields.

12. Group Discussion on World Water Day

(Date:-31 March 2026)

The Department of Economics, Handique Girls' College, organised a group discussion on the topic "Impact of Population Growth on Water Resources" to mark World Water Day. The discussion served as a platform for students to exchange ideas, raise awareness about the growing pressure on water resources and emphasise the importance of responsible water use and conservation.

13. Community Outreach Activity at Auxilium Snehalaya

(Date:-1 April 2026)

The P.G. Department of Economics, along with a group of 14 students, visited Auxilium Snehalaya, Noonmati, as part of a community outreach initiative. The students engaged with the children through various activities and interactive sessions, creating an opportunity for meaningful interaction and shared experiences. The visit aimed to contribute to the children's overall development while fostering a sense of social responsibility and community engagement among students.

14. Workshop on Competitive Exam Mastery for UPSC/APSC/NET/SLET/JRF and Other Government Examinations

(Date:-1 April 2026)

The P.G. Department of Economics, Centre for Leadership and Competitive Learning (CLCE) and the Economic Society of Handique Girls' College, in collaboration with the IQAC, HGC, organised a workshop on competitive exam preparation, with Advait IAS as the knowledge partner. The workshop aimed to familiarise students with various competitive examinations, including UPSC, APSC, NET, SLET and JRF, while providing guidance on preparation strategies and future career opportunities.

15. Game-Based Learning Session on Leadership and Soft Skills

(Date:-6 April 2026)

The P.G. Department of Economics, Centre for Leadership, Competitive Learning and Entrepreneurship, in collaboration with the IQAC of Handique Girls' College and Aspire Academy, organised a game-based learning session on leadership and soft skills. The session used interactive activities to encourage teamwork, communication, problem-solving and leadership abilities among students.

The session began with a critical-thinking self-assessment to evaluate participants' analytical abilities. Students were then divided into teams of five, with each group selecting a name to represent its identity. Individual participants reflected on their personal strengths and weaknesses before working together to discuss and develop practical ideas. Finally, each team presented its ideas, highlighting their relevance and potential impact. The activities encouraged self-awareness, teamwork, critical thinking, collaboration and leadership skills through an interactive learning approach.

16. Employability Skill Enhancement Programme

(Date:-6 April 2026)

The P.G. Department of Economics, Centre for Leadership, Competitive Learning and Entrepreneurship, in collaboration with the IQAC of Handique Girls' College and Aspire Academy, organised two sessions under the Employability Skill Enhancement Programme. The sessions focused on equipping students with essential skills and competencies required to improve their employability and prepare them for future professional opportunities.

17. Seminar on Competitive Exam Preparation Strategies for Banking, SSC and Railway Examinations

(Date:-28 April 2026)

The P.G. Department of Economics organised a seminar on competitive examination preparation strategies for Banking, SSC and Railway examinations, conducted by Adda247. The session featured resource persons J. Abhisekh Upadhaya (Admin/Counsellor), Tonmoy Das (Branch Manager) and Chanakya Thakuria (Faculty), who provided students with guidance on examination preparation and potential career opportunities in these sectors.

18. Celebration of the Birth Centenary of Dr. Bhupen Hazarika

(Date:-8 September 2026)

The Department of Economics organised a commemorative programme to celebrate the birth centenary of Dr. Bhupen Hazarika, honouring his remarkable contributions to Assamese music, literature and culture. The programme featured musical performances by students, who sang some of his timeless compositions, along with speeches highlighting his life, artistic journey and enduring legacy. The celebration provided an opportunity for students to reflect on his contributions to society and the cultural heritage of Assam. The programme served as a heartfelt tribute to the legendary artist, whose music continues to inspire generations.

19. Celebration of World Ozone Day

(Date:-16 September 2026)

On the occasion of World Ozone Day, the Department of Economics organised an awareness session featuring a presentation highlighting the harmful effects of ozone layer depletion and the measures necessary for its protection. The session also encouraged students to adopt environmentally responsible practices, concluding with a pledge to contribute towards protecting the ozone layer. An extempore speech competition was also organized among the students to encourage them to express their views and raise awareness about Ozone layer protection and environmental conservation. The initiative encouraged students to understand environmental challenges and recognise the importance of sustainable practices in safeguarding the planet.

20. Tribute to Zubeen Garg on His Birth Anniversary

(Date:-19 September 2026)

The Department of Economics organised a short commemorative programme to pay tribute to the legendary singer Zubeen Garg on his birth anniversary. Students sang some of his memorable songs, while others shared speeches reflecting on his life, contributions and musical legacy. Faculty members also expressed their thoughts and memories, celebrating the lasting influence of the artist. The programme concluded with a musical tribute by a faculty member.

21. The Little Bazaar – Exhibition-cum-Sale

(Date:-6 November 2026)

The Department of Economics organised an Exhibition-cum-Sale titled "The Little Bazaar" on 6th November 2026. The event provided a platform for students to showcase their creativity, entrepreneurial skills and business ideas through various stalls and exhibits. It offered a practical understanding of marketing, pricing, consumer behaviour and the dynamics of buying and selling. Beyond its academic significance, the event encouraged teamwork, innovation and active student participation, making it an engaging and memorable initiative of the department.

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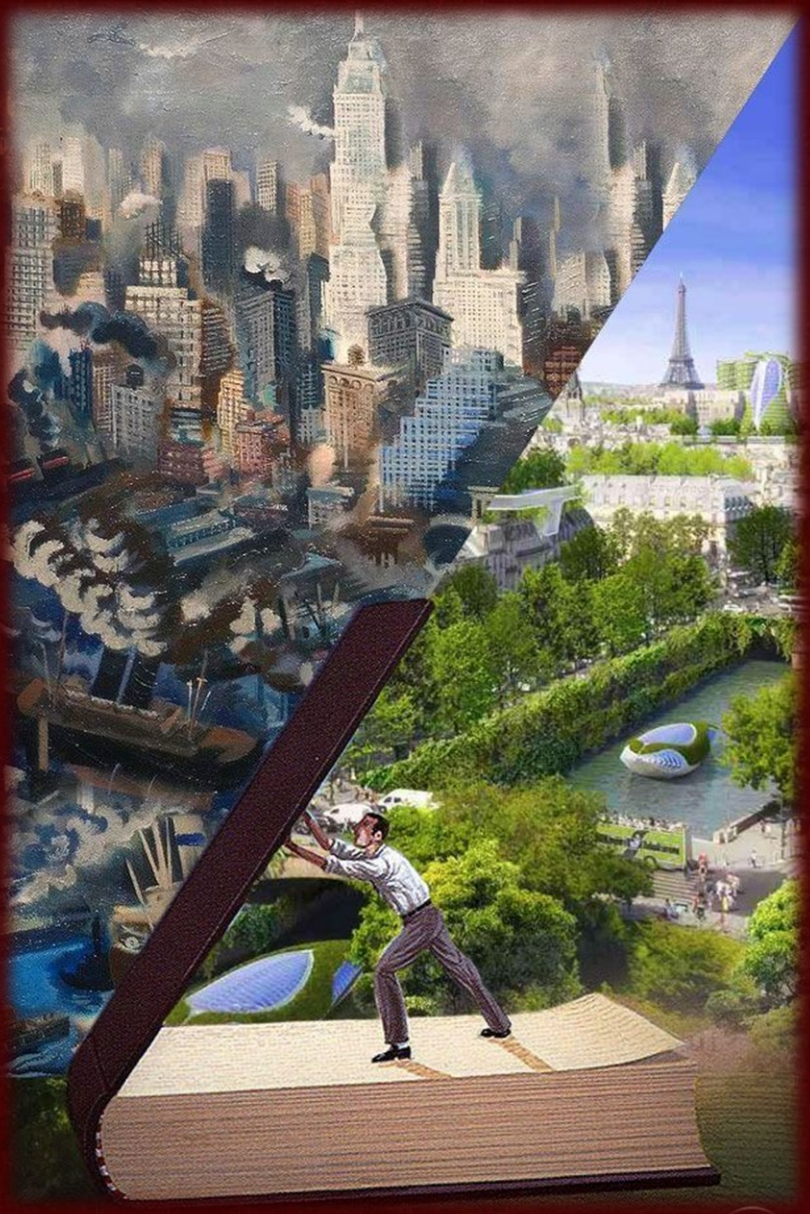
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The Thought Atelier





01



The Sound of Progress

-Dr. Unmilan Kalita
Assistant Professor,
PG Department of Economics
Handique Girls' College

The intersection of culture, creative industries, and regional development has become a vital area of study in cultural economics, shifting our perspective of culture from a purely social good to a measurable engine of economic growth. Globally, creative and cultural sectors operate as multi-trillion-dollar economic pillars, driven by a growing public preference for experiences, intangible assets, and live entertainment. In developing nations like India, this growth is moving beyond traditional big-city hubs and taking root in regional economies. Assam, located in the culturally and ecologically unique landscape of Northeast India, offers a clear example of this shift, showing how traditional heritage, local craftsmanship, and modern live entertainment can be brought together through state-led economic planning. From the standpoint of cultural economics, the branch of economics that studies how artistic and cultural expressions are produced, distributed, and consumed, and how they generate value for society, Assam's foundation rests heavily on tangible heritage and traditional cottage industries. The state plays a major role in India's handloom sector, supporting over 1.3 million active looms and providing employment to hundreds of thousands of rural weavers, most of whom are women. Economically, this network relies on unique regional materials, such as golden Muga silk, pristine Pat silk, and warm Eri silk, alongside traditional bamboo craft, cane items, and bell-metal artifacts. While these sectors have historically faced informal market limits and distribution challenges, modern policies are helping to bridge these gaps. By utilizing digital supply chains, geographical indication (GI) tags, and organized artisan markets, the state is helping rural workers increase their productivity and capture a larger share of the wider textile economy.

Alongside this physical heritage is Assam's intangible cultural capital, particularly its rich musical and performing arts traditions, which are now being expanded through the commercial framework of the "concert economy." Recognizing that live performances and creative tourism create strong economic ripple effects, the Assam government introduced a pioneering concert tourism policy. Developed alongside major entertainment platforms like BookMyShow, this policy aims to make Guwahati the premier regional hub for large-scale music concerts and cultural festivals in Northeast India. The practical success of this model is supported by major events, such as international artist Post Malone's concert in Guwahati, which generated a local economic impact of ₹43 crore, injecting nearly ₹32 crore directly into regional hospitality, local transport, and food services.

Industry analyses, such as *"The Assam Blueprint: Turning Live Music Economy into a Tourism Multiplier,"* project that Assam's strategic push into event-driven tourism will unlock economic outputs exceeding ₹700 crore over a five-year period. To help event organizers manage high upfront costs and logistical challenges, the state provides targeted financial incentives. These include viability gap funding (VGF) of up to ₹5 crore for qualifying large-scale events, free use of state-managed public venues, and streamlined single-window clearances for licensing, security, and safety approvals.

Crucially, the strategy behind Assam's cultural economy relies on connecting different economic sectors. Rather than treating a concert as a one-off event, the state tourism framework links these modern entertainment events with regional heritage tours. Visitors who travel to Guwahati for major concerts are encouraged to explore broader regional attractions, such as historic tea-garden trails in the Brahmaputra Valley, local food tourism, and wildlife safaris in UNESCO World Heritage sites like Kaziranga National Park and Manas. This multisectoral approach maximizes the tourism multiplier effect, ensuring that visitor spending flows outward to rural homestays, handloom cooperatives, and local drivers.

Ultimately, looking at Assam through the lens of cultural economics shows a successful blend of tradition and modern commerce. By combining ancient handloom heritage and artisan skills with state-supported infrastructure for the live concert economy, Assam is proving that regional economic growth does not require leaving local identity behind. Instead, with smart policy support and strategic planning, the combination of traditional heritage and modern creative industries can create lasting jobs, boost regional income, and turn cultural assets into tools for long-term economic development.

02



From Fragrance to Fortune:

The Economic Potential of Assam's Xasi Tree

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When we talk about Assam's heritage and culture, we visualize the lush green tea gardens of Charaideo, Dibrugarh (also known as tea city of India), Golaghat, Sivasagar, Tinsukia and many more Parts of Upper Assam that represents the legacy of tea plantation in Assam. And when we speak of Assam, we speak of a land where every corner carries a story and every landscape holds a legacy i.e, we remember Bihu and laru pitha when we talk about culture. And as we talk about Digboi we remember the famous oil refineries and Namrup for the Fertilizer industries.

Yet Assam's legacy extends far beyond its tea gardens. For instance, Charaideo, the first permanent capital of the Ahom kingdom, preserves the magnificent *Moidams* -the royal burial mounds that bear witness to centuries of history and architectural achievement. Sivasagar, once a major center of Ahom power, continues to tell this story through monuments such as Rang Ghar, Talatal Ghar, and the historic Sivasagar tank.

And how can we forget that our inheritance is equally visible in the golden glow of Muga silk, the elegance of Pat and Eri.

Legacy of Agarwood: A Treasure rooted in tradition

But amidst these treasures, lies another treasure that has not gained as much popularity as it should have gained. It is the Xasi tree, known for producing agarwood, a highly valued aromatic resource sought after by the global fragrance industry. Assam has been a natural home of Agarwood for centuries and certain regions of the state are famous for the large-scale cultivation of xasi tree, concentrated in Upper Assam specifically in areas like Hojai, Golaghat, Jorhat district. These regions experience a humid sub-tropical climate with high rainfall which is highly suited for the growth of Aquilaria tree (xasi tree).

For generations, agarwood has held significance in religious practices, traditional uses, and the preparation of aromatic products. The tree develops a dark, fragrant resin within its wood as a response to certain injuries and microbial infections. This resinous wood, known as agarwood, is the source of its commercial value.

From Tradition to Enterprise: The Transition

Assam has long been associated with tea, silk, oil, and other natural resources. Today, agarwood offers an opportunity to expand this economic identity by connecting traditional cultivation with modern entrepreneurship, and international markets.

The transition from a traditional resource to a modern industry requires more than simply growing trees. It involves improving nursery practices, adopting scientific cultivation methods, understanding resin formation, and developing efficient techniques for processing agarwood into valuable products.

Instead of selling only raw wood or semi-processed materials, local entrepreneurs could explore opportunities in agarwood oil extraction, incense production, fragrance ingredients, and other permissible value-added products.

According to, The Assam Agarwood Promotion Policy of 2020, recognises the importance of cultivation, processing, research, training, and market development. It also highlighted the need to promote agarwood trade under applicable international regulations.

The real opportunity lies not only in growing the tree but utilising the resource for economic prosperity.

Opportunity Generation

Assam's tea growers are battling many challenges i.e, high production costs, low profit margin, labour problems, and coal shortage. Amid all this, they have found a window of opportunity, the critically endangered agarwood tree, that promises a symbiotic relationship in which they can both receive help from each other.

Agarwood, or Aquilaria malaccensis, is native to Assam and parts of the Northeast. Although its use is varied as an aromatic, medicine and for religious purposes, however, Xasi, called in Assamese, is most famous for the expensive perfumes that it is used for making. its exclusivity and demand, is particularly seen in the Arab countries, and is often termed as "liquid gold." However,

It is only an infected agarwood tree that produces the dark resin that makes the aromatic oil.

Growth Without Depletion: Can Agarwood Be Sustainable?

One of the most important questions surrounding the commercial development of agarwood is whether economic growth can take place without exhausting the natural resource.

The answer depends on how the industry is managed sustainably.

Agarwood cultivation does not inherently lead to depletion. In fact, well-managed plantations can help meet market demand while reducing pressure on naturally occurring populations. However, plantations cannot automatically end the threat to wild trees, especially if demand for grades continues to encourage unsustainable harvesting.

Agarwood-producing trees have faced pressure because of the high demand for their resinous wood. Since resin formation is not guaranteed in every tree, indiscriminate cutting of wild trees in the hope of finding valuable agarwood can cause severe damage to natural populations.

A sustainable approach should therefore include the following measures:

- **Encourage responsible cultivation**: Farmers should be supported in establishing and maintaining plantations on suitable land, using scientifically informed cultivation practices.
- **Improvement of scientific methods**: Research into nursery development, tree health, and controlled resin induction could help improve production without relying on destructive practices in natural forests.
- **Protection of wild populations**: Natural forests must not be treated as unlimited sources of commercial wood. Monitoring, legal enforcement, and responsible harvesting practices are essential to protect biodiversity.

The Road Ahead: Turning Potential into Prosperity

For Assam to realise the full economic potential of its Xasi tree, coordinated action is needed from farmers, researchers, entrepreneurs, financial institutions, and the government.

03



যি শ্ৰমৰ মূল্য কোনো হিচাপত নুঠে

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ঘৰুৱা অবৈতনিক শ্ৰম আৰু অৰ্থনীতিৰ এক অৱহেলিত অধ্যায় এটা পৰিয়ালৰ অৰ্থনীতি বুজিবলৈ কেৱল উপাৰ্জনৰ হিচাপ জানিলেই নহয়, সেই পৰিয়ালটো চলাই ৰাখিবলৈ কোনে কিমান শ্ৰম কৰে,সেয়াও বুজিব লাগিব।

ৰাতিপুৱা ঘড়ীৰ কাঁটাডালে ছয় বজাৰ সংকেত দিয়াৰ আগতেই বহু ঘৰত দিনটোৰ কাম আৰম্ভ হয়। কোনোবাই পাকঘৰত চাহ-জলপান প্ৰস্তুত কৰে, কোনোবাই ল'ৰা-ছোৱালীক বিদ্যালয়লৈ পঠিওৱাৰ ব্যৱস্থা কৰে, কোনোবাই ঘৰৰ পৰিষ্কাৰ-পৰিচ্ছন্নতা আৰু আন সদস্যসকলৰ প্ৰয়োজনীয়তাৰ প্ৰতি মনোযোগ দিয়ে। দিনটোৰ শেষত এই কামবোৰৰ কোনো দৰমহা নাথাকে, কোনো বেতন-ৰচিদ নাথাকে। অথচ এই কামবোৰ নকৰিলে পৰিয়ালটোৰ দৈনন্দিন জীৱনেই স্থবিৰ হৈ পৰিব পাৰে।

আমি প্ৰায়ে অৰ্থনীতিৰ আলোচনা কৰোঁতে উৎপাদন, উপাৰ্জন, বজাৰ, বিনিয়োগ আৰু নিয়োগৰ কথা কওঁ। কিন্তু এই সকলোবোৰৰ আঁৰত থকা ঘৰুৱা শ্ৰমৰ অৰ্থনৈতিক গুৰুত্ব কিমানবাৰ বিবেচনা কৰোঁ?

উপাৰ্জন নাথাকিলেই কামৰ মূল্য নাথাকে নেকি?

অৰ্থনীতিৰ সাধাৰণ হিচাপত যি কামৰ বিনিময়ত ধন লেনদেন হয়, তাৰ মূল্য সহজে নিৰ্ধাৰণ কৰিব পাৰি। এজন শিক্ষকে দৰমহা পায়, এজন দোকানীয়ে সামগ্ৰী বিক্ৰী কৰি আয় কৰে, এজন কৃষকে উৎপাদিত শস্য বিক্ৰী কৰি উপাৰ্জন কৰে। কিন্তু পৰিয়ালৰ বাবে ৰন্ধা-বঢ়া কৰা, অসুস্থ ব্যক্তিৰ যত্ন লোৱা, শিশুক পঢ়া-শুনাত সহায় কৰা অথবা বৃদ্ধসকলৰ পৰিচৰ্যা কৰা ব্যক্তিজনৰ শ্ৰমৰ মূল্য সাধাৰণতে ঘৰুৱা আয়ৰ হিচাপত দেখা নাযায়।

ইয়াতেই এটা গুৰুত্বপূৰ্ণ অৰ্থনৈতিক প্ৰশ্ন উত্থাপন হয়—ধনৰ বিনিময়ত কৰা কামেই কেৱল উৎপাদনশীল কাম নেকি? বাস্তৱত, ঘৰুৱা অবৈতনিক শ্ৰমে পৰিয়ালৰ আন সদস্যসকলক নিজৰ শিক্ষা, চাকৰি আৰু অন্যান্য অৰ্থনৈতিক কাৰ্যকলাপত অংশগ্ৰহণ কৰিবলৈ সময় আৰু সুবিধা প্ৰদান কৰে। যদি এগৰাকী ব্যক্তিয়ে ঘৰৰ সকলো দায়িত্ব বহন কৰে, তেন্তে আন এজন সদস্যই হয়তো অধিক সময় চাকৰি বা ব্যৱসায়ত নিয়োজিত হ'ব পাৰে। অৰ্থাৎ, এই শ্ৰমৰ প্ৰভাৱ পৰিয়ালৰ উপাৰ্জনৰ ওপৰতো পৰে, যদিও সেই অৱদানৰ বাবে প্ৰত্যক্ষভাৱে কোনো ধন লাভ কৰা নহয়।

সময়ৰো এটা অর্থনৈতিক মূল্য আছে

অর্থনীতিত 'সুযোগ ব্যয়' (Opportunity Cost) বুলি এটা গুৰুত্বপূর্ণ ধাৰণা আছে। কোনো এটা কাম বাছি লোৱাৰ ফলত আন এটা সম্ভাব্য কামৰ যি মূল্য ত্যাগ কৰিবলগীয়া হয়, সেয়াই সুযোগ ব্যয়।

এই ধাৰণাটোৰ সৈতে ঘৰুৱা শ্ৰমৰ গভীৰ সম্পৰ্ক আছে। উদাহৰণস্বৰূপে, এগৰাকী শিক্ষিত মহিলাই যদি প্ৰতিদিনে বহু ঘণ্টা ঘৰুৱা কামত ব্যয় কৰে, তেন্তে সেই সময়খিনি তেওঁ চাকৰি, উচ্চ শিক্ষা, দক্ষতা বিকাশ অথবা নিজাকৈ ব্যৱসায় আৰম্ভ কৰাৰ কামত ব্যৱহাৰ কৰিব নোৱাৰিবও পাৰে। অৱশ্যে, ঘৰুৱা কাম কৰাটো কোনো অপচয় নহয়। পৰিয়ালৰ যত্ন লোৱাও গুৰুত্বপূর্ণ। প্ৰশ্নটো হ'ল—এই দায়িত্ববোৰ ন্যায্যভাৱে ভাগ কৰা হৈছেনে, আৰু প্ৰতিজন ব্যক্তিয়ে নিজৰ সম্ভাৱনা বিকাশৰ সুযোগ পাইছেনে?

যেতিয়া ঘৰুৱা দায়িত্বৰ বেছিভাগ অংশ এজন সদস্যৰ ওপৰত পৰে, তেতিয়া সেই ব্যক্তিজনৰ সময়, স্বাধীনতা আৰু অর্থনৈতিক সুযোগ সীমিত হ'ব পাৰে। সেয়েহে ঘৰুৱা শ্ৰমৰ আলোচনা কেৱল পৰিয়ালৰ বিষয় নহয়; ই শ্ৰম বজাৰ আৰু মানৱ সম্পদৰ ব্যৱহাৰৰ সৈতেও জড়িত।

এখন ঘৰৰ পৰা বৃহত্তৰ অর্থনীতিৰ পাঠ

ধৰা হওক, এখন গাঁৱৰ এগৰাকী মহিলাই প্ৰতিদিনে ঘৰৰ কাম-কাজৰ লগতে সন্তানৰ পঢ়া-শুনা, পৰিয়ালৰ বৃদ্ধ সদস্যৰ যত্ন আৰু আন বহু দায়িত্ব পালন কৰে। তেওঁ হয়তো কোনো প্ৰতিষ্ঠানৰ কর্মচাৰী নহয়, কিন্তু তেওঁৰ শ্ৰমে পৰিয়ালটোৰ দৈনন্দিন কার্যকলাপ অব্যাহত ৰখাত সহায় কৰে।এতিয়া যদি ঘৰুৱা কামৰ দায়িত্ব পৰিয়ালৰ সদস্যসকলৰ মাজত অধিক সমতাৰে ভাগ কৰা হয়, তেন্তে সেই মহিলাগৰাকীয়ে দক্ষতা আহৰণ, উপার্জনমূলক কাম অথবা নিজৰ পছন্দৰ অন্য কার্যকলাপৰ বাবে অধিক সময় লাভ কৰিব পাৰে। একে সময়তে আন সদস্যসকলেও যত্ন আৰু দায়িত্বৰ মূল্য বুজিবলৈ শিকিব।

ইয়াৰ অর্থ এইটো নহয় যে ঘৰুৱা কামৰ সমাধান কেৱল সকলোকে চাকৰিত নিয়োগ কৰাতেই আছে। বৰং মূল কথাটো হ'ল—ঘৰুৱা শ্ৰমক স্বাভাৱিকতে এজন বিশেষ ব্যক্তিৰ দায়িত্ব বুলি ধৰি লোৱা নহয়,ইয়াক পৰিয়ালৰ সকলো সদস্যৰ যৌথ দায়িত্ব হিচাপে স্বীকাৰ কৰা।

অর্থনৈতিক উন্নয়নৰ হিচাপত কি বাদ পৰি যায়?

এখন দেশ বা ৰাজ্যৰ অর্থনৈতিক অৱস্থা মূল্যায়ন কৰিবলৈ মুঠ ঘৰুৱা উৎপাদন (GDP), নিয়োগ, উপার্জন আৰু উৎপাদনশীলতাৰ দৰে সূচক ব্যৱহাৰ কৰা হয়। কিন্তু ঘৰৰ ভিতৰত বিনা পাৰিশ্রমিকত সম্পন্ন হোৱা বহুতো সেৱা সাধাৰণতে GDP-ৰ নিয়মীয়া বজাৰভিত্তিক হিচাপত অন্তর্ভুক্ত নহয়।উদাহৰণস্বৰূপে, ঘৰত ৰন্ধা খাদ্য আৰু হোটেলত কিনি খোৱা একে ধৰণৰ সোৱাদ নহ'লেও, খাদ্য প্রস্তুতৰ কামৰ এটা অংশ বজাৰৰ বাহিৰত সম্পন্ন হোৱাৰ বাবে ইয়াৰ মূল্য একে ধৰণে পৰিসংখ্যাত প্রকাশ নাপায়। সেইদৰে, পৰিয়ালৰ সদস্যৰ যত্ন লোৱা আৰু ধনৰ বিনিময়ত নিয়োজিত যত্ন-কর্মীৰ কামৰ মাজতো হিচাপৰ পার্থক্য থাকে।ইয়াৰ ফলত GDP-ৰ দৰে সূচকে অর্থনৈতিক কার্যকলাপৰ এটা গুৰুত্বপূর্ণ অংশ সম্পূর্ণৰূপে প্রকাশ কৰিব নোৱাৰে। অৱশ্যে, ইয়াৰ অর্থ এইটো নহয় যে GDP অর্থহীন। GDP-য়ে বজাৰভিত্তিক উৎপাদনৰ বিষয়ে গুৰুত্বপূর্ণ তথ্য দিয়ে; কিন্তু সমাজৰ সামগ্রিক কল্যাণ আৰু মানুহৰ সকলো ধৰণৰ অৱদান বুজিবলৈ ইয়াৰ লগতে আন সূচক আৰু তথ্যৰো প্রয়োজন।সেয়েহে, উন্নয়নৰ আলোচনা কেৱল কিমান উৎপাদন হ'ল বা কিমান আয় বৃদ্ধি পালে, তাৰ মাজতে সীমাবদ্ধ থাকিব নালাগে। মানুহে কেনেকৈ সময় ব্যৱহাৰ কৰিছে, যত্নৰ দায়িত্ব কেনেদৰে ভাগ হৈছে আৰু সকলোৰে অর্থনৈতিক সুযোগ কিমান বিস্তৃত হৈছে—এই প্রশ্নবোৰো গুৰুত্বপূর্ণ।

স্বীকৃতিৰ পৰা পৰিৱর্তনলৈ

ঘৰুৱা অবৈতনিক শ্রমৰ মূল্য স্বীকাৰ কৰাৰ অর্থ এইটো নহয় যে প্রতিটো ঘৰুৱা কামৰ বাবে বাধ্যতামূলকভাৱে ধনৰ মূল্য নির্ধাৰণ কৰিব লাগিব। ইয়াৰ প্রথম পদক্ষেপ হ'ল এই শ্রমক অৱহেলা নকৰা, ইয়াৰ সময় আৰু পৰিশ্রমৰ প্রয়োজনীয়তা বুজা, আৰু দায়িত্বসমূহ ন্যায্যভাৱে ভাগ কৰি লোৱা।

চৰকাৰী নীতি প্রস্তুত কৰোঁতে সময়-ব্যৱহাৰৰ সমীক্ষাৰ দৰে তথ্যই মানুহে ঘৰুৱা কাম আৰু যত্নৰ কামত কিমান সময় ব্যয় কৰে, সেয়া বুজাত সহায় কৰিব পাৰে। একেদৰে, মানসম্পন্ন শিশুযত্নৰ সুবিধা, বৃদ্ধসকলৰ বাবে যত্ন-সেৱা, উপযুক্ত কর্মপৰিৱেশ আৰু সমান সুযোগে পৰিয়ালৰ সদস্যসকলৰ ওপৰত থকা অসামঞ্জস্যপূর্ণ বোজা হ্রাস কৰাত সহায় কৰিব পাৰে।অর্থনৈতিক উন্নয়নৰ লক্ষ্য কেৱল অধিক উপার্জন সৃষ্টি কৰাই নহয়; মানুহে নিজৰ সময়, সামর্থ্য আৰু জীৱনৰ সুযোগসমূহ কেনেদৰে ব্যৱহাৰ কৰিব পাৰে, সেয়াও নিশ্চিত কৰা।

শেষত, এটা প্রশ্ন

এটা পৰিয়ালৰ মাহিলি উপার্জন কিমান, আমি সহজেই সুধিব পাৰোঁ। ঘৰৰ খৰচ কিমান, সেয়াও হিচাপ কৰিব পাৰোঁ। কিন্তু সেই পৰিয়ালটোক প্রতিদিনে চলাই ৰাখিবলৈ কোনে নিজৰ সময় দিছে, কোনে নিজৰ সুযোগ ত্যাগ কৰিছে আৰু কাৰ শ্রমৰ ওপৰত আনৰ ব্যস্ত জীৱন নির্ভৰ কৰিছে—এই প্রশ্নবোৰৰ উত্তৰ আমি সদায় বিচাৰোঁনে?

অর্থনীতি কেৱল টকাৰ চলাচলৰ কাহিনী নহয়। ই মানুহৰ সময়, পৰিশ্রম, সিদ্ধান্ত আৰু সুযোগৰো কাহিনী। ঘৰৰ ভিতৰত হোৱা প্রতিটো কামক বজাৰৰ সামগ্রীলৈ ৰূপান্তৰিত কৰিব নোৱাৰি, কিন্তু সেই কামৰ গুৰুত্ব অস্বীকাৰ কৰিও এখন সুস্থ সমাজ গঢ়িব নোৱাৰি।কাৰণ, যি শ্রমৰ মূল্য কোনো দৰমহাৰ কাগজত নুঠে, সেই শ্রমৰ ওপৰতেই বহুতো উপার্জন, বহুতো সপোন আৰু এখন সমাজৰ দৈনন্দিন জীৱন নির্ভৰ কৰি থাকে।

04



From Jagiroad to the Global Chip Map:

The Economics of Assam's Semiconductor Ambition.

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We all know about the places in Assam that paint our lands with endless stretches of tea gardens - Dibrugarh, Tinsukia, Golaghat etc. We also know about places like- Digboi , Noonmati and Bongaigaon which are famous for their historic oil refineries but how many of us have paid attention towards “Jagiroad” as the new emerging name in one of the world's most strategically important industries - Semiconductor Industry?

With Tata Electronics’ Semiconductor Assembly and Testing (TSAT) Facility - Jagiroad, a small town situated in Morigaon district of Assam, is arising as the hope that could drastically transform Assam’s economic landscape, not just at the National and Global levels but at the local levels too.

Yet, beyond the promises of large investments and advancements the question remains one: “Can a small town in Northeast India find its place in an industry that has become central to the world's technological and economic future?” This article is an attempt to answer just that.

The Face of Modernization and Digitalization

A semiconductor, in simple terms, is a material whose ability to control electricity can be controlled. But once converted into a tiny Electronic Chip. It gains the ability to control flow of electricity, store data and even communicate with different networks. From the smartphones and laptops in our hands to the basic appliances of our home -Television, Washing Machine, LED lights etc.., from Banking and Digital payment tools - ATM Machines or Payment systems using QR to the healthcare equipment in our hospitals and even the vehicles for transportation, Semiconductors forms the foundation behind all of these technologies that we depend upon.

Legacy In Transition

Jagiroad has seen a notable industrial history till now. The Morigaon District Census Handbook records Textile industries like - Assam Polytex Ltd and Assam Spun Silk Mills that emerged here and were later closed by 1995-96 and 2005. Nagaon Paper Mill was established here in 1985. It didn't just act as a manufacturing unit but also as a source of employment for many local people. However, the Mill faced heavy losses by March 2017 and the Union Government finally confirmed its closure by November 2019. Jagiroad's economic identity is not defined by industries alone. It's a town at the intersection of Heritage and Modernity. Every year the historic “Jonbeel Mela” brings together communities from hills and plains, preserving a centuries-old tradition of trade and barter system.

Dawn of a New Era

The Union cabinet approved Tata Electronics' proposal to establish a semiconductor assembly, testing, marking and packaging facility with a landmark announcement on 29th of February, 2024. The Nation's first indigenous Semiconductor Assembly and Test unit, according to the data of Press Information Bureau, is designed with an investment outlay of ₹27,000 crore (~ $3.6 Billion USD), making it the largest private sector investment in Northeast India. It is expected to achieve a production capacity up to 48 million Semiconductor Chips per day. The facility is strategically constructed on the premises of defunct Nagaon Paper Mill, covering around 592 acres of land. Currently according to the data of The Federal, commercial production is expected to begin by December 2026 or January 2027 however Chief Minister of Assam has confirmed on October 3 that the first cleanroom is operational and pilot production has already begun.

From Jagiroad to the Global Chip Map.

This plant is just a part of Tata Electronics' larger plan to build a domestic semiconductor ecosystem. The company is investing around ₹91,000 in the Dholera Fab which is a partnership with Taiwan's Power chip Semiconductor Manufacturing Corporation (PSMC). The pace with which the vision is being worked upon, there's no doubt that Assam from India will be the next rising power hub in the globally connected network of Semiconductor Industries along with countries like Taiwan, USA, Netherlands and China.

Progress At What Cost?

Talking about the benefits, the project head of TSAT, Shri Ashish Mishra has highlighted that the project is poised to generate over 27,000 direct and Indirect employment opportunities in Assam, a state where graduates (both Undergraduates as well as Postgraduates) constitute the largest category in terms of Job seekers. If we talk about Gender- based employment ratios then, in Assam the Male Labour Force Participation Ratio is significantly higher than the Female Labour Force Participation Ratio by a gap of roughly 39 percentage points. Sectoral concentration is one of the major drawbacks which are holding back many learned women from entering into Technical and Skill Based Sectors in search of employment. Taking advantage of this, the government of Assam in January 2024 has selected 1,800 women from Assam to learn Semiconductor Manufacturing skills at the Bengaluru Facility of Tata Electronics'. The figures might be small but this initiative definitely promotes more investment on women employment. Apart from these, the facility needs reliable transport, security and other support services and the Local Businesses may have opportunities to meet some of this. However, the main challenges revolve around this one question:

"How much of the Semiconductor Manufacturing value chain will the state actually capture when the plant becomes fully operational?" Imagine a chip designed in one country, fabricated in another, packaged and tested in Jagiroad, and then incorporated into a vehicle manufactured elsewhere. Assam would surely contribute manufacturing services to that product's journey, but the value generated in Assam would not automatically equal the full value of the finished chip, let alone the final vehicle or smartphone. Environmental challenges remain as the next important concern. The proposed water scheme allocates 11 million litres per day to the plant, which I think, leaves no doubt about Water Shortages in the near future. A highly dependable Power Supply and industrial waste management measures are subjects yet to monitor about.

Beyond The Factory Gates

Ultimately the success of this Semiconductor Ambition will not just depend on "How many chips it produces?" or "How much investment does it attract?" but more on the opportunities that it'll create beyond the gates. Like the graduate who finds a meaningful career without leaving Assam, the woman who's now financially independent not through self-employment or agricultural activities but through technical and skill-based activities, the local entrepreneur who becomes a part of the supply chain. The examples could be endless. As Sahityarathi Lakshminath Bezbaruah has beautifully expressed his love for the motherland in the Assam's State Anthem as, "O Mur Apunar Desh".it reminds us that the bond between a land and its people should always remain at the heart of its identity. So, as Assam is stepping onto this new era of technological advancement, I wish that rather than leaving behind the people who gave the state its identity, may this investment be worthy enough of moving them forward with it. For what is the worth of an investment that moves a state forward but leaves its people behind?

05



More Than Coffee:

What Café Culture Reveals About Guwahati

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A cup of coffee may seem like an ordinary purchase, but the place where it is consumed can reveal something about the society around it. In Guwahati, the growing visibility of cafés offers an interesting way to observe changing lifestyles, consumer preferences and the city's evolving urban economy. Cafés are no longer viewed merely as places to eat or drink. For many young people, they have become spaces for conversations, celebrations, study sessions, informal meetings and even working. The attraction often lies not only in the menu but also in the ambience, comfort and experience. This shift raises an important economic question: are people simply buying coffee or are they increasingly paying for experiences?

From an economic perspective, café culture reflects changing patterns of consumption. As preferences evolve, consumers may become willing to spend on products and experiences that offer convenience, comfort or social value. For businesses, this creates opportunities to differentiate themselves through their location, design, menu and service. Yet, the popularity of such establishments should not automatically be interpreted as proof that every household has greater purchasing power. Consumer choices differ according to income, age and priorities.

The café economy also has a livelihood dimension. Every establishment depends on a network of people, including owners, cooks, servers, cleaners, suppliers and delivery workers. A growing café sector can create employment and encourage entrepreneurship. A report published by *The Times of India* on 27 January 2026 described increased customer footfall and sales for café owners and small businesses around Guwahati's Sati Radhika Shanti Udyan riverfront. This example illustrates how public spaces and leisure activities can generate economic opportunities for nearby businesses. However, such local observations do not establish the overall growth rate of Guwahati's café industry.

At the same time, the expansion of café culture invites questions about affordability and inclusion. An expensive coffee may be an occasional indulgence for one person and an everyday purchase for another. Meanwhile, small cafés must contend with rent, electricity, ingredients, wages and competition. Behind an attractive interior lies the practical challenge of remaining profitable.

Perhaps the most interesting aspect of this change is what it tells us about Guwahati itself. As a major urban centre in Northeast India, the city brings together education, employment, commerce and changing social aspirations. Its café culture can be viewed as one small expression of this transformation, although it cannot represent the experiences of every resident.

Ultimately, a city's progress should not be measured by the number of fashionable places it offers alone. It should also be judged by the opportunities it creates, the livelihoods it sustains and the accessibility of its public spaces. Cafés may serve coffee, but they also offer a glimpse into the changing relationship between consumption, community and urban development. The real question is not simply whether Guwahati is acquiring a café culture, but what kind of city that culture is helping it become.

06



Assam at a Turning Point: Development for Whom?

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Assam is a land of remarkable diversity, rich cultural traditions, abundant natural resources, and immense economic potential. From its world-renowned tea gardens and traditional silk weaving to its fertile agricultural lands and the mighty Brahmaputra, the state has inherited a legacy that continues to shape its identity. Situated in India's North-East, Assam holds strategic importance through its geographical position, trade connections, and cultural links with neighboring regions. Yet, beyond its heritage, Assam is also a state in transition, attempting to transform its economic potential into greater prosperity for its people. Its future depends not only on the decisions made today but also on how effectively economic ambitions can be reconciled with the needs of citizens and the preservation of its natural environment.

Over the past decades, Assam has witnessed significant changes in infrastructure, education, connectivity, healthcare, and public services. Roads and bridges have improved connections between communities, while expanding educational institutions and healthcare facilities have created new possibilities. Investment in transport, urban infrastructure, and economic activities reflects the state's ambition to strengthen its position within India's growing economy. Guwahati has developed into an important center of commerce, education, administration, and employment, while tourism, tea, agriculture, handloom, and other industries continue to offer economic opportunities.

These developments deserve recognition. Better connectivity can link remote communities with markets, infrastructure can encourage investment, and welfare programs can provide essential support to vulnerable households. Assam's growing economic ambitions offer genuine opportunities for progress. However, recognizing achievements should not mean accepting every development decision without examination. The more important question is whether these changes are improving the everyday lives of ordinary citizens.

The Assam Economic Survey 2025–26 estimated real economic growth of 10% for the financial year 2025–26, while the state's 2026–27 Budget projected nominal growth of 17%. These figures indicate economic momentum, but they measure different things: the first adjusts for inflation, while the second reflects growth at current prices. They should therefore not be compared directly. More importantly, neither figure alone reveals whether families have secure incomes, graduates can find suitable employment, or essential public services are accessible to everyone. Economic growth is encouraging, but its wider significance depends on how its benefits reach the population.

One of the most important concerns is employment. Education has become a major aspiration for young people in Assam, with families investing time, money, and hope in their children's futures. Yet, obtaining a degree does not always guarantee suitable employment. According to the Government of India's Periodic Labour Force Survey, Assam's unemployment rate among people aged 15 and above, measured using usual status, was 3.9% in 2023–24, compared with 1.7% in the previous year's survey. This increase deserves attention, although the overall rate does not capture every aspect of underemployment, job security, or the mismatch between qualifications and available work.

Some young people spend years preparing for competitive examinations, others accept jobs below their qualifications, and many seek opportunities outside the state. If education prepares young people for the future, are we creating an economy that can use their skills and knowledge**?** Government recruitment can provide important opportunities, but lasting economic security also requires a diverse private sector, stronger local industries, support for entrepreneurs, and productive employment across different regions. Young people should be free to

pursue opportunities elsewhere, but they should also have meaningful choices within Assam.

This brings us to the movement of people from villages to towns and cities. Migration can raise incomes, expand educational opportunities, and give people access to better healthcare and employment. However, when people feel compelled to leave their villages simply to access opportunities that are difficult to find at home, it raises concerns about the distribution of development. Rural communities depend on agriculture, small enterprises, traditional occupations, and local markets, yet these livelihoods can be affected by uncertain incomes, limited infrastructure, and inadequate public services.

When young people move away, their families may benefit from remittances and new skills, but some villages may also lose workers, entrepreneurs, and the next generation of people who could sustain local industries. Meanwhile, growing urban centres face increasing pressure on housing, transport, sanitation, and public infrastructure. Development should therefore extend beyond expanding cities. Stronger rural healthcare and education, better agricultural support, improved connectivity, and opportunities for local businesses can help people build secure lives without having to relocate simply to meet their basic needs.

The challenges of urban development are particularly visible in Guwahati, where recurring floods and waterlogging disrupt everyday life. As Assam's largest urban centre and an important gateway to the North-East, Guwahati has experienced considerable expansion. However, heavy rainfall, water flowing from surrounding hills, drainage problems, wetland loss, and construction in environmentally sensitive areas contribute to the city's flooding challenges. The Guwahati Municipal Corporation has identified rapid urbanization, shrinking wetlands, blocked drainage systems, and the loss of natural water-retention areas among the factors contributing to flooding.

For residents, this is not merely an environmental concern. Flooded roads affect commuters, students struggle to reach educational institutions, businesses lose working hours, and families face damage to their homes and belongings. Workers may lose income simply because they cannot reach their workplaces. Those with fewer financial resources are often less able to recover from repeated losses.

When a city is expanding through roads, flyovers, buildings, and commercial projects, its development must also account for the realities of the monsoon. Infrastructure is necessary, but construction alone cannot measure urban progress. Effective drainage, wetland protection, scientific land-use planning, and accountability for poorly implemented projects are equally important. Initiatives such as Mission Flood-Free Guwahati reflect efforts to address the problem, but residents need lasting improvements rather than repeated disruption each rainy season. A city's growth should make everyday life safer and more convenient, not leave citizens continually struggling with preventable problems.

The relationship between development and environmental protection becomes even more significant when we consider Kaziranga National Park, one of Assam's most treasured natural landscapes and a UNESCO World Heritage Site. In 2026, a debate emerged over the proposed site-specific Eco-Sensitive Zone (ESZ) around the park. The Assam government maintains that the existing 10-kilometre zone is a default provision because a site-specific ESZ has not been formally notified. Therefore, it describes its proposal for shorter distances in certain areas as establishing a site-specific boundary rather than reducing an already notified zone. The government argues that the default provision creates difficulties for local residents and restricts infrastructure and development projects, while maintaining that the park's boundary would remain unchanged.

The Supreme Court's June 2022 order directed that an ESZ of at least 1 kilometre should be declared around protected areas. However, in

April 2023, the Court modified its order, recognizing that a uniform approach was not feasible everywhere and retaining a ban on mining within one kilometre of protected areas. Despite the government's arguments, conservationists have expressed concern about the proposed changes. Environmentalist Jadav Payeng has warned of the potential consequences for wildlife, particularly because animals such as rhinoceroses, elephants and deer move towards the Karbi Anglong hills during seasonal floods. Wildlife corridors and surrounding habitats are essential for these movements, making the potential ecological effects of any change important to assess.

This debate should not be reduced to a conflict between development and conservation. Communities around protected areas have legitimate concerns about housing, livelihoods and economic opportunities, while environmental safeguards help protect wildlife and Assam's natural heritage. The government's concerns deserve consideration alongside the risks of habitat fragmentation. Scientific assessments, public consultation and clear explanations of the proposed boundaries are essential to ensure that development addresses local needs without compromising Kaziranga's long-term ecological security.

Government spending and public accountability connect all these issues. Roads, hospitals, schools, drainage systems, flood-management projects, and environmental programmes require public resources, but allocations and announcements do not automatically guarantee successful outcomes. Citizens deserve to know whether projects are completed properly, whether facilities function as intended, and whether the people they are meant to serve actually benefit. Criticism should not be treated as opposition to development. It is a necessary part of ensuring that public policies achieve their intended purposes. Governments must be accountable not only for the promises they make but also for the outcomes of the decisions they implement.

Assam's future depends on addressing these challenges while building upon the progress already made. Economic growth must create meaningful employment, rural communities must have access to essential services, urban planning must account for heavy rainfall, and environmental decisions must consider both local livelihoods and ecological sustainability. These goals require effective government policies, but public participation is equally important.

Citizens, students, researchers, journalists, local organisations, and community groups all have a role in shaping the state's future. People can seek reliable information, participate in public consultations, raise concerns with relevant authorities, report damaged infrastructure, support local enterprises, and take part in community and environmental initiatives. Students and young people can also contribute by researching local problems, discussing policy decisions, and helping others understand how public choices affect their communities. Such actions may seem small, but informed and collective participation can make local concerns more visible and encourage institutions to respond.

As readers, we should not see ourselves merely as observers of Assam's development. We are part of the society whose future is being shaped by these decisions. Each of us can reflect on the changes taking place in our own neighbourhoods and consider which problems remain unresolved, what evidence is available, and how citizens can contribute to practical solutions. Rather than accepting every announcement uncritically or dismissing every achievement, we can ask for information, recognise genuine progress, and respectfully challenge decisions that require reconsideration. The responsibility for a better future rest with both the government and the citizens it serves. Let us recognise what has been achieved, speak openly about what needs to change, and participate actively in shaping the state we wish to leave for future generations.

07



The Uncaptured Value of Assam:

Cultural Capital, Local Enterprise and the Pursuit of Inclusive Development

-Zahin Ali

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What if Assam's greatest economic opportunity lies not merely in what it possesses but in what it can create from what it already has?

Assam is a land of remarkable contrasts. Its tea travels across borders, its silk carries generations of craftsmanship, its rivers shape livelihoods and its cultural traditions preserve knowledge that cannot be recreated overnight. The landscape offers possibilities for agriculture, tourism and industry, while its young population represents an important source of talent and ambition. Yet a question deserves greater attention: How much of the value created from Assam's resources becomes lasting prosperity for the people who sustain them? This is not a question of whether Assam possesses wealth. It is a question of how that wealth can be transformed into better livelihoods, stronger local enterprises and wider economic opportunities.

A product may be grown in Assam, processed elsewhere and sold under a brand that reaches national or international markets. A tourist may visit a local attraction but the benefits of that visit may be distributed among transport operators, accommodation providers, restaurants, guides and businesses located in different places. An industry may generate substantial production, but its contribution to the surrounding economy will also depend on the employment it creates and the opportunities it offers to local suppliers. These examples reveal a distinction between creating economic value and capturing it. Creating value means producing something useful, desirable or economically productive. Capturing value means receiving a share of the benefits generated through that activity.

The distinction matters because a region's economic strength depends not only on what it produces but also on the opportunities its people have to participate in the production, processing and distribution of wealth and for Assam, this opens up a different way of thinking about development.

Beyond the Wealth We Can See

Economic wealth is often associated with visible resources: fertile land, natural gas, tea gardens, forests, rivers and industrial projects. These resources matter, but they represent only one part of an economy's potential. The other part lies in the ability to use them productively.

A resource becomes more economically valuable when people develop the skills, technology, infrastructure and institutions needed to use it effectively. Agricultural produce can support additional activities through storage, processing and packaging. Traditional textiles can reach wider markets through thoughtful design, quality assurance and effective branding. Tourism can support local livelihoods when visitors purchase services and products from local enterprises. In each case, the resource itself is only the beginning.

Economist Paul Romer, whose work helped establish modern endogenous growth theory, emphasised the importance of knowledge and technological change in long-term economic growth (Romer, 1986). His insight offers a useful way to understand Assam's possibilities: resources become more productive when combined with knowledge, innovation and new ways of organising economic activity.

Consider the difference between selling a raw product and developing an entire network of activities around it. The second approach can create opportunities for processors, designers, transport providers, marketers, technicians and entrepreneurs. The goal is not to eliminate trade with other regions. Markets beyond Assam can bring investment, income and opportunities for expansion. The more important question is whether Assam's producers and businesses can participate meaningfully in the activities that generate additional value. The challenge, therefore, is not simply to produce more, but to create stronger connections between production, knowledge, enterprise and local prosperity.

Tea: A Story Larger Than the Cup

Few products are as closely associated with Assam as tea. It is an agricultural product, a commercial industry and a recognisable part of the state's identity. But tea also offers a way to think about the wider economics of value. The journey of a product does not necessarily end when it leaves the place where it was produced. Processing, packaging, branding, distribution and retailing can all contribute to its final market value. Different participants undertake these activities and receive different returns.

For Assam, the question is how producers, workers and enterprises can benefit from opportunities across this wider chain. Could more local businesses develop distinctive tea products? Could stronger branding help suitable producers reach new customers? Could tourism, specialised retail and local entrepreneurship create additional activities around the tea industry? These are possibilities worth exploring, not guaranteed solutions. Their success would depend on investment, market demand, production costs, quality and the ability of businesses to compete. The point is that an established industry can offer opportunities beyond its original activity.

The same principle applies to agriculture. Increasing production is important, but farmers' incomes are also influenced by market prices, storage facilities, transport costs and access to buyers. In some cases, better processing and marketing may help producers obtain more favourable returns. A crop is therefore more than what is harvested. It can also become the starting point for a wider network of economic activities.

When Heritage Becomes an Economic Strength

Assam's cultural wealth is not always recognised in the language of economics, yet it contains valuable forms of knowledge, skill and creativity. Muga silk, handloom weaving, bamboo and cane crafts, pottery and other traditional practices represent the accumulated knowledge of communities and generations. Their significance extends beyond commercial transactions: they preserve identity, sustain relationships and connect the present with the past. Economically, these traditions can also support livelihoods and small enterprises. However, possessing a distinctive craft does not automatically ensure that its makers receive adequate returns. Producers may face difficulties obtaining finance, reaching customers, maintaining consistent demand or competing with mass-produced alternatives. Thoughtful design, collective branding, digital marketing and access to wider markets may help address some of these challenges. But the purpose should not be to turn every cultural practice into a commercial product.

Culture has value that cannot be measured entirely in money. UNESCO's work on culture and sustainable development highlights the connections between cultural heritage, livelihoods and community participation (Hosagrahar, 2017). This perspective is particularly relevant when considering how traditional knowledge can support economic opportunities without losing its meaning.

The people who sustain a tradition should have opportunities to benefit from its commercial success. Their knowledge should not become merely a marketing label used by others. This is where cultural preservation and economic development can reinforce each other. When craftspeople receive fair returns and younger generations see viable livelihoods in traditional skills, cultural knowledge has a stronger chance of continuing. Thus, Heritage becomes an economic strength when the people who preserve it are also able to build a future from it.

Tourism: More Than a Destination

A destination may attract visitors, but the number of visitors alone cannot tell us how much the surrounding community benefits. Tourism can

create opportunities for local transport operators, food vendors, guides, homestays, artisans and small businesses. It can also support the preservation and presentation of cultural and natural attractions. Yet the economic impact depends partly on where visitors spend their money and which businesses supply their needs.

Imagine a tourist visiting a cultural site. The experience may involve transport, accommodation, food, souvenirs and guided activities. If local enterprises provide these services, a wider range of households may benefit from the visit. If local participation is limited, the economic benefits may be more concentrated. This does not mean that tourism must exclude outside investors. Investment can improve facilities, services and connectivity. The opportunity lies in building links between tourism businesses and local producers, service providers and communities.

Tourism also raises questions about seasonality. Businesses may earn well during busy periods but struggle during quieter months. Environmental pressure and the commercialisation of cultural practices require attention as well. A successful tourism strategy should therefore ask more than how many people arrive. It should also ask whether tourism creates stable livelihoods, supports local enterprise and protects the attractions on which it depends. For Assam, tourism's potential lies not merely in bringing people to its destinations, but in creating meaningful economic connections between those destinations and the communities around them.

The Missing Link: People and Productive Opportunities

No economic transformation can be sustained without people who have the knowledge and opportunities to participate in it. Assam's young population represents an important source of potential. Education, technical skills, research, entrepreneurship and professional training can help individuals participate in changing economic activities. But education alone does not guarantee economic opportunity.

A young person may acquire qualifications yet struggle to find work that makes meaningful use of them. A small entrepreneur may have a promising idea but lack finance, market information or the support needed to establish a viable business. The challenge is therefore twofold: people need relevant capabilities, and the economy needs productive opportunities in which those capabilities can be used.

Economist Amartya Sen's capability approach provides a useful perspective here. In *Development as Freedom* (1999), Sen argues that development should be understood in terms of the freedoms and opportunities people possess, rather than income or production alone.

Applied to Assam, this means asking whether economic development enables people to secure livelihoods, acquire useful skills, start businesses and participate in decisions affecting their lives. It also means considering whose opportunities remain limited. Women contribute to agriculture, weaving, household enterprises and many other economic activities. Yet participation does not always translate into control over income, access to finance or independent decision making. Improving these conditions can strengthen both individual freedom and the productive capacity of the wider economy. Similarly, young people need more than encouragement to become entrepreneurs. They need access to information, practical learning, finance, infrastructure and markets. The objective should not be to treat every young person as a future business owner. It should be to create an environment in which people can pursue different forms of productive work with dignity and realistic prospects. Ultimately, human potential becomes an economic strength when people have the freedom and means to use it.

Industrial Growth and the Local Connection

Industrial investment can contribute to economic diversification, technological learning and employment. But the presence of a major project does not, by itself, reveal the extent of its contribution to the surrounding economy. An industrial enterprise may employ workers directly while also creating demand for transport, maintenance, construction, food services and other supplies. Local businesses may benefit if they can provide the required goods and services. These connections can spread the benefits of investment beyond the enterprise itself.

For Assam, this makes local economic linkages an important consideration in industrial development. Skills training, reliable infrastructure, access to finance and suitable support for small enterprises may help local workers and businesses participate in emerging opportunities. The benefits must nevertheless be assessed through actual outcomes. Investment announcements do not automatically establish how many jobs will be created, how many local suppliers will participate or how much income will reach surrounding communities. The aim should be to build an economy in which investment does more than increase production: it also creates opportunities for learning, enterprise and wider participation. This does not require every input to be sourced locally. Some specialised goods, technologies and services may need to come from elsewhere. Rather, it requires identifying where local participation is practical and helping enterprises meet the standards needed to compete. Industrial development is most meaningful when it strengthens the productive capacity of the wider economy.

Can Growth Be Sustainable Without Protecting Nature?

Assam's rivers, wetlands, forests and agricultural landscapes are not simply features of its geography. They support livelihoods, economic activity and ecological balance. Their condition can influence agriculture, tourism, transport and the security of households. Flooding, erosion and environmental degradation can damage productive assets, interrupt economic activity and place additional pressure on families and businesses. These challenges remind us that economic growth and environmental protection cannot be treated as entirely separate concerns.

An activity may generate income today while imposing costs that become visible only later. If environmental damage reduces future productivity or undermines livelihoods, the immediate economic gain may not represent the full social benefit. This does not mean development should stop. It means development decisions should account for environmental risks and long-term productive capacity.

Appropriate infrastructure, disaster preparedness, improved agricultural practices and ecosystem protection can form part of a broader strategy for economic resilience. The right combination of measures will depend on local conditions and should be evaluated carefully. The underlying principle is simple: natural resources contribute to development not only through what can be extracted from them, but also through the ecological systems they sustain. A future-oriented economy must protect the foundations on which its future production depends.

Rethinking What Economic Success Means

Economic progress is often discussed through growth rates, investment, production and the expansion of industries. These indicators are important but they cannot answer every question

about development. They do not, by themselves, reveal whether small producers receive better returns, whether workers obtain secure employment, whether young people can find productive opportunities or whether local communities benefit from tourism and industrial expansion. A more complete understanding of development requires attention to the distribution of economic opportunities.

For Assam, this means examining whether producers can access markets on reasonable terms, whether traditional enterprises remain viable, whether education connects with employment, and whether investment creates productive relationships with local businesses. It also means recognising that economic benefits may be distributed unevenly. Some enterprises may possess the capital, technology and market access needed to expand quickly, while others may struggle to participate. Public policy can help address these differences through appropriate infrastructure, education, enterprise support, market information and institutions that enable fair participation. But policies should be judged by their outcomes rather than their intentions. Better data on employment, producer returns, supply chains and local enterprise participation would help identify where progress is occurring and where constraints remain. The objective is not to ensure that every benefit remains within Assam. Modern economies depend on exchange, cooperation and connections with wider markets. The objective is to ensure that Assam's people have meaningful opportunities to contribute to, and benefit from, the economic activities taking place around them.

The Value That Still Awaits Possibility

Perhaps the most important way to think about Assam's economic future is to look beyond the familiar distinction between rich resources and insufficient development.

Assam already possesses many foundations for economic activity: established industries, agricultural knowledge, cultural skills, natural attractions, educational institutions and a population capable of learning and adapting. The question is how these different strengths can be connected. Can traditional craftsmanship be supported by better design and market access? Can agriculture generate more opportunities through appropriate processing and distribution? Can tourism strengthen local livelihoods? Can industrial investment help local enterprises acquire new skills? Can education prepare people not only for existing jobs, but also for emerging forms of productive activity?

None of these possibilities is automatic. Each requires investment, institutional support, practical knowledge and sustained effort. Some will succeed; others may not. Their value must be demonstrated through results. Yet together, they offer a way of thinking about development that does not reduce Assam to a list of resources or a comparison of economic indicators. It begins with what exists, but refuses to assume that the present represents the limit of what is possible.

The idea of *uncaptured value* should therefore be understood as an invitation to investigate, not as a claim that Assam has already lost a measurable share of its wealth. It asks where additional value could be created, who might participate in creating it, and how the resulting benefits could support broader prosperity. The answers will require evidence, imagination and policies attentive to the realities of producers, workers, entrepreneurs and communities. Assam's future will depend not simply on how much it produces, but on the knowledge, it develops, the enterprises it strengthens, the opportunities it creates and the people it enables to prosper. The real wealth of Assam lies not only in what it has inherited, but in its ability to transform that inheritance into possibilities that more of its people can share.

08



Educated, But Where to Work?

Rethinking Higher Education and Local Economic Opportunities in Assam under NEP 2020

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The Promise We All Grew Up With

At home, the advice was always simple: study well, get your degree, and the rest will follow. Almost every family I know believes in this promise, and many stretch their savings to the limit to keep it. Yet once the degree is in your hand, a question arrives that nobody prepares you for. Where do I use all this?

This article is my attempt to answer it. I believe Assam's challenge is no longer only about getting students into college. It is about whether our economy has room for them once they walk out.

What the Numbers Say

Access comes first, because it is still low. In 2021-22, about 6.78 lakh students were enrolled in higher education in Assam, with slightly more women than men. Yet the state's gross enrolment ratio that year was 16.9, while the national figure was 28.4.[1] This gap may partly reflect incomplete data submission by Assam's institutions to the national survey, as the state's education minister has acknowledged.[2] Even so, it points to a real access challenge. That leaves two jobs in front of us. We must bring more young people in, and we must make sure the degree means something when they leave.

The second job worries me more. On paper, unemployment in Assam looks small. The Periodic Labour Force Survey shows an overall rate of 1.7 per cent in 2022-23 and 3.9 per cent in 2023-24.[3] Now look at graduates. For graduates aged 15 and above in Assam, the unemployment rate was 11.7 per cent in 2021-22 and 14.9 per cent in 2022-23, while the all-India graduate rate in 2022-23 was 13.4 per cent.[4] Put 14.9 beside the overall 1.7 for the same year, and the graduate rate is almost nine times higher.

> ***"A degree did not protect people from being jobless."***

A Degree, and Twenty Years at Home

These numbers are not just numbers to me. In a remote area I know, there is a man who finished his graduation and has been sitting at home ever since. More than twenty years now. There was no regular work nearby, nobody to show him another direction, and the chance he was waiting for never came. The degree he once felt proud of slowly turned into a disappointment for him and his family. He is one person, of course. But this is what a graduate unemployment figure looks like when it is lived over a whole lifetime.

Behind every enrolment figure is a family decision. Parents pay for fees, hostels, bus fares and coaching, and students delay earning to complete one more degree. In economics, we call this investment in human capital: education builds skills, and those skills are expected to pay back through better productivity and income. But the payback depends on one condition. There have to be enough places where those skills can actually be used.

Why the Skills Have Nowhere to Go

Economists would call part of this structural unemployment: a mismatch between the skills graduates hold and the jobs the local economy actually offers. Unlike cyclical unemployment, which eases when the economy recovers, structural unemployment persists unless training, institutions and local enterprises change. Assam's pattern of low overall unemployment but

high graduate unemployment looks consistent with this, which is why waiting for growth alone may not be enough.

This is why I believe the problem sits on the demand side as much as the supply side. A graduate who cannot find a suitable job does not necessarily lack ability. Assam has many small businesses, farms, weaving households, craft units and tourism ventures. A lot of them find it hard to get credit, technology, organised markets or trained managers, and that may limit how many graduates they can take on.

It may also explain why so many young people pour their energy into government jobs and competitive exams. A government post offers security, respect and a salary you can plan your life around. Anyone would want that. But when many candidates chase a few vacancies, education starts to feel like a waiting room instead of a bridge. I don't blame the aspirants. I think it shows that we need more doors.

Migration comes from the same pressure. Moving to a big city for a better job is often a sensible decision, and nobody should look down on it. The trouble starts when leaving becomes the only realistic way to find work that matches what you studied. Then the state loses people who might have built something at home.

Where Education Can Create Work

This is where NEP 2020 comes in. Its focus on vocational learning, internships and hands-on exposure can help, but only if it connects to what Assam's economy actually looks like.

Handloom. We have a rich weaving tradition and skilled weavers, but the link between the loom and a buyer far away is often missing. A graduate who understands accounts, design management or digital marketing could help build that link, and the weaver gains as well.

Tourism. Visitors need guides, decent places to stay, online visibility, and someone to handle money and transport. Educated youth can create value in all of these without waiting for a vacancy notice.

Agriculture. Selling, processing, storing, branding and delivering farm produce can create work around farming, even for people who never plough a field.

So instead of only asking which existing job a graduate can get, we could also ask a different question: what activity can this graduate help make more productive?

What Has to Change

Still, it would not be fair to expect graduates to fix everything through entrepreneurship. A good idea goes nowhere without affordable credit. A trained student who returns to a small town may find no business that can offer real experience. Education gives a person capability. It cannot build the whole environment around them.

So, institutions have to do their part:

- Colleges and universities should build lasting ties with local businesses, cooperatives, farms and tourism operators.
- Internships should teach students how a real enterprise runs, and not end up as a certificate collected at the end of a semester.

- Banks and financial institutions need to treat credit seriously if we want young people to start something.
- Skill programmes should begin by looking at what each district actually does for a living, because training that works in one place may not suit another.

We also need to look beyond Guwahati. Smaller towns and remote areas need colleges that are connected to their own local economies, so that nobody has to travel to the capital just to find out that their degree has a use.

The Real Test

In the end, I think Assam needs to move from producing qualified people to building local systems that can use them. A university can produce a graduate. Only a working local economy can turn that graduate into a worker, a professional, a researcher, an entrepreneur or an employer. The point is not to keep every graduate in the state, because people should be free to go wherever their ambitions take them. What matters is that a young person who wants to stay has a real reason to.

There is no single big answer. It will take many smaller efforts working together: closer links between universities and industry, practical learning, easier access to finance, stronger local enterprises, digital markets, and planning at the district level.

If we are preparing our young people for the future, what are we doing so that no graduate is left waiting at home for twenty years?

Education should open doors, not leave young people waiting outside them.

09



Life in Assam, through an artistic illusion

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Life is a mosaic reflection of the absence and presence of both reality and the non-existence of thoughts. The human mind here plays a dual role, co-existing with objectivity. The human mind dwells in the subjective world of ideas and concepts, while one exists in the objective world of reality that cannot be directly experienced or fully understood. Hence, the mind struggles to grasp reality within the pool of imagination. This struggle results in a disconnection from reality, which is inevitable; thus, the mind explores the notion of illusion within the said norm of reality. This artistic way of observing life evolves the world we see, which is often coloured by the way we understand it, and what appears beautiful may conceal complexity, while what appears ordinary may contain extraordinary meaning. This idea becomes particularly fascinating when viewed through the cultural landscape of Assam, a land where the echoes of history, the rhythm of nature, the richness of tradition, and the aspirations of modern society coexist in a constantly evolving artistic expression.

The state of Assam holds the key responsibility to maintain integrity within all of North-East India. Assam reflects itself as a painting of different dimensions of existence. These dimensions carry along the memories of civilisations, changing landscapes and transformations. Its beauty inspires literary people and the mode of their longevity of thinking. For instance, the mighty river Brahmaputra that nourishes agricultural fields and sustains livelihoods can also disrupt lives and transform entire landscapes. This artistic illusion of life in the region of Assam vividly portrays both beauty and hardship that lie in the separatist facts in a coaxial plane.

Similarly, “Life is an artistic illusion". It's not just a remark; it is an existential thought. It is an invitation to recognise that human experience is shaped by perception, imagination, emotion and interpretation. Life can be seen as a living composition where realism meets abstraction with the duality of imagination and imperfections. It's just the sharing of an identical perspective with individual execution and diverging thoughts. The canvas of life is never completely finished. Every experience adds a new mark, every decision alters the composition, and every new perspective changes how we interpret what came before. The tradition of figure drawing, seen throughout classical and contemporary art, celebrates the human form as an expression of nature, identity and existence. What may be judged by society as mere nudity can, through an artist's thoughtful vision, become a study of beauty, vulnerability, strength and the extraordinary design of the human body. This reminds us that the meaning of an artwork often lies not only in what is depicted, but also in the intention, knowledge and sensitivity with which it is created.

The historical legacy of Assam further reveals how life can be understood as an evolving artwork. The Ahom kingdom, which endured for nearly six centuries, left an enduring impression on the region's political history, architecture, cultural traditions, and collective identity. Monuments such as Rang Ghar and the archaeological remains of Sivasagar stand as reminders of a past that continues to influence the present. Yet history is never simply the past preserved in stone. Every generation interprets it differently, drawing inspiration, pride, lessons, and sometimes difficult questions from inherited memories. The past can appear like a glorious painting when viewed through the lens of achievement, but a deeper understanding requires us to examine its complexities as well. Thus, history becomes an artistic illusion not because its events are unreal, but because the meaning we assign to them changes with our perspective and the passage of time.

Assam's cultural heritage offers another powerful expression of this theme. Bihu, Sattriya, traditional handloom weaving, folk music, literature, and indigenous artistic practices reveal how human beings transform everyday life into something meaningful and beautiful. The

movements of Bihu dancers, the melodies of traditional instruments, and the intricate patterns woven into Assamese textiles demonstrate that art is not confined to galleries or museums. It exists in ordinary experiences, in celebrations, in labour, in relationships, and in the transmission of traditions from one generation to another. Through such expressions, life becomes more than survival; it becomes a shared act of creation.

Modern technology and social media add another layer to this artistic illusion. The beauty of Assam can be captured in photographs of the Brahmaputra at sunset, the celebrations of Rongali Bihu, or the green expanses of tea gardens. These images can introduce the region to the world and inspire appreciation for its heritage. Nevertheless, a photograph can never contain the whole reality of a place. It cannot fully communicate the experiences of the people who live there, the difficulties they encounter, or the changes occurring beyond the frame. Similarly, the online image of a successful individual rarely reveals the entire journey behind that success. Whether applied to a landscape, a culture, or a human life, the distinction between representation and reality reminds us that every picture is selective. What is visible may be beautiful and true, yet it is never necessarily complete. Illusion is often created through perspective, contrast, light, shadow and the manipulation of space. A skilled painter can make a flat surface appear three-dimensional, while a surrealist can place familiar objects in unfamiliar settings to challenge our understanding of reality.

Life operates in a similar manner. Two individuals may experience the same event yet interpret it differently. One may see a rainy day as an inconvenience, while another sees it as a moment of peace and inspiration. The event remains the same, but the emotional meaning changes.

This relationship between perception and reality is central to artistic expression. The artist does not merely reproduce what the eyes observe; the artist communicates what the mind and heart experience. Therefore, the illusion of life is not necessarily a falsehood. It is the subjective reality through which we understand the world.

Assam's journey from inherited legacies to emerging horizons demonstrates that life is neither a fixed masterpiece nor a meaningless illusion. It is an evolving creation shaped by history, nature, culture, human effort, and the dreams of future generations. The task is not to preserve every image unchanged or to chase every new vision blindly, but to understand what deserves to be carried forward, what must be questioned, and what needs to be created anew.

Perhaps the greatest lesson is that life resembles a work of art because its meaning is never entirely predetermined. Assam's past provides the foundation, its present supplies the colours, and its future remains an unfinished canvas. The true art of living lies in appreciating the beauty of the picture without ignoring its imperfections, honouring the reality beneath its appearances, and having the courage to create a future more meaningful than the illusions that first inspired us.

The artistic illusion of life emerges from this mixture. We do not experience existence as a neutral collection of facts; we experience it through emotional colour. Life as a masterpiece of different art forms. Life's artistic illusion becomes more meaningful when examined through the different disciplines of Fine Arts. Each art form provides a distinct language for interpreting human existence.

10



The Looms of Assam, the Dreams of Tomorrow:

How Traditional Handloom Can Create Modern Businesses, Empower Women and Preserve Cultural Identity

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Assam is a land of rich culture, beautiful traditions and skilled artisans. Among its most precious cultural treasures is its handloom industry. The sound of the loom the colourful threads, and the careful hands of weavers tell stories of Assam's history and identify. From the elegant Muga silk to the soft texture of Eri silk and the traditional designs of the Assamese Gamusa every piece of cloth reflects a part of the state's heritage.

However, handloom is not only about preserving the past. It also has the potential to create new businesses, support women, attract modern customers, and build a brighter future for Assam. With the right ideas, skills, and support, traditional weaving can become a source of livelihood, pride, and economic growth.

The Beauty of Assam 's Handloom Tradition

Assamese handloom is famous for its uniqueness and cultural importance. The Mekhela Chador, Gamusa, and traditional silk garments reflect the creativity and hard work of local weavers. Muga silk is valued for its natural golden colour, while Eri silk is admired for its soft texture and traditional significance. Pat silk is also known for its smooth texture and elegant appearance.

Sualkuchi, often called the silk village of Assam, is an important centre of silk weaving. Weaving skills are passed from one generation to another, preserving traditional designs and techniques. For many families, weaving is not simply a profession; it is part of their identity and way of life.

Despite its cultural value, the industry faces challenges such as low earnings, competition from machine-made products, rising production costs, and limited access to larger markets. Addressing these challenges is necessary to protect the future of Assamese handloom.

Turning Traditional Skills into Modern Businesses

Today, traditional handloom products can reach far beyond local markets. Social media platforms, online shopping websites, and digital payment systems have created new opportunities for small businesses. A weaver who once sold products only in a nearby market can now display them to customers across India and even abroad.

For example, a small business selling handmade Mekhela Chadors, Gamusas, or Eri silk scarves can promote its products through Instagram, Facebook, or an online store. Attractive photographs, clear product descriptions, and honest information about the weaving process can help build customer trust.

Young people can also contribute by creating handloom brands, designing modern clothing, and developing attractive packaging. Traditional Assamese designs can be used in shirts, bags, jackets, home decorations, and other everyday products. In this way, handloom can connect its cultural roots with modern lifestyles.

Empowering Women Through Weaving

Women have played a major role in Assam’s handloom industry for generations. In many households, weaving is closely connected with women’s daily lives, skills, and creativity. However, their hard work does not always bring them a fair income or enough recognition.

By organising self-help groups, cooperatives, and small women-led businesses, weavers can work together, share resources, and reach larger markets. Training in business management, digital marketing, and financial literacy can help women manage their own enterprises and make independent economic decisions.

Imagine a group of women in a village producing beautiful traditional Gamusas and silk garments and selling them directly to customers. If they receive fair prices for their work, their earnings can support their children’s education, household needs, and future plans.

Supporting women weavers is therefore not only about protecting a traditional skill. It is also about creating opportunities, building confidence, and strengthening rural families.

Attracting the New Generation of Customers

Young customers often look for products that are fashionable, comfortable, meaningful, and unique. To attract them, handloom businesses need to understand their preferences without losing the originality of traditional designs.

Designers can combine Assamese motifs with contemporary styles. For instance, a traditional Gamusa pattern could appear on a modern tote bag, while Muga silk could be used to create elegant accessories or contemporary outfits. Such products can make Assamese handloom appealing to people who may not usually buy traditional clothing.

Awareness campaigns in colleges, exhibitions, fashion shows, and cultural festivals can also introduce young people to the value of handmade products. When customers understand the time, effort, and skill behind a piece of cloth, they may appreciate it more and become willing to support local artisans.

Preserving Culture while Protecting the Environment

Handloom is an important part of Assam's cultural identity, and its preservation is essential for future generations. Every traditional motif and weaving technique carries memories of the people and communities that developed it.

At the same time, sustainable production can make the industry more responsible. Using locally available materials where appropriate, reducing fabric waste, and choosing environmentally considerate dyes and production methods can help reduce its environmental impact.

Traditional silk and handwoven fabrics can also encourage more thoughtful consumption. Instead of treating clothing as something to use briefly and discard, customers can value durable products and the craftsmanship behind them.

The Challenges and the Way Forward

Despite its potential, Assam's handloom industry needs practical support. Weavers require fair wages, access to affordable raw materials, better marketing facilities, and protection against misleading claims about machine-made products being handmade.

Government schemes, financial assistance, design workshops, and easier access to markets can help address these problems. Partnerships between weavers, designers, entrepreneurs, and educational institutions can also bring fresh ideas into the industry.

Consumers have a role to play as well. Buying genuine handloom products, checking their origin, and sharing information about local artisans can help strengthen the market. Every purchase from a genuine weaver can contribute to preserving a valuable skill and supporting a livelihood.

Conclusion

The future of Assam's handloom industry lies in finding a balance between tradition and innovation. The loom does not need to remain only a symbol of the past; it can also become a symbol of opportunity, entrepreneurship, and progress.

With modern business ideas, fair opportunities for women, creative designs, and greater public awareness, Assamese handloom can reach new markets while preserving its cultural roots. Behind every Mekhela Chador, Gamusa, and silk garment is a story of hard work, creativity, and heritage that deserves to be valued.

The looms of Assam carry more than threads. They carry the dreams of weavers, the strength of women, the hopes of young entrepreneurs, and the promise of a brighter tomorrow

11



Beyond the Billboards:

The Invisible Architects of the Economy

-Shyamonika Kalita

B.A 1st Semester

Economics Department

A city's success is often advertised through its tallest buildings, illuminated billboards, shopping complexes and expanding commercial spaces. Guwahati, too, is witnessing a transformation shaped by modern infrastructure, growing businesses and changing lifestyles. Yet, behind this visible picture of progress exists another story, one that rarely finds its place in advertisements or development narratives. It is the story of ordinary people whose everyday labour keeps the city's economy alive.

Before the city becomes busy, a vegetable vendor has already arranged the day's produce, a tea seller has prepared the first kettle, and sanitation workers have begun cleaning the streets. As the day progresses, auto-rickshaw drivers transport commuters, delivery partners navigate crowded roads, domestic workers enter households, and roadside food vendors serve customers from different walks of life. Their activities may appear small and disconnected, but together they form an essential network of economic exchange.

These individuals are, in many ways, the invisible architects of Guwahati's economy. Unlike large corporations and established businesses, their contribution is not always reflected in prominent economic indicators. Nevertheless, they generate employment, support household consumption, facilitate the movement of goods and services, and sustain the informal economy. A roadside food stall, for instance, does more than sell a meal; it may support a family, employ an assistant and purchase ingredients from local suppliers. Thus, even a small economic activity can create a chain of livelihoods.

However, behind this contribution lies a reality of uncertainty. Many workers depend on daily earnings, without fixed salaries, paid leave or adequate social security. Their income is often influenced by factors beyond their control. Heavy rainfall can reduce a vendor's sales, rising fuel prices can affect a driver's earnings, and changing consumer preferences can threaten a small business. For these workers, economic fluctuations are not merely statistics discussed in reports; they are realities that directly influence their ability to meet household expenses.

There is also an interesting contradiction in modern urban life. We increasingly value convenience, affordability and speed, yet rarely consider the labour that makes these services possible. We expect clean streets, quick deliveries, accessible transport and inexpensive meals, but the people providing these services often remain economically vulnerable. This raises an important question: can a city truly be considered developed if the people sustaining its everyday economy are excluded from the benefits of that development?

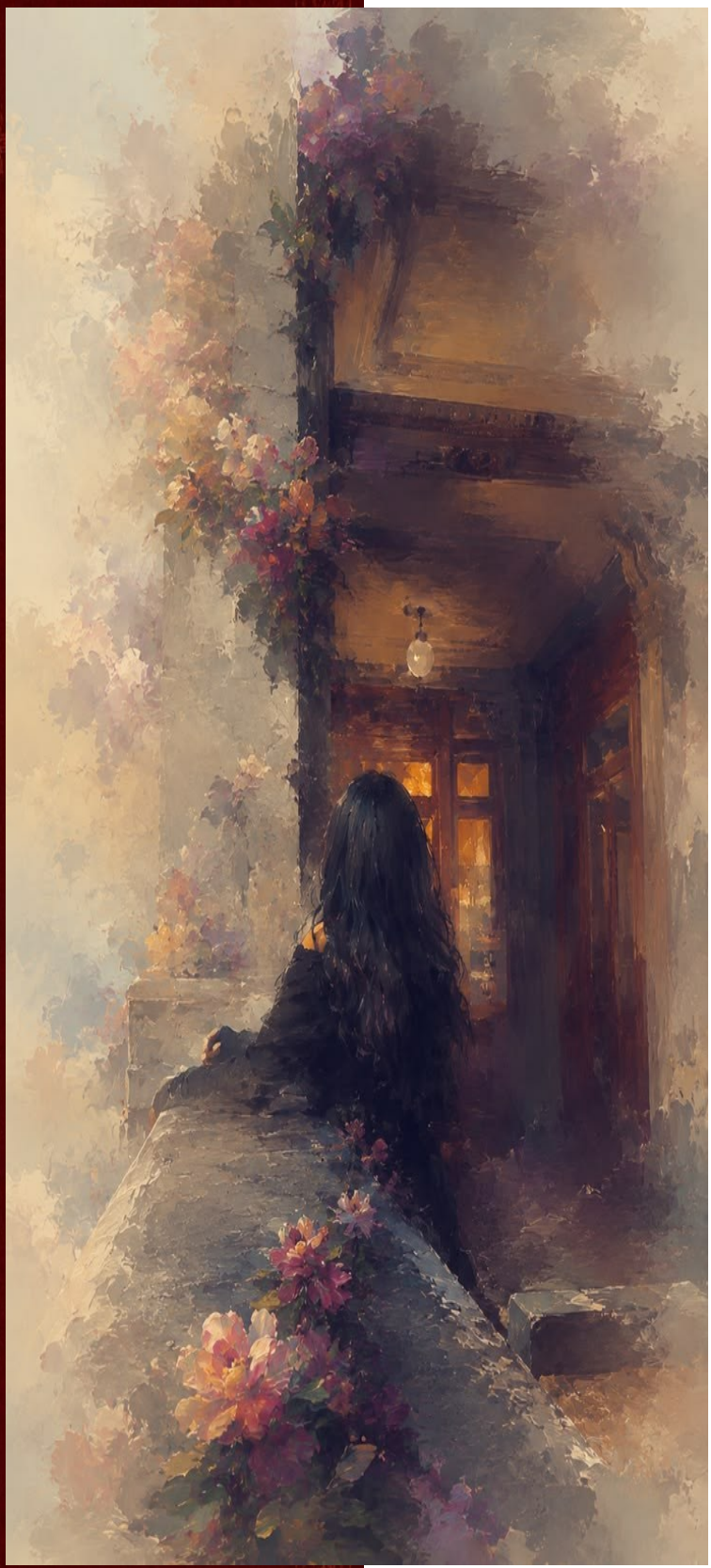
As Guwahati continues to expand, its economic priorities must extend beyond physical infrastructure and commercial investment. Accessible healthcare, social security, better working conditions, organised vending spaces and affordable housing are equally important. Recognising informal workers is not simply an act of appreciation; it is an essential step towards building a more inclusive urban economy.

Perhaps the real strength of Guwahati cannot be measured by its billboards, buildings or commercial achievements alone. It must also be measured by the dignity of its workers, the security of their livelihoods and the opportunities available to them. After all, billboards may advertise a city's progress, but it is the hands behind them that make progress possible

Echoes of Ink



How Shall I Name A Woman?



Tell me, how shall I name a woman?
Is she the moon that softens the night,
Or the sun that refuses to lose its light?
Is she the river that bends around stone,
Or the mountain that stands on its own?

She is the scholar, the dreamer, the guide,
The quiet strength that storms cannot hide.
The rebel who questions, the artist who feels,
The fearless heart that refuses to kneel.

She can be gentle, she can be wild,
A fierce revolution, a laughing child.
She can forgive, yet choose to depart,
Carry a thousand storms inside her heart.

She is the woman who dares to begin,
Who falls, feels afraid, yet rises again.
And the one who cries when no eyes can see,
Still finding the courage to simply be.

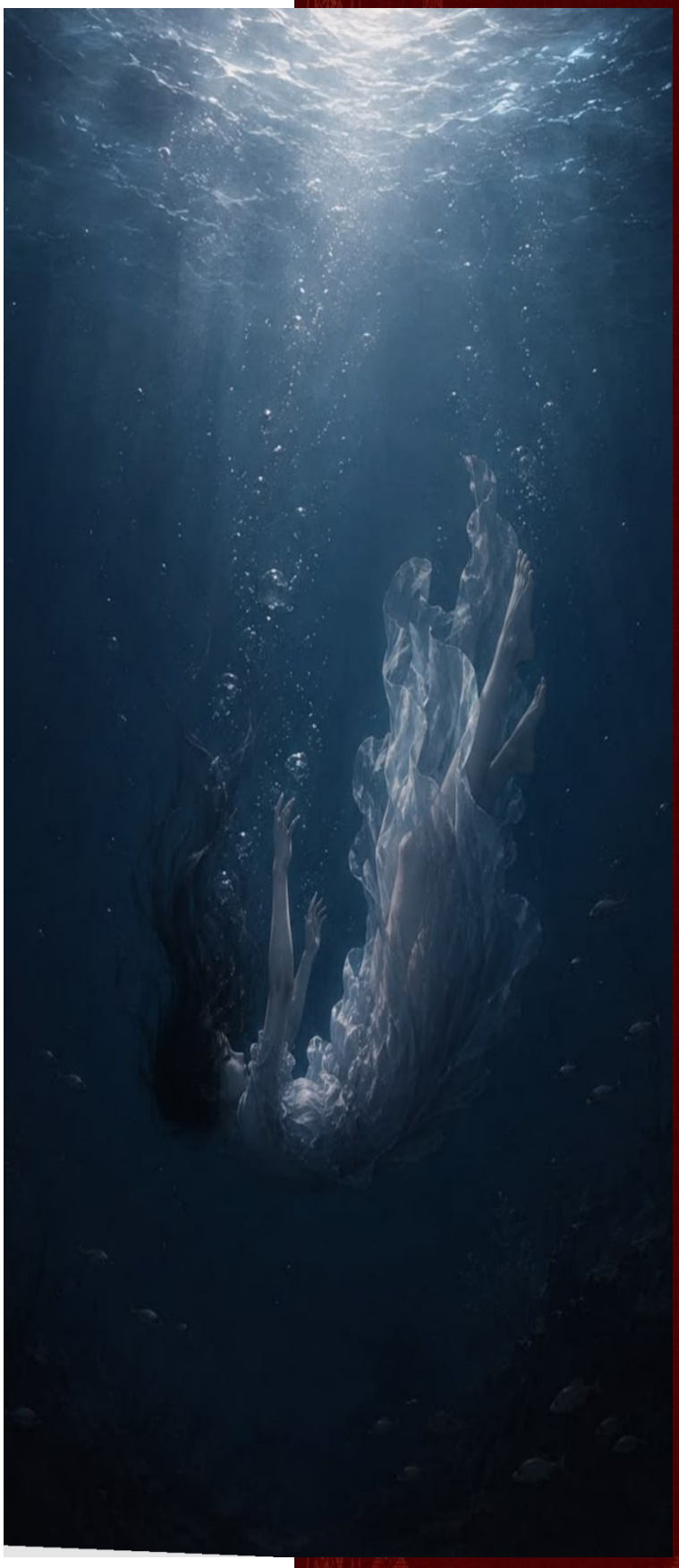
She may be a daughter, a mother, a wife,
But no single role can contain her life.
She owes no world a particular face,
No perfect smile, no prescribed grace.

So, tell me again, how shall I name a woman?
The fire, the ocean, the boundless sky?
The courage to stand, the freedom to fly?
No, for to name her is to draw a line
Around a spirit never meant to confine.

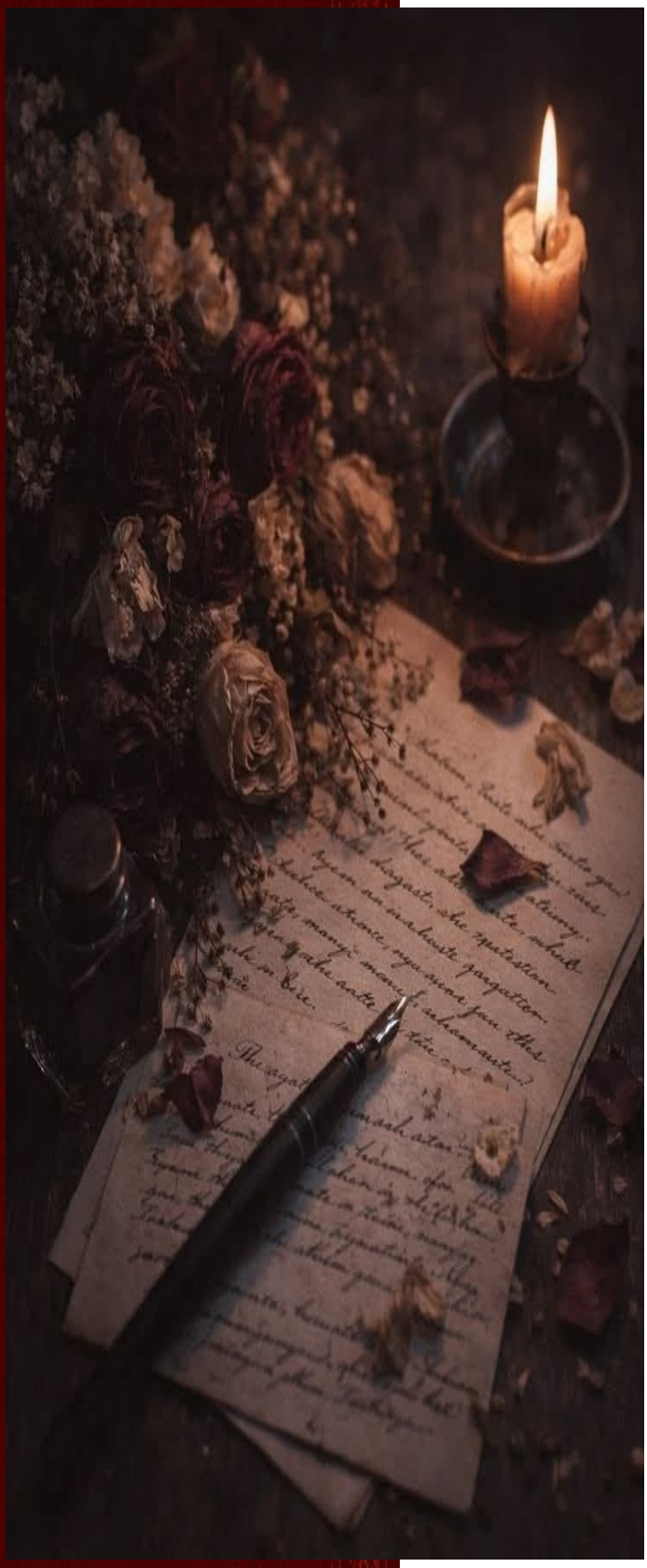
Let her be gentle. Let her be strong.
Let her be right. Let her be wrong.
Let her be everything she has ever been,
Everything yet unseen, everything in between.

And if you must name her, then name her this:
A life that belongs to herself.
A voice that no world can erase.
A thousand different stories,
And the freedom to write them at her own pace.

-Zahin Ali



The things we don't choose



To choose is to leave something behind,
Sometimes we regret, sometimes we don't,
But it's the universal law — we leave one to get another.
The stream I chose, was another discipline I left.
The major I chose; was another subject I can't study anymore.
The lecture I skipped, was time I spent having fun.
The job I chose, was a city I left behind.
The marriage I chose, was my dream I gave up on.
The life I chose, was the life I dreamt of.
The last breath I took, was my entire life I lived.
Everything starts with a cost,
A cost that we don't realise,
A cost that some end up regretting,
And some end up thanking the universe for.
The daily scenes of our lives, so simple, so subtle,
Are often what we pay for
By leaving the other behind.
In life we cannot have everything,
It all starts with a cost, only to end with it.
For many, it's the law of nature,
But economists call it opportunity cost.
Life is full of sacrifices,
But it doesn't have to be always loud.
Some sacrifices are made without realisation,
Some we make without a doubt.

-Snigdho Jonak Kashyap

জীৱনৰ মায়া



মুক্ত জীৱনৰ বিলুপ্ত ধাৰা
বিশ্লেষণ হৈ ৰ'ল নিৰ্গম ছায়া ।।
চিনাকি পৰ্দাৰ উল্লেখিত মায়া,
উদ্ধাৰ কৰোঁ আহা বিচাৰৰ সত্য
হয়তো আপোন মোৰ এই সাহিত্য।।
চৰ্চা কৰোঁ আহা আনৰ ক্ৰিয়া,
মোৰ এই জীৱন
মানৱতাৰ হত্যা .....
ইতিবাচক প্ৰেমক দিয়া সত্যৰ বিচাৰ
জন্ম কৰোঁ আহা নেতিবাচক সমাৰ।
হয়তো, হেৰালো চাগে নিজ তত্ত্ব,
ভৱিষ্যতৰ হয়তো এই যেন অন্ত।
সকলো দিগন্তৰ আঁৰত, প্ৰাৰ্থনা জনালোঁ
অশ্ৰুতৰ নৱৰসৰ অৰ্থত।

-Swapnalee Patowary

What the Marksheet Doesn't Show



Somewhere in Ganeshguri, a student
is stretching one packet of noodles into two meals.
Somewhere in Paltan Bazaar, a student
is counting the bus fare twice,
as if the coins might change their minds.

A student in Jalukbari swallows hunger quietly
so it will not wake the wall.
A student in Maligaon laughs into the phone,
"I've eaten, Ma,"
and the laugh is the hungriest thing in the room.

In a hundred rooms, nine feet by seven,
a lamp stays awake
so that a dream can sleep.
The stairwell keeps their midnight footsteps.
The window keeps the whole of their homesickness.

And far away, in Silchar, in Jorhat, in Dibrugarh,
a mother sets her phone beside the plate
and lets the rice go cold,
asking only, "Did you reach safely?"
because love has no other way to cross three hundred kilometres.

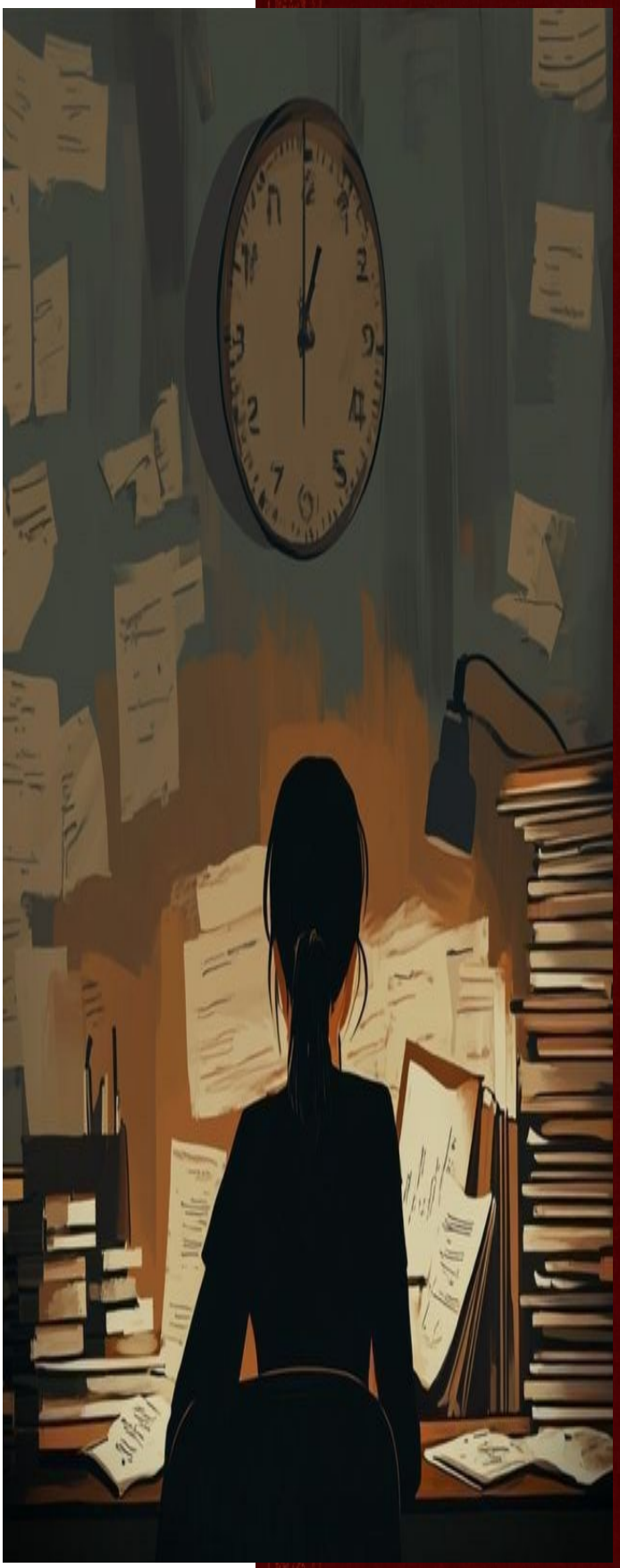
The Brahmaputra passes under the bridge,
wide and unhurried,
and does not ask any of them for a rank.
It carries every hill it ever drank,
and still it moves.

Then one morning, a number arrives.
Two marks short. The width of a thumbnail.
And the world that clapped at the station
measures the thumbnail
and forgets the mountain
carried up the stairs, night after night, in silence.

They sing of the mother who sold her bangles,
and rightly so.
But who sings of the child who sold her laughter,
her cousin's wedding, her sleep, her festivals,
in small instalments,
and never sent the bill?

A student in Ganeshguri closes the book at three.
A student in Paltan Bazaar opens it again.
The mark can be earned again.
What it cost to reach this city cannot be bought,
and it is still here, in every room, awake.

Somewhere a bus pulls out at six,
and on it sits a whole country's quiet courage,
holding the rail with one hand
and a mother's voice with the other,
while far away, at a small station,
a hand stays raised, long after the train has grown small.



-Shresta Acharjee

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ইউকেলিপ্টাছ হোৱাৰ সপোন

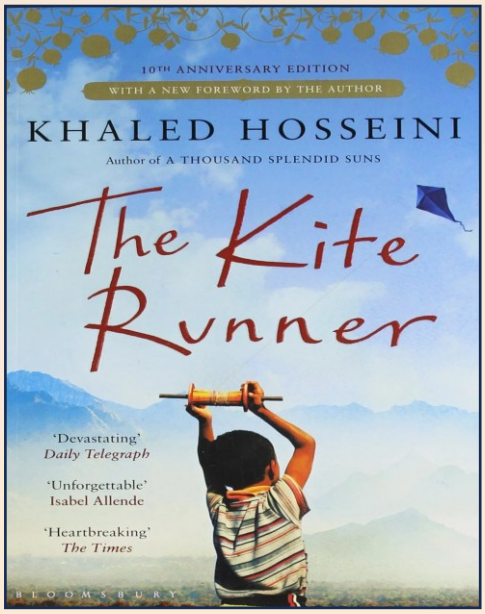


জুবিন দা, তুমি শিকালা মোক
মুকলি আকাশ ভাল পাবলৈ,
এজাক বতাহৰ মাজতো
নিজৰ সপোন জীয়াই ৰাখিবলৈ।
মই ইউকেলিপ্টাছ হব খোজোঁ
আকাশলৈ মূৰ তুলি,
বতাহে যিমানেই জোকাৰি নাযাওঁক
শিপা ৰাখিম মাটিতে গাঁথি।
মই চৰাই হ'ব খোজোঁ
নীল আকাশত উৰিবলৈ,
নদীৰ দৰে বৈ যাব খোজোঁ
নিজৰ বাট নিজে বিচাৰি ল'বলৈ।
জুবিন দা, তোমাৰ গানৰ মাজত
মই এখন সেউজীয়া পৃথিৱী পাওঁ,
য'ত মানুহে মানুহক ভাল পায়
য'ত সুখবোৰ ভগাই ল'ব পাৰি।
বুকুত মৰম সাৱটি লৈ
এখন সুন্দৰ পৃথিৱী গঢ়িব পাৰি।
মই ডাঙৰ মানুহ হব নোখোজোঁ
কেৱল এটা সুন্দৰ মন বিচাৰোঁ,
আনৰ দুখত কান্ধ পাতি দিবলৈ
মানুহৰ মাজত মানুহ হৈ ৰ'বলৈ।
আৰু যেতিয়া এদিন
জীৱনৰ বাটত ভাগৰি পৰিম,
তেতিয়া তোমাৰ গানৰ সুৰত
নিজকে আকৌ বিচাৰি পাম।
জুবিন দা, মই উৰিব খোজোঁ—
কিন্তু শিপা হেৰুৱাই নহয়।
মই আকাশ চুব খোজোঁ—
কিন্তু মাটিৰ গোন্ধ পাহৰি নহয়।

-Sneha Medhi

BOOKS & BEYOND





The Kite Runner:

For You a Thousand Times Over

By Khaled Hosseini

Book Review by

Snigdho Jonak Kashyap

Some books leave us with memories; others leave behind a sadness that stays long after the final page. Khaled Hosseini's The Kite Runner is one such book. Set against the turbulent history of Afghanistan, it explores friendship, betrayal, guilt and redemption, reminding us that behind every war and political upheaval are human lives, broken families and relationships that time cannot always repair.

At the heart of the novel is the friendship between Amir and Hassan, two boys separated by social and ethnic differences but connected by their childhood. Hassan's unwavering loyalty, expressed through the words "For you, a thousand times over," is one of the most moving aspects of the story. His love for Amir is sincere and selfless, which makes his suffering all the more heartbreaking. What hurts most is knowing that Hassan continues to carry his pain quietly, while the person he loves struggles to confront the consequences of his own actions.

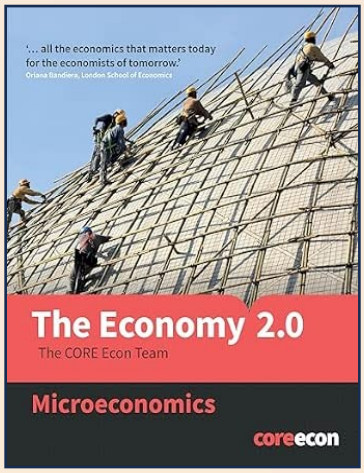
Yet, Amir is not simply a boy who betrays his friend. He is also a child desperately seeking his father's love and approval, so consumed by his longing for affection that he fails to recognise the gravity of his choices. His actions towards Hassan are cruel and cannot be justified, but his guilt reveals a boy who understands, even if too late, that he has done something deeply wrong. His attempts to escape that guilt only make it follow him into adulthood. Hosseini makes us confront an uncomfortable truth: understanding someone's weakness does not excuse their actions, but it allows us to see the human being behind them.

The revelation that Hassan is Amir's half-brother makes their story even more tragic. They were connected by a bond neither fully understood, yet secrets, prejudice and betrayal kept them apart. The truth arrives too late to give them the life they might have shared.

Amir's decision to bring Hassan's son, Sohrab, to safety becomes his attempt at redemption. He cannot undo the past or make amends to Hassan, but he can refuse to abandon his son. His journey reminds us that guilt alone cannot repair our mistakes; we must find the courage to act differently.

What stayed with me most about The Kite Runner was the enduring power of Hassan's love and Amir's struggle to become someone worthy of it. The novel shows us that some mistakes cannot be undone and some losses cannot be repaired. Yet, even when the past cannot be changed, we can choose what we do with the chances that remain.

Perhaps redemption begins when we finally find the courage to stand beside someone we once failed. And perhaps some words, like "For you, a thousand times over," remain with us because they remind us of the love we should never take for granted.



The Economy 2.0: Microeconomics

Book Review by

Sagarika Das

The Economy 2.0: Microeconomics, written by the CORE Econ Team, is a modern textbook that explains how economies work and how economic decisions affect people and society. Published in 2024 by Hackett Publishing Company, it presents microeconomics through real-world examples, evidence and clear economic models. Instead of treating economics only as a collection of theories and diagrams, the book connects the subject with important issues such as inequality, climate change, technological progress, employment and the behaviour of firms and consumers.

The book is organised into ten units that examine the economy from different perspectives. It begins by exploring prosperity, inequality and the limits of the planet, helping readers understand how living standards have changed and why the benefits of economic growth are not shared equally. It then discusses technology and incentives, scarcity and well-being, strategic interactions, institutions and the distribution of power and resources.

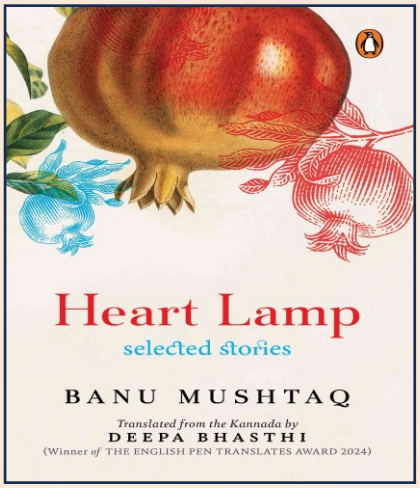
Later units focus on firms and their employees, firms and their customers, supply and demand, lending and borrowing, and the social effects of private economic decisions. The book also considers situations in which markets may not produce the best outcomes for society, encouraging readers to think about the role of institutions and public policy.

One of the book's greatest strengths is its connection between economic theory and real-life problems. Concepts are introduced through evidence and examples, which can make difficult ideas easier to understand and remember. The book also gives attention to issues that are highly relevant today, including income inequality, environmental challenges, innovation and working conditions.

Another strength is its modern approach to teaching economics. Readers are encouraged not only to learn models but also to question their assumptions, examine evidence and consider how well a model explains the real world. The book is useful for students because it provides a broad understanding of microeconomics while showing why the subject matters beyond examinations and classrooms.

Although the book is designed for introductory learners, some sections may require careful reading because they include graphs, data and economic models. Students who are unfamiliar with basic mathematics may need help from a teacher or additional explanations. The book's broad discussion of social and environmental issues is valuable, but readers looking specifically for a traditional, formula-focused textbook may find its approach different from what they expect. Working through the examples and exercises can help readers overcome these difficulties.

Overall, The Economy 2.0: Microeconomics is an informative and relevant textbook that presents economics as a subject closely connected to everyday life. Its emphasis on evidence, contemporary challenges and the relationship between individual decisions and social outcomes makes it more than a conventional introduction to economic theory. It encourages readers to consider not only how markets function but also who benefits from economic activity and what happens when private choices affect others.



Heart Lamp:

A Collection of 12 Short Stories

By Banu Mushtaq

Book Review by

Mandira Smita Borah

Heart Lamp is a collection of twelve short stories by Banu Mushtaq which had been originally written in Kannada and translated into English by Deepa Bhasthi. The book won the International Booker Prize in 2025 by not just bringing global recognition to stories rooted in the everyday lives of Muslim women in southern India but has also proved to be encouraging for Indian regional literature and translation too.

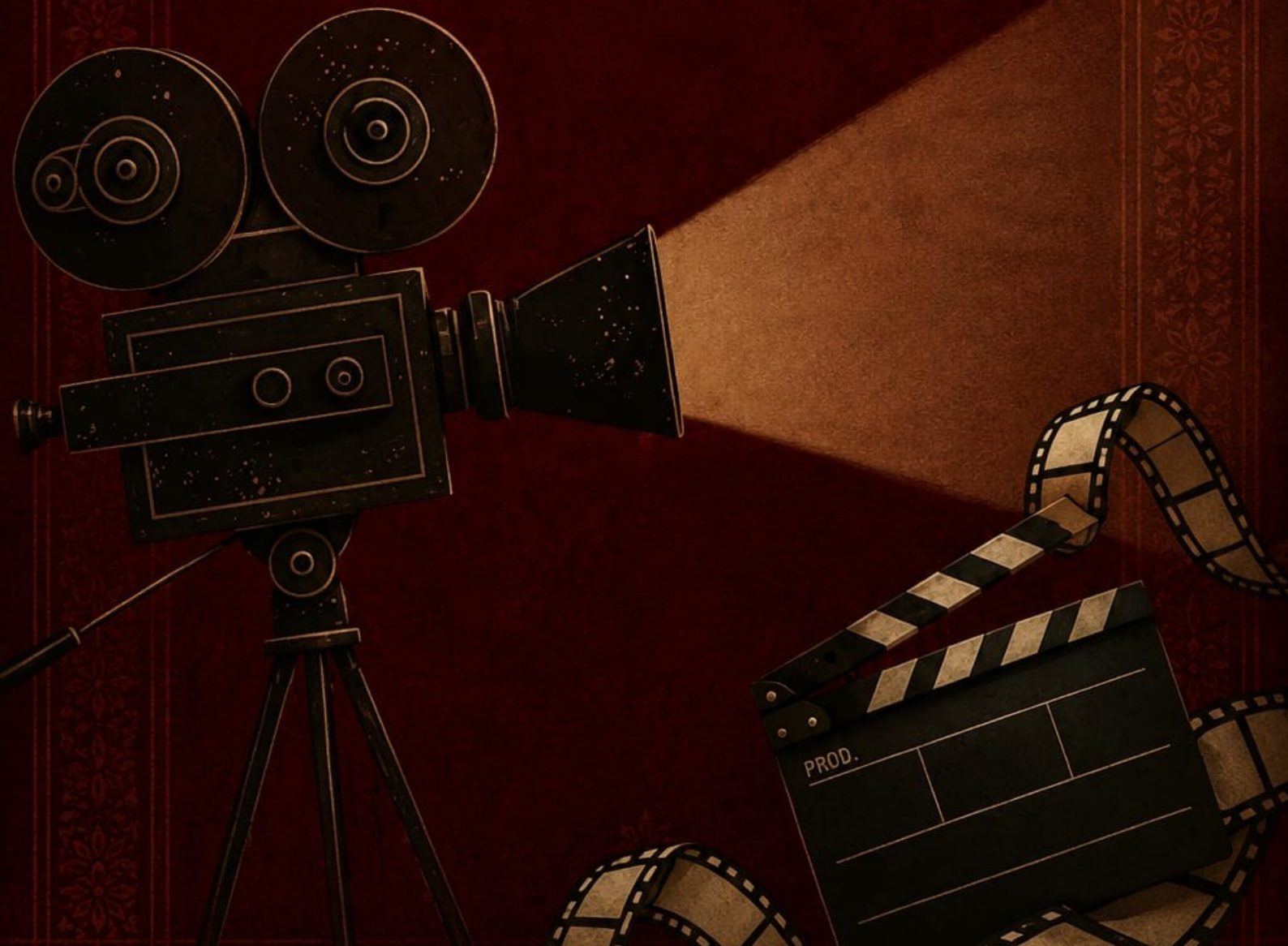
Set within Muslim communities in southern India, the stories explore the lives of women and girls navigating family expectations, societal restrictions, religious conservatism and highly patriarchal traditions. Through mothers, daughters, grandmothers and wives, she reveals how deeply social expectations can influence a woman's choices, dignity and freedom. Mushtaq's book portrayed through their characters, the casual patriarchal cruelty of some Muslim men often pointing out to their orthodoxical hypocrisies towards women (their wives, daughters, mothers etc.). One great example for this is the character of "Mutawalli Saheb" from the story "Black Cobras". It grated when Mushtaq's female characters- Oppressed, Depressed and Suppressed and constantly being forced to have children or limited to their homes or abandoned by their husbands for younger, prettier wives - fit the classic mould of "women in rescue".

As a girl myself who's just stepped into the transition from teenage to adulthood, there were some instances in this book which left me shocked to the core, thinking how so many girls exactly of my age are living such a different life than me. Many have even accepted this Orthodoxical and stereotypical bubble of the society disguised as Tradition and Normality just because they were indirectly brainwashed in the name of "So what? This has been going on for generations and THIS IS THE RIGHT WAY." They never get to see the world outside that bubble until it's too late and the very thought of this left my blood boiling.

What makes this collection powerful is its HONESTY. Mushtaq does not romanticize suffering or portray her characters as helpless victims. Her women are vulnerable, complicated, resilient and, at times fiercely rebellious. The stories remind us that oppression does not always appear in obvious forms; sometimes it survives through ordinary customs, unquestioned beliefs and expectations passed from one generation to another.

Deepa Bhasthi's translation deserves special appreciation for preserving the cultural richness and conversational quality of the original Kannada stories. Although some stories may feel uncomfortable to read, that discomfort is part of the book's strength. It leaves us with an important thought: how many voices remain unheard simply because society has never learned to listen?

Director's Cut: A Review



The Psychic Theory: The Mentalist

By

Aditee Chetia





The Mentalist, created by Bruno Heller and premiered in 2008 revolves around a man who uses human psychology, deception, manipulation, and keen observation to help resolve crime under California bureau of investigation.

Is what we see the reality, or merely the version of reality that we want to believe?

Perhaps we all would like to seek an answer of this, yet the truth is; reality is not perceived in the same way by everyone. While keen observation and manipulation can help one to identify a few things about a person but distinguishing perception from reality requires evidence.

The Mentalist, featuring Patrick Jane, an exceptionally observant consultant Portrayed by Simon Baker is far more than its story. Patrick Jane, a phenomenal human reader and observant, has a deep personal reason behind his intense sense of justice, its intriguing cases lie a deeper exploration of grief that shaped his pursuit of justice. Later it was seen that his own daughter was murdered by a serial killer named ‘Red John’ and that explains his pursuit of Seeking Justice for many other victims of Red John and that is another reason why he does-not want others to see the same reality he did. And that leaves a question in my mind that :

Does losing once’s family to a murder alter the meaning of justice or blurs the line between justice and revenge?

The plot of the show revolves around Patrick Jane helping the CBI to find Red John, a serial killer and kill him to avenge the murder of his wife and daughter. But the real question lies at the heart of, The Mentalist, that is followed by a man named Patrick Jane. For Jane, this is far more than a quest to solve a crime; it is a struggle backed by grief, anger, and an overwhelming desire to confront the man who destroyed his family. As his pursuit unfolds, the distinction between seeking justice and seeking revenge becomes increasingly difficult to define.

The greatest lesson of The Mentalist is that the truth is not always what we see, justice is not always what we seek, and revenge does not always bring the peace we expect. In a world where appearances can deceive and emotions can cloud judgement, the challenge lies not merely in uncovering the truth, but in recognising it without allowing our own desires to distort it.

And in the end, the most intriguing mystery is not how well we can read others, but how realistically we can understand ourselves.

