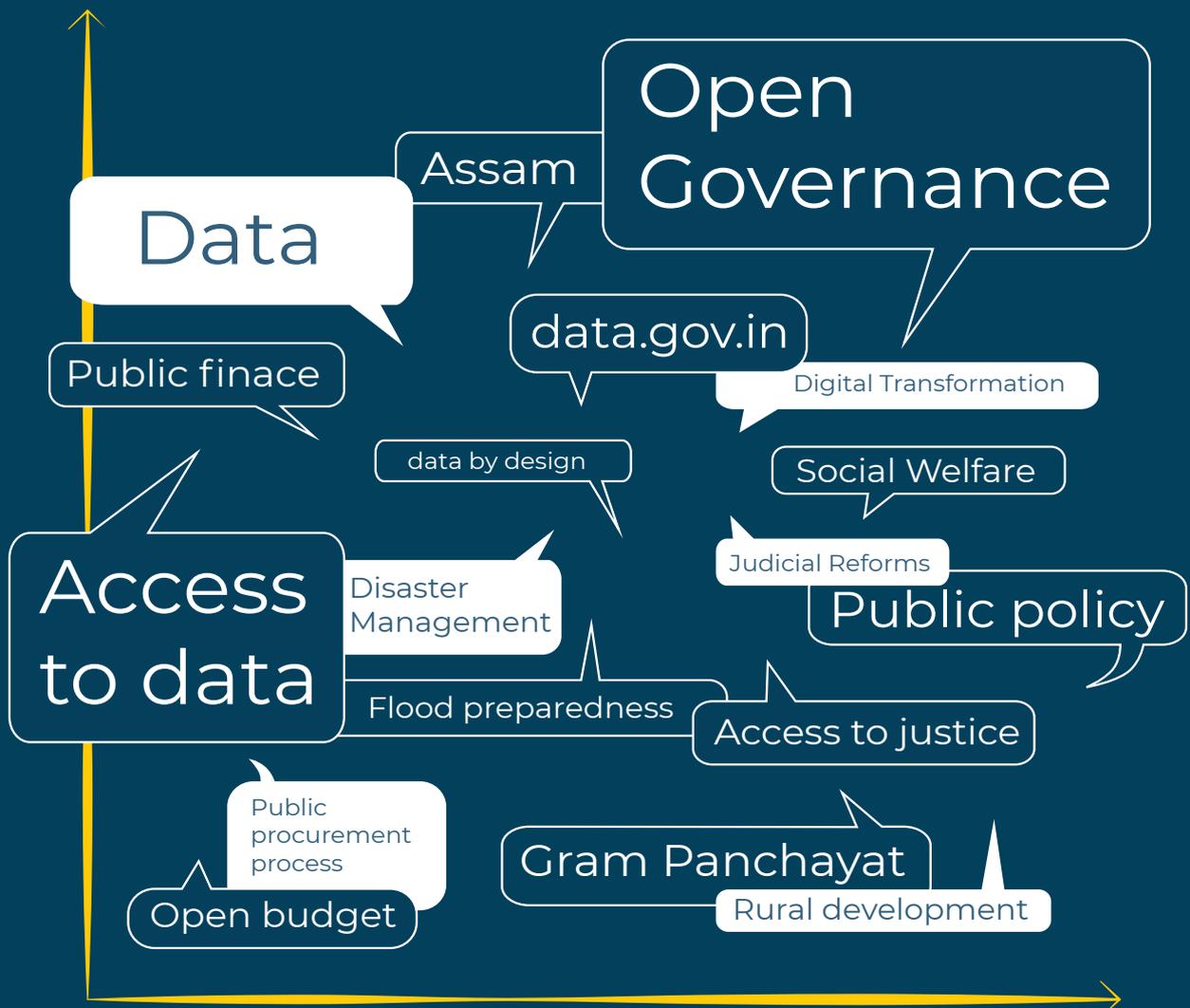# Data Dialogues - Assam

A two-day discussion to improve access to Government Data, Data Sharing, Data-driven decision-making & Community Building in Assam.

21st and 22nd March 2022

Open Governance

Assam

Data

data.gov.in

Public finace

Digital Transformation

data by design

Social Welfare

Access to data

Disaster Management

Judicial Reforms

Public policy

Flood preparedness

Access to justice

Public procurement process

Gram Panchayat

Open budget

Rural development

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Acknowledgements

About CivicDataLab

CivicDataLab (CDL) is a private research lab working at the intersection of data, tech, design and social science to strengthen access to public information and improve citizen participation in governance in India. CDL works to harness the potential of open knowledge movements and better enable citizens to engage in matters of public reform. We work closely with governments, non-profits, think tanks, media houses, universities, and other actors; to grow their data and tech capacity to enable data-driven decision-making at scale.

CDL Team - Abhinav, Apoorv, Arun, Bhavabhuthi, Bianca, Deepthi Chand, Gaurav, Jatin, Kabeer, Nupura, Ruthvik, Samriddhi, Shoaib and Shreya.

About Open Government Data (OGD) Platform

Open Government Data Platform India, commonly known as data.gov.in, is a platform for supporting the Open data initiative of the Government of India. This portal provides a single point of access to datasets, documents, services, tools, and applications published by ministries, departments, and organisations of the Government of India. As a result of the announcement made by President Obama and Prime Minister Shri Manmohan Singh during the Indo-US Open Government Dialogue in 2010, the Open Government Data (OGD) Platform India was developed jointly by the India and US government.

The Open Government Data Platform India is designed, developed and hosted by the National Informatics Centre (NIC), a premier Information and Communication Technology organisation of the Government of India under the aegis of the Ministry of Electronics & Information Technology.

They facilitate government organisations to publish their datasets in open formats for free public use and work as a connecting link for government, citizens and communities to create an Open Data ecosystem in the country.

Introduction

The importance of data generated by and about the functioning of government has been realised in a variety of contexts, including decision making, analysing and addressing the needs of effective citizen engagement, and evaluating the effectiveness of government. The Government of India has a legal framework in place to facilitate sharing and accessing public information for citizens. The Right to Information Act, particularly Section 4(2) of the Act and the National Data Sharing and Accessibility Policy (NDSAP) are steps in this direction. Various state governments have been making efforts to share government data in the public domain to improve innovation, data-driven decision-making, and citizen participation in governance.

CivicDataLab has been working on the intersection of data, tech, design and social science to strengthen access to public data to improve citizen participation towards better governance in India. We have been co-creating open data initiatives like Open Budgets India, Justice Hub, Open Contracting India, Open City and more. With these initiatives, we have been able to collate and publish more than 20,000 public interest datasets, and we cater to an active user base of more than half a million citizens accessing this data to better participate in governance. Since 2018, we at CivicDataLab, have been working with the Assam Society for Comprehensive Financial Management System (AS-CFMS) on providing support to publish open budget data, inclusive budget statements and public procurement data for Assam. With AS-CFMS, we have co-created open data platforms like the Assam Budget Explorer and the Assam Public Procurement. Explorer that help government agencies to make data-driven decisions and citizens to better understand budget and procurement data from the state. Moreover, we are also working to understand implementation of child protection laws in the state, to ensure a safe environment for children.

We have started a new series - Data Dialogues, a forum for various government agencies, civil societies, academia, media and other actors to come together and shape data-driven policy discourse in the country. Our first event in the series was Data Dialogues - Assam, a two-day consultation, