

# Annual Report 2025-26



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## Secretary's message



**Mrinal Talukdar**  
Secretary, NTF

The year 2025–26 marks a phase of consolidation and scale for the Nanda Talukdar Foundation. The successful digitisation of over 2.76 million pages stands out as a defining achievement, reflecting not just volume but the preservation of Assam's intellectual and cultural memory. The focus has now moved towards keyword searchability and AI integration, signalling a shift from storage to meaningful access.

Equally important has been the emergence of Digitising Assam as a community-driven movement. Collaborations with five universities, including Gauhati University and Dibrugarh University, along with technical support from Indian Institute of Technology Bombay, have strengthened both academic and technological foundations. Institutions, volunteers, and individuals across the state have actively contributed, making the initiative truly participatory.

The expansion into new verticals—endangered languages, Xaasipaati, tea, and cinema—has added depth and diversity to the archive. As Secretary, I express satisfaction with this progress, where scale, community participation, and technology have come together to shape a sustainable and forward-looking knowledge ecosystem.

The Foundation expresses its sincere gratitude to **Assam Jatiya Bidyalaya Educational and Socio-economic Trust** for being both a pillar of strength and a guiding mentor, consistently handholding the project through every critical stage.

# Executive Summary

The year 2025–26 marks a phase of consolidation and scale for the Nanda Talukdar Foundation, as Digitising Assam evolved into a structured, community-driven knowledge movement. A key milestone has been the digitisation of over 2.76 million pages of archival material—ranging from rare books and journals to manuscripts and cultural records—now being prepared for keyword searchability and AI-enabled access, marking a shift from preservation to intelligent retrieval.

The initiative has also strengthened its institutional base through collaborations with five universities, including Gauhati University and Dibrugarh University, along with technical integration from Indian Institute of Technology Bombay. With active participation from institutions, libraries, and individuals, the project has firmly emerged as a decentralised yet cohesive community movement. The expansion into verticals such as endangered languages, Xaasipaata, tea, and cinema has further enriched the archive.

## Future Roadmap:

- Xaasipaata Digital Grid: Creation of a unified, open-source repository in collaboration with Gauhati University, Dibrugarh University, Srimanta Sankardev University, Sankardeva Kalakshetra, and Axom Xahitya Xabha, supported by Numaligarh Refinery Limited.
- AI Search Platform: Deployment of AI tools for seamless discovery of Assamese content.
- NEP Intern Network: Structured student engagement for field documentation and digitisation.

The Foundation now stands at the intersection of scale, community participation, and technology, with a clear pathway towards building an accessible and future-ready knowledge ecosystem.



## NTF objectives

- Cultural heritage preservation
- Archival digitisation expansion
- Knowledge access enhancement
- Community participation
- Institutional collaboration building
- Endangered language documentation
- Xaasipaata manuscript conservation
- AI-driven searchability
- Research ecosystem development
- Open-source repository
- Youth engagement App
- NEP backed Intern program

# Programme Implementation Overview



## Digitisation of Archival Resources

NTF undertook multiple digitisation projects across institutions and communities, collaborating with JB College, Sipajhar College, Dibrugarh University, Madhab Dev University, Kamrup Anusandhan Samity (KAS) and rural libraries like Jamuguri. These efforts enabled systematic preservation of rare books, manuscripts, and periodicals.

The work followed standard protocols—high-resolution scanning, metadata tagging, and archival indexing—with a focus on data integrity, accessibility, and long-term preservation. Inclusion of periodicals like Gariyoshi and Rupkotha broadened the archive to contemporary cultural narratives.

These initiatives have resulted in a structured, scalable digital repository supporting research, policy work, and public access.

## Endangered Language Preservation Programme

The Endangered Language Programme under Digitizing Assam stands out as a key intervention of the Nanda Talukdar Foundation during 2025–26, anchored in a strong collaboration with All Assam Students' Union. This partnership enabled deep community access and transformed the initiative into a participatory cultural movement.