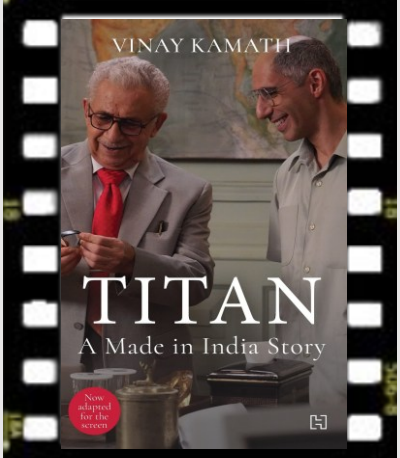
When Vision Turns into History

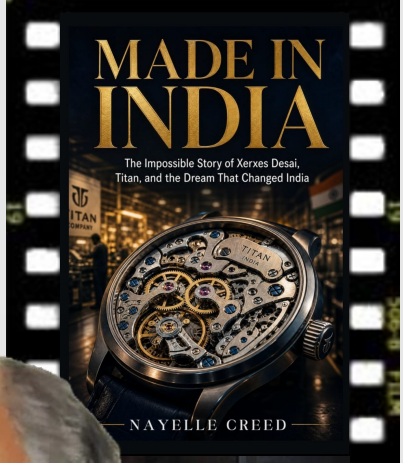
A Review of Made in India: A Titan Story (2026)

By

Zahin Ali









Some dreams begin with a question: why not us? *Made in India: A Titan Story*, directed by Robbie Grewal, follows Xerxes Desai and his team as they attempt to build an Indian watch brand capable of competing globally. Set in an era when foreign watches symbolised prestige, this six-episode series captures the courage of creating something extraordinary against all odds.

Jim Sarbh portrays Xerxes Desai with remarkable conviction, bringing out his ambition, stubbornness and unwavering belief in his vision. Naseeruddin Shah, as J. R. D. Tata, adds warmth and authority, while Vaibhav Tatwawadi brings sincerity to his role as Akash Bansal. Together, the performances make the series as much about people and their beliefs as it is about business.

From an economic perspective, the series offers an interesting portrayal of entrepreneurship and industrial development. Titan's journey highlights the challenges of entering a market dominated by foreign brands, identifying consumer preferences and creating product differentiation. Its emphasis on quality, affordability, design and branding demonstrates how businesses can build a competitive advantage. The series also explores the importance of investment, technology and skilled labour in strengthening domestic manufacturing. Financial constraints, bureaucratic hurdles and production setbacks reveal the difficulties of building an enterprise. More importantly, Titan's growth illustrates how innovation, calculated risks and consumer trust can transform a business into a household name.

What makes the story particularly meaningful is its larger message: world-class products need not come from elsewhere. It celebrates the spirit of *Made in India*, connecting national pride with innovation, industrial capability and economic self-reliance. Although certain developments feel predictable and some conflicts could have been explored more deeply, the strong performances and engaging premise keep the series compelling.

I finished the series with a renewed appreciation for the people behind the brands we often take for granted. We see the finished watch, but rarely the failures, disagreements and determination behind its creation. The series reminds us that progress begins when someone dares to challenge what seems impossible. Some people measure success by the time they save; others create something that stands the test of time. This is a story about the latter.

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When Reality Becomes a Question

By

Mandira Smita Borah









Directed by: Prawaal Raman

Released: 2011

Genre: Psychological Thriller

What happens when the mind begins to question what the eyes see but the heart refuses to believe it? 404: Error Not Found (2011), directed by Prawaal Raman, explores this unsettling question through a story that blurs the boundaries between reality, perception, and belief.

Set in a medical college, the film follows Abhimanyu, the central character of this film. A rational and scientifically minded student who moves into Room 404, where a student had previously died by suicide. Soon, he begins experiencing strange occurrences that challenge his understanding of reality. As the mystery deepens, the film invites us to question whether what he experiences is supernatural or a reflection of the human mind.

What makes this film intriguing is that it does not simply rely on fear or conventional horror. Instead, it builds suspense through psychological conflict and the clash between scientific reasoning and personal experience. The performances, particularly those of Imaad Shah (played the role of Professor Aniruddh) and Nishikant Kamat (played the role of Chris) add depth to the narrative, while the unsettling atmosphere keeps viewers curious about what is truly happening.

Beyond all this,the film also touches upon the darker side of college life, particularly ragging, bullying, and their potential psychological consequences. It reminds us that behind the big walls of educational institutions are young minds carrying their own struggles and fears. The film subtly raises an important question: do we always recognise the emotional suffering of those around us, or do we dismiss it until it is too late?

Although the pacing occasionally feels slow and some explanations may leave viewers wanting more clarity, still the ending that it carries makes it worthy enough for the viewers. Its greatest strength lies in making the audience THINK rather than simply REACT.

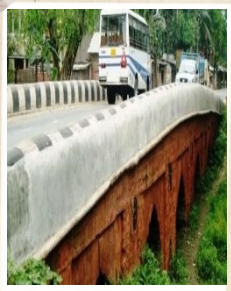
Ultimately, 404: Error Not Found is more than a psychological thriller, it is an exploration of how fragile our understanding of reality can be. Through the incident that happened with Abhimanyu at the end, it leaves the viewers curious about this one thing that - sometimes, the most disturbing mysteries are not the ones hidden in a room, but the ones hidden within the human mind.

Echoes and Enigmas

The Culture & Heritage File



Muga silk is famous for its natural golden sheen and its deep connection with Assam's handloom heritage. Muga silk received a Geographical Indication (GI) tag in 2007, while its logo was registered in 2014.



Built in 1703 during the reign of Swargadeo Rudra Singha, the Namdang Stone Bridge in Sivasagar was cut from a single solid rock. Approximately 60 metres long, it remains a remarkable example of Ahom-era engineering.



Joysagar Tank in Sivasagar was excavated in 1697 by Swargadeo Rudra Singha in memory of his mother, Sati Joymoti. Covering approximately 318 acres, it is a significant example of the Ahom dynasty's historical legacy.



Sagol Kangjei, the traditional horse-mounted game of Manipur, is widely recognised as one of the major origins of modern polo. British officers encountered the game in the nineteenth century and helped introduce it to wider audiences



Khong Kangjei is a traditional form of hockey associated with Manipur. Played with a stick and ball, it reflects the region's rich sporting traditions and the importance of indigenous games in community life

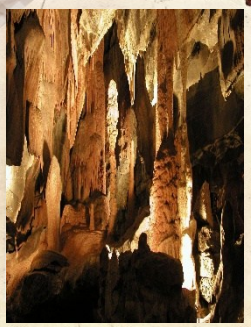


Angkor Wat in Cambodia is widely recognised as the world's largest religious monument. Built in the twelfth century under King Suryavarman II, it was originally dedicated to the Hindu God Vishnu and later became an important Buddhist site.

The Nature & Geography File



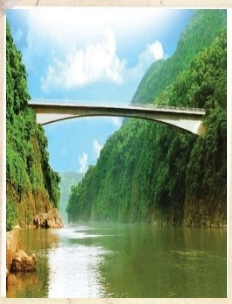
Magnetic Hill near Leh, Ladakh, is famous for the apparent movement of vehicles uphill without engine power. The effect is an optical illusion caused by the surrounding landscape and the road's actual slope, rather than a demonstrated magnetic force.



Krem Liat Prah, in the East Jaintia Hills, is recognised as South Asia's longest natural cave. Its extensive underground passages and enormous chamber, known as the "Aircraft Hangar," reveal the remarkable geological landscape beneath Meghalaya.



Umling La Pass in eastern Ladakh reaches approximately 19,300 feet (5,883 metres) above sea level. Its high-altitude road, constructed by the Border Roads Organisation, became a landmark in mountain-road engineering.



The Jadukata Bridge near Ranikor in Meghalaya is associated with a distinctive pin-connected cantilever design. Its reported 140-metre central span makes it an interesting subject for exploring bridge engineering in India's Northeast.



Brihadeeswara Temple in Thanjavur, Tamil Nadu, was completed around 1010 CE under the Chola king Rajaraja I. Its monumental granite construction and architectural sophistication make it one of India's most celebrated historic temples.

The People & Ideas File



Nek Chand began creating sculptures from discarded materials in Chandigarh around 1958. Working secretly at first, he transformed waste into an extraordinary artistic landscape that became the famous Rock Garden, which opened to the public in 1976.



Anna Mani was a pioneering Indian physicist and meteorologist who helped develop and standardise weather instruments made in India. Her research also advanced the study of solar radiation, atmospheric ozone and wind energy



Kamala Sohonie faced resistance when seeking admission to the Indian Institute of Science because she was a woman. She eventually entered the field of biochemistry and became widely recognised as the first Indian woman to earn a PhD in a scientific discipline.



Birbal Sahni pioneered the study of fossil plants in India. By examining ancient plant remains preserved in rocks, he helped scientists understand past vegetation and geological history. His work also extended to the scientific study of archaeological coin moulds.

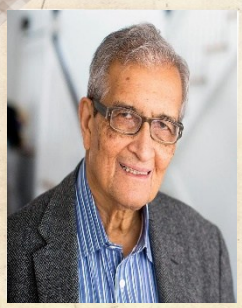


Vikram Sarabhai believed space technology should serve society, not merely scientific ambition. He envisioned using satellite communication to bring education and information to remote communities, helping shape India's space programme around practical developmental needs



Indian science educator Arvind Gupta became known for creating simple educational toys from everyday and discarded materials. His approach shows that children can explore scientific principles through inexpensive hands-on experiments instead of relying entirely on costly laboratory equipment.

The Economics File



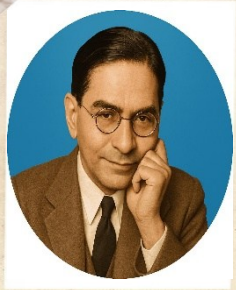
Economist Amartya Sen demonstrated that famines are not caused only by a shortage of food. People's ability to access food through employment, income and resources is equally important. He received the 1998 Nobel Memorial Prize in Economic Sciences for his contributions to welfare economics.



In 1974, the Shri Mahila SEWA Sahakari Bank was established in Ahmedabad to serve self-employed women. Associated with Ela Bhatt's work, it helped women gain access to savings, credit and greater financial independence.



Verghese Kurien helped transform India's dairy sector through cooperative institutions. Operation Flood, launched in 1970, connected rural milk producers with larger markets, increased milk production and strengthened the livelihoods of dairy farmers.



P. C. Mahalanobis founded the Indian Statistical Institute and contributed to India's post-independence economic planning. The Mahalanobis distance, a statistical measure named after him, continues to be used in data analysis.



India has issued ₹10,000 banknotes in the past. First issued in 1938, withdrawn in 1946, reintroduced in 1954 and demonetised again in 1978, it remains the highest denomination banknote ever issued in India.



Long before online banking and electronic transfers, Indian merchants used traditional financial instruments called hundis. They helped facilitate money transfers, credit transactions and long-distance trade, forming an important part of India's historical commercial system.

The Economy Unboxed:

A quiz of curiosity, logic and discovery

1. Paradox of Plenty:

How can a country rich in natural resources still experience widespread poverty and slow economic development?

2. Value of Nothing:

If air is essential for human survival but usually has no market price, while diamonds are not essential but are expensive, which economic paradox explains this?

3. Economics of Free Things:

Why do companies sometimes offer products or services for free and still manage to earn enormous profits?

4. Broken Window Fallacy:

If a broken window creates work for a glazier, why doesn't breaking more windows make society wealthier?

5. Happiness Economy:

Can a country's GDP increase even when the overall happiness or well-being of its people declines?

6. The Invisible Hand:

Which economist introduced the famous concept of the 'Invisible Hand' to explain how individual self-interest can contribute to economic outcomes?

7. Cost of Choice:

What is the economic term for the value of the next-best alternative sacrificed when a decision is made?

Answers

1. Resource Curse
2. Diamond-Water Paradox
3. Freemium / Advertising-based business models
4. Broken Window Fallacy
5. Yes; GDP does not measure all dimensions of well-being
6. Adam Smith
7. Opportunity Cost

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ROBERT E. HALL
STANFORD UNIVERSITY, USA



MICHAEL WOODFORD
COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY, USA

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"Microeconomic foundations of macroeconomic stabilisation"

Their research helps explain how monetary and fiscal policy can smooth economic ups and downs.

- HOW HOUSEHOLD DECISIONS AND EXPECTATIONS INFLUENCE THE ECONOMY
- MACROECONOMIC MODELS TO UNDERSTAND ECONOMIC FLUCTUATIONS
- ROLE OF MONETARY POLICY, INTEREST RATES AND CENTRAL-BANK COMMUNICATION IN STABILISING THE ECONOMY

MACROECONOMICS
MONETARY POLICY
ECONOMIC STABILITY
FISCAL POLICY

ANNOUNCED 12 OCTOBER 2026

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(2026-27)

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Hues and Horizons

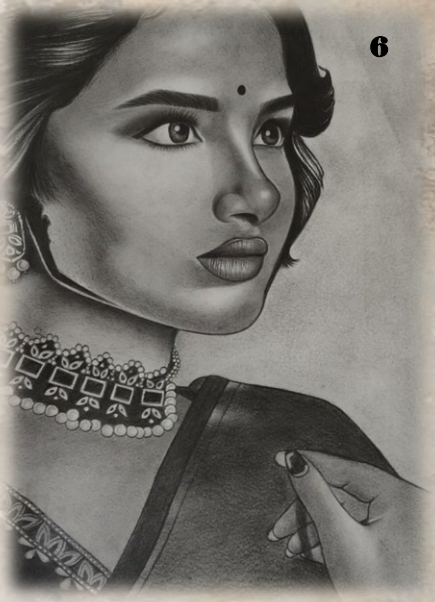












1. By Prachi Kashyap, B.A 3rd Semester, Department of Economics
2. By Swapnalee Patowary, B.A 3rd Semester, Department of Economics
3. By Swapnalee Patowary, B.A 3rd Semester, Department of Economics
4. By Swapnalee Patowary, B.A 3rd Semester, Department of Economics
5. By Swapnalee Patowary, B.A 3rd Semester, Department of Economics
6. By Mandira Smita Borah, B.A 3rd Semester, Department of Economics

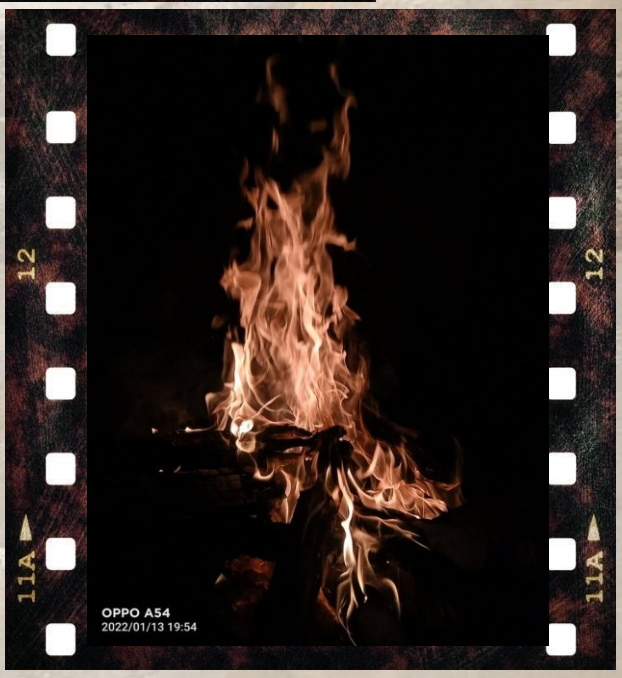
Shutter and Soul















Contributions by

Snigdho Jonak Kashyap

Zahin Ali

Prachi Kashyap

Our Departmental Journey































Achievements of the students of the Department of Economics

A Proud Achievement in Debate

The XXVI All Assam Sarat Chandra Goswami Memorial Inter-College/University Debate Competition 2026, organised by Handique Girls' College, brought together students to exchange ideas on contemporary educational issues, focusing on the practical and pedagogical challenges of implementing NEP 2020.

Representing Handique Girls' College, Aditee Chetia and Mandira Smita Borah, 3rd Semester students of the Department of Economics, secured the Second-Best Team position.

The Department of Economics takes immense pride in their achievement and congratulates both students, wishing them continued success.





A Remarkable Achievement in Art and Creativity

Swapnalee Patowary, a student of B.A 3rd Semester, Department of Economics, Handique Girls' College, Guwahati, earned a place in the Book of World Records for her unique doodle portrait of Zubeen Garg, incorporating 29 handloom textile patterns, 24 Assamese musical instruments and Assamese song lyrics.

Officially recognised on 21 August 2026, her artwork beautifully celebrates Assam's rich cultural heritage through contemporary creativity. The department congratulates her on this exceptional achievement and wishes her continued success.

Department of Economics

Faculty Members



ASSAM

THE LAND OF RED RIVER
AND BLUE HILLS



Assam, the gateway to Northeast India, is a land of rich culture, scenic beauty, and warm hospitality.
From majestic rivers to lush tea gardens, Assam offers a unique blend of nature and tradition.