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## Annual Report 2009-2010

### Nanda Talukdar Foundation

This is the most defining year for the Nanda Talukdar Foundation as it has completed some of the most visible and famous work they have done so far. Most important of them is the publication of the coffee table book called “Assam” besides a state wide massive social audit and another unfulfilled mega book on Bamboo.

#### **Assam –The coffee table book**

The Book was formally launched at Guwahati on December 3 by the Chief Minister Assam Tarun Gogoi in a function held at the Guwahati Town Club hall where huge number of intellectuals and luminaries were present. Notable amongst them were Dr M S Prabhakar, Mr Nitya Bora, Additional Chief Secretary Parul Devi Das and Hitesh Deka. Then again at New Delhi, the book was ceremonially presented to the Prime Minister on January 12, 2010 while the international release was done at Hong Kong on January 26. The Prime Minister lauded the unique effort and specially praised the ownership model of the book.



This is the grandest and the first coffee table book on ASSAM. It has been published by Nanda Talukdar Foundation and has 212 pages with a corporate equity model of ownership. The need for a coffee table on Assam has long been felt. Assam has always been wrongly projected. This is a book introducing Assam. The Nanda Talukdar Foundation is the promoter of this unique venture and the stakes of the project has been picked up by a select group of professionals who have strong commitment towards the state.

The total project cost was more than Rs 12 lakh and it is not possible for Foundation to do it alone and it has also decide not to take any institutional or government support for the book. The Foundation has become promoter of the book with 10 per cent share and then

floated an internal Initial Public Offering (IPO) to a select group with each share worth Rs 10,000. Eventually 11 persons picked up 70 per cent share, 15 per cent is the promoter's share and remaining part is the bank loan.

There are 29 chapters from land & people, to history, food, tourism, sports, mobile theatre to biological diversity as well as Assam Agitation. There are also chapters on economy, tea and oil.

This is also the first book in the history where a 1.5 mts long video was made to promote the book and it can be seen in [www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com) by searching ASSAM BOOK.



The share holders or the project members consist of journalists, Assam Govt official, entrepreneur, IIM lectures, engineer and technocrat. They are—Bijay Sankar Bora, Rahul Karmakar, Raj Chakrabarty, Sanjay Barkataki, Sanjeeb Kakoty, Utpal Borpujari, Krishna Talukdar, Prasanta Barkakoti, Abhijit Bhuyan, Ratan Saud and Mrinal Talukdar.

## **Social Audit**



Simultaneously the social audit work of the Chief Minister's Jeevan Jyoti Swaniyojan Yojana is going and all the 22 districts have been covered, field works are tabled, compilation has been done and re-editing was also done and the first draft was submitted to the SIRD. A team of five young research scholars namely Kishore Kalita, Biman Maral, Kaifia Ancer Laskar, Subal Bhagwati, Asesh Nayak, Abdul Gani and Rituparna Tamuly Phukan worked in this massive project where nearly 125 villages were toured touching more than

350 joint liability groups for the study. The book is expected to hit the stand by May 2010.

The SIRD entrusted us for an independent monitoring of one of their biggest effort, the CMJJSY in Assam. We covered all but two hills districts of Assam and it was a daunting task of spanning over eight months, as we traveled no less 250 villages in this course of journey. Majority of these have seen sustainable success while some have been languishing. The initial growth curve, has always been excellent but after some time in

majority of the cases, the curve take a dip. This is basically due to individual effort. There are still loopholes in the system and in some cases the whole concept of group and peer pressure have been defeated. But the irony is that it is the attitude of people of Assam that have stood out as the unshakable stumbling block in the faster rural development. But yet there have been a silent revolution in Assam and with some dedicated effort by all the agencies working in the field there could be dramatic changes to rural Assam by 2020. We are thankful to each of the SIRD members for making the project possible despite their extremely busy schedule.



It has found out that Assam needs a very major intervention at the government level to enhance the mass income generation activities to encourage flow of the money through the rural class which has always been feeling deprived. The cycle of deprivation-agitation-wasteful intervention have been robbing Assam from the real development it has needed over the decades.



The failures have brought in the Chief Minister's Jeevan Jyoti Swaniojan Yojana, a new intervention with radical approach of targeting the people living above the poverty line for better success of the government projects.

The "Chief Minister's Jeevan Jyoti Swaniojan Yojana" is a project for providing avenues of self-employment to the educated unemployed youths of Assam so as to enable them to take up productive activities for income generation through institutional credit, i.e., credit extended by

nationalized banks or any other financial institutions or organizations.

The Project has thus been conceived to explore the self-employment avenues and in the process try to mitigate the growing frustration among the youth which otherwise may spill into the waiting hands of the insurgent elements.

It has been expected that employment opportunities would be created in production, processing, marketing, transportation, creation of infrastructure, supply of quality inputs, small business, small industries, services, in course of implementation of the Project.



Main objectives of the project is to provide financial assistance to educated unemployed youth by providing institutional credit supported by Government subsidy to enable them to undertake productive income generation activities for self employment.

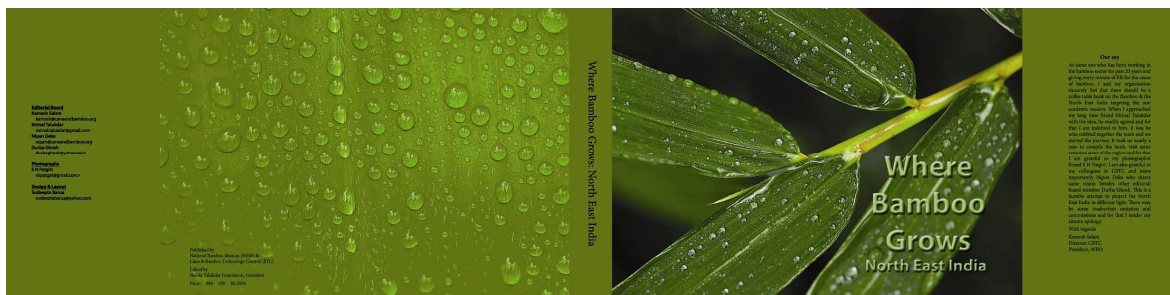
With so many activities targeted, the State Institute of Rural Development (SIRD), was the natural choice for Assam Government for the implementation of the same.

However the problem of convex curve of growth has jeopardized almost all effort as Assam in general has a tendency to slow down after initial rapid success, a syndrome people of Assam have refused to give up over the years.

This intervention is also not an exception of this syndrome with no fault of the project. Drive to reach bigger goal and achieving more in a rightful and honest way has been lacking for most of the people of Assam. Why this... can be another topic of broader study.



## **Bamboo Project**



This is set back for the Foundation. The Foundation was commissioned by the Cane & Bamboo Technology Centre(CBTC) to prepare a book on Bamboo. The book was done, completed, photographs were taken and even lay outs were made and handed over to the CBTC. But because of internal dynamics of the CBTC, it has yet not seen the light of the day.

Mrinal Talukdar  
Secretary  
31.3.2010