The programme focused on three critically endangered languages—Khamyang, Tai Phake, and Singpho—documenting each through a structured approach that combined manuscript digitisation, vocabulary-based audio recording, sentence-level usage, and visual documentation of cultural practices. AASU's grassroots network played a vital role in mobilising communities, identifying knowledge holders, and facilitating fieldwork across locations. The outcome is a robust, multi-layered archive that not only preserves these languages but also creates a foundation for future research, learning, and digital integration.



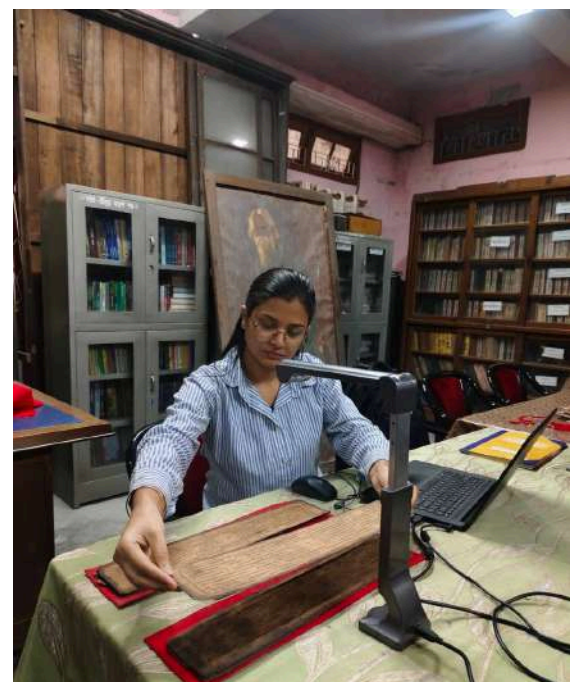
## Technological Integration and AI Enablement

The collaboration between the Nanda Talukdar Foundation and Indian Institute of Technology Bombay (IIT-Mumbai) under the BharatGen initiative marks a significant step in positioning Digitising Assam within a national AI framework built on the collective wisdom of 22 Indian languages. Within this architecture, NTF contributes the wisdom of the Assamese language through its extensive digitised corpus of over 2.76 million pages. This enables the development of AI-driven tools such as keyword searchability, text recognition, and language processing, ensuring that Assamese knowledge systems move beyond preservation into intelligent, usable formats.

As a first-of-its-kind initiative in the country—where a community-driven archive feeds into a national AI engine—the project received national recognition and was invited to be showcased at the AI Summit held at Bharat Mandapam. The inclusion of Digitising Assam at this platform underscored its relevance in India’s evolving multilingual AI ecosystem, highlighting how regional knowledge systems can play a central role in shaping future technologies.

## Key Achievements (2025–26)

- 2.76M pages digitised
- 3 languages documented
- 6,000+ Xasipaas digitised
- Academic partnerships established
- AI integration with IIT- BharatGen
- Keyword search of Assamese text enabled





## Governance and Operational Framework

- Decentralised community model with centralised technical standards for uniformity and scale
- Strict data protocols governing digitisation, metadata creation, and archival storage
- Institutional ownership assured through MoUs, with NTF as technical facilitator  
Hybrid workforce structure combining staff, interns, and volunteers for scalability
- Cost-efficient operations ensuring expansion without significant financial escalation

## Challenges and Mitigation



- Rural infrastructure gaps
- Fragile archival materials
- Skilled manpower shortage
- Field logistics complexity
- Data standardisation challenges
- Quality control variability
- Digital storage scalability
- Community trust deficits

# Activities

## Kamrup Anusandhan Samity(KAS)

The famed library and the journals of the KAS was digitized completely in an operation that lasted six months

## MoU with JB College

Brought ~2,500 books and 2 lakh pages into the project through a MoU  
First major institutional-scale archival integration

## Partnership with AASU

AASU came on board to digitize three endangered languages under Endangered Language Preservation Programme (ELP)  
Connected with Tai Phake, Khamyang, Singpho communities

## The Tea vertical

The Jalan Trust came on board and started a dedicated Tea vertical to preserve and archive documents related to Assam's tea industry.

