

BUILDING RESILIENT FUTURES



Gender and Climate Change in North East India

A HANDBOOK
2025

NORTH EAST NETWORK

Editors

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Cover Page: North East Network

Published by North East Network, 2025

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PREFACE

This Handbook, titled *Building Resilient Futures: Gender and Climate Change in Northeast India*, compiles findings, discussions, and recommendations from the two-day Regional Dialogue and Exchange, *Changing Patterns of Climate Change and Gendered Vulnerabilities: Feminist Voices from NE India* held on 10th and 11th of September, 2024, hosted by the North East Network (NEN), Guwahati. The Handbook also includes resources to contextualise and expand upon the learnings from the Regional Dialogue. The primary aim of this Handbook is to offer an informed guide for individuals and organisations to help develop gender-responsive climate action in communities across Northeast India.

The Regional Dialogue was part of NEN's 30-year-old commitment towards the region since the time of its inception. NEN is a women's rights organisation, founded by Dr. Monisha Behal and Dr. Roshmi Goswami on the 22nd of March, 1995 as a part of the preparatory process for the Beijing World Conference on Women in 1995. The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action completes 30 years in 2025 and is an opportune moment to reiterate and emphasise on women's contribution and involvement in decision making related to climate change and environmental policies. In the years following its establishment, the organisation has successfully instituted links with rural and urban women, worked with civil society organisations on issues of development, and various issues of social, gender and environmental concerns in Northeast India. Its vision is to combine activism with advocacy from a liberal feminist perspective, conveying critical gender issues through dialogue and dissemination. NEN extends its work across three states of Northeast India, Assam, Meghalaya and Nagaland and is headquartered in Guwahati, Assam.

The two-day Regional Dialogue convened a diverse group of stakeholders-activists, grassroots workers, researchers, journalists, and community members from across the Northeastern region—who have deeply engaged with work around intersections of climate change and gender. Collaborative discussions, through the shared experiences and insights of participants, sought to contribute in addressing and devising strategies for the unique climate-related challenges faced by women and gender diverse persons.

Climate change represents one of the most critical global challenges of the 21st century, with profound implications on ecosystems, economies, and societies. The impacts of climate change, including extreme weather events, changing precipitation patterns, rising sea levels, and increased temperatures affect communities and individuals worldwide. Yet these effects are not experienced uniformly.

Gender has a critical role to play in how individuals experience and respond to climate change and adapt to its effects. Traditional gender roles, power imbalances in terms of access to resources, and decision-making structures have generationally shaped the differential exposure and response capabilities of men, women, and gender diverse persons. In many regions, gender norms assign women with primary responsibilities associated with sustenance of livelihoods that have kindred relations to natural resources such as securing food, water, and fuel. This responsibility of gathering and providing for their families, in the face of a perilous climate change, intensifies the burden on women who are entrusted with their care. This holds true especially for all developing regions, where access to resources and adaptive capacities are already limited.

Furthermore, adverse climate change impacts have come to amplify existing inequalities that often deepen poverty, by reducing economic opportunities, and restricting access to education and healthcare for women and gender diverse persons. These factors have contributed to a "gendered vulnerability," where the risks associated with climate change are not evenly distributed, and where social and economic marginalisation can heighten the exposure of certain groups.

Structural inequalities further restrict women and gender diverse persons' participation in decision-making processes related to climate adaptation and mitigation. Limited access to land, credit, education, and technology, and ongoing conflicts, hamper their ability to adopt adaptive practices and engage in resilience-building activities. Traditional gender roles and social exclusions, compounded by legal and social discrimination, often result in their absence from leadership roles in climate governance, leaving their perspectives and needs underrepresented in policy decisions. In contrast, when women are involved in decision-making processes, they have contributed valuable insights into resource management, community resilience, and sustainable practices, which have benefitted not only households but entire communities. Therefore, addressing gendered vulnerabilities is not only essential for equity but also for more effective, resilient climate action.

The Handbook is organised into four main sections:

Part I: Setting the Agenda

This section focuses on observations made by keynote speakers Dolly Kikon and Agnes Kharshiing, highlighting critical challenges in the region. These crucial insights range from the social and economic upheavals caused by climate change, the rise in violence against women to the devastating impact of land grabs under the guise of capitalist development. Both speakers envision a future of healing and preservation where resources are safeguarded for generations to come.

Part II: Voices from the Ground

This section captures the lived experiences of communities and grassroots workers that were shared in the course of the Regional Dialogue, arranged thematically into four core action areas. It is intended as a practical guide for researchers, NGOs, and others addressing social issues in the region.

Part III: Summary and Recommendations

In this section, the key insights and recommendations from the Regional Dialogue are summarised, offering actionable steps for individuals and organisations to make meaningful contributions.

Part IV: Catalysts for Change

The final section focuses on how you—the reader—can contribute to gender-sensitive climate solutions. It emphasises that no action is too small to make a difference. From advocating for equitable policies to making conscious everyday choices that can reduce your carbon footprint, every single step matters. Whether it's amplifying marginalised voices, supporting local initiatives, or educating others about sustainable practices, our actions collectively contribute to a ripple effect of positive change.

Do explore resources including posters, NEN's feminist practices and additional readings to supplement your work around climate change and gendered vulnerabilities. We hope this Handbook encourages you to reflect on how we can actively foster sustainable relationships and inspire others to do the same. Together, we can build a more equitable and resilient future for Northeast India and beyond.

—Meenal Tula and Bondita Baruah

Participants in the Regional Dialogue from across the States of Northeast India:

Assam

1. Aatreyee Dhar (Independent Journalist)
2. Amrita Pritam Gogoi (Dibrugarh University)
3. Anasuya Borah (Green Hub)
4. Anurita Pathak Hazarika (NEN)
5. Aparna Chutia (Gramin Mahila Kendra, NEN)
6. Arghadeep Barua (Broadleaf Productions)
7. Babli Basumatary (NEN)
8. Baishali Garg (NEN)
9. Bikash Karmakar (NEN)
10. Bismita Gogoi (Performer, Dhemaji)
11. Bondita Acharya (Purva Bharati Educational Trust)
12. Bondita Baruah (Girijananda Chowdhury University)
13. Bonty Saikia (Green Hub)
14. Bornali Borgohain (Performer, Dhemaji)
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17. Dejna Daulagupu (NESRC)
18. Devlina Chakravorty (Foundation for Social Transformation)
19. Devyani Sarma (Rashtriya Gramin Vikas Nidhi)
20. Dharmeswar Brahma (Aagor)
21. Dhritimoni Mahanta (Research Scholar)
22. Dr Narayan Sharma (Cotton University)
23. Gaurab Talukdar (Freelance Filmmaker)
24. Geolang Muchahary (Aagor)
25. Gitamoni Doloï Performer, Dhemaji
26. Happy Lina Pathak (Roots to Branches Foundation)
27. Hemprabha Betala (Lawyer, HRLN)
28. Himani Gogoi (Performer, Dhemaji)
29. Jollymoni Saikia (NEADS)
30. Kungreiliu Gangmei (Priscilla Centre)
31. Laxmi Chetri (the ant))
32. Manjuwara Mullah (Amrapari)
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35. Monisha Behal (NEN)
36. Moon Bora (Gramin Mahila Kendra, NEN)
37. Namita Gogoi (Performer, Dhemaji)

38. Namita Konwar (NEN)
39. Nandita Deka (Lawyer)
40. Nilanju Dutta (NEN)
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42. Pallab J. Nath (SATRA)
43. Pallabi Hazarika (NEN)
44. Philashon Mahung (NEN)
45. Priyanka Saikia (NEN)
46. Promila Begum (Saneki Weaves, NEN)
47. Puja Devi (Shishu Sarothi)
48. R. Borkotoky (Freelance)
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50. Rashmi Rekha Borah (NEN)
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54. Rituparna Neog (Akam Foundation)
55. Rituparna Patgiri (IIT, Guwahati)
56. Rocktim R. Saikia (SATRA)
57. S. Christie Horam (Priscilla Centre)
58. Samir Bordoloi (Spread NE)
59. Sangeeta Tete (Nawa Bihan Samaj)
60. Sangit (Diya Foundation)
61. Sangita Rai (Bijoyini Network)
62. Shabnam Hafiz (Amrapari)
63. Shafiul Hassan (AMAN Foundation)
64. Shivani Choudhury (Royal Enfield)
65. Siddharth Rasaily (The Midway Journey)
66. Sunayana Baruah (NEN)
67. Supriya Khound (Self-employed)
68. Thuiet Rongpharpi (NEN)
69. Zulfikar Islam (the ant)

Nagaland

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72. Arenla (SEWA)
73. Azungla James (Sisterhood Network)
74. Dolly Kikon (University of California, Santa Cruz)
75. Ethulhi Tsohah (NEN)

76. G Usha Thapa (NEN)
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78. Kewekhau (Performer, Mesulumi)
79. Kezunypeu Tsuhah (Nenterprise)
80. Kopelou (Performer, Mesulumi)
81. Kopenyiu (Performer, Mesulumi)
82. Menuu Tsuhah (Nenterprise)
83. Munulu Chuzho (NEN)
84. Neiteo Koza (Advocate)
85. Neizoteu (Performer, Mesulumi)
86. Nukholo Swuro (LCK, NEN)
87. Séno Tsuhah (Chizami Women's Society, NEN, Nenterprise)
88. T Imdongdangla Phom (Lemsachenlok)
89. Temjenlemla Longkumer (SEWA Bharat, Nagaland)
90. Tshekhroweu (NEN)
91. Tshenyilou Chirhah (NEN)
92. Vilazonuo (NEN)
93. Watikala A Phom (Lemsachenlok)
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Meghalaya

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98. Iaimanda A Rynksai (NEN)
99. Justina Marwein (Farmer)
100. Lambinus Raliang (NEN)
101. Linda Chhakchhuak (Grassroots Options Magazine)
102. Mayfereen Ryntathiang (Grassroot)
103. Merrysha Nongrum (NESFAS)
104. Nancy Olina Laloo (NEN)
105. Riabakin Khonglah (NEN)
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115. Melody Zairemmawi (Rural Women Upliftment Society)
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123. Mimi T Lalhamachhuani (All Mizoram Women Federation)

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