## Jamuguri Rural Library Digitisation

In August, the Foundation undertook an intensive field digitisation exercise at the Jamuguri Rural Library. Operating under infrastructural constraints, the team deployed portable digitisation units to scan rare collections, including locally published books and handwritten records.

## Digitisation of Gariyoshi & Satsoree

Thanks to the community support, major repository of two popular magazine Sastoree and Goriyoshi have been digitized. Prof Jonaram nath extended the Goriyoshi magazines..



# Activities

## Collaboration with IIT Bombay

The collaboration with IIT Bombay marked a defining moment in the Foundation's evolution. By integrating Assamese datasets into artificial intelligence frameworks of Bharat Gen, the Foundation opened up possibilities such as OCR-based text recognition and keyword search across millions of pages.

This development transformed the archive from a static repository into a dynamic knowledge system, significantly enhancing accessibility and long-term relevance.



## Collaboration with Madhav Dev University

Madhab Dev University has come on board, and both organisations will work on digitising rare books, journals, and the Khamti literature of Narayanpur.



## Launch of Digitising Assam 2.0

The launch of Digitising Assam 2.0 marked a strategic expansion of the Foundation's mission. The initiative prioritises keyword searchability of Assamese content, a game changer for researchers, while integrating artificial intelligence tools and a dedicated app for efficient field digitization.



## Collaboration with Assam College Library Association (ACLA)

The partnership with ACLA enabled access to multiple college libraries across Assam, significantly increasing the scale and efficiency of digitisation efforts through a network-based approach.



# Activities

## Participation in AI Summit

The Foundation presented its work at the AI Summit of New Delhi, showcasing AI-enabled access to Assamese archives. This marked its emergence on a national platform, highlighting the relevance of regional language preservation in technological discourse.



## Xasipaas Digitisation at Axom Xahitya Xabha

The year concluded with one of the most significant archival projects undertaken by the Foundation—the digitisation of approximately 6,000 Xasipaas manuscripts. This initiative represents a major cultural milestone, ensuring that centuries-old knowledge systems are preserved in digital form for future generations.



## Digitisation at Dibrugarh University

The Foundation expanded its work to Dibrugarh University, engaging with one of the most significant academic repositories in the region.



## Pabitra Deka Archive

The family of Late Pabitra Deka, doyen in the field of cine journalism in Assam, has opened its archive to the project and now all issues of Rupkar and pamphlets of old Assamese cinema can be found on our website



# Future Roadmap



## Digital Xaasipat Grid

Establish a digital grid dedicated to Xaasipat preservation, developed as an open-source initiative in collaboration with the Gauhati University, Dibrugarh University, Sankardeva Kalakshetra, Axom Xahitya Xabha, Srimanta Sankardev University besides Xatras pf Assam. A unified, open-source Assam Xaasipat repository will be created to consolidate digitised manuscripts from across the state. Purpose-built applications will be deployed to identify, collect, and catalogue Xaasipat held in distributed locations. Proposed Sponsor: Numaligarh Refinery Limited

## AI-Enabled Search Platform for Assamese Content

Develop and deploy an artificial intelligence-powered search platform to enhance discoverability and accessibility of digitised Assamese manuscripts, texts, and cultural content for researchers, institutions, and the general public.

## NEP-Aligned Intern Network

Leverage the National Education Policy (NEP) framework to establish a structured internship network, enabling students to undertake field work – gathering, documenting, and digitising content using Foundation-developed applications

# About us

The Nanda Talukdar Foundation stands as a beacon of knowledge and preservation, dedicated to safeguarding Assam's rich literary, cultural, and historical heritage. Rooted in a legacy of intellectual pursuit, the foundation bridges the past with the present, fostering research, public discourse, and policy advocacy. With a deep commitment to truth and scholarship, it continues to illuminate untold stories, nurture independent thought, and champion the spirit of Assam's vibrant identity.

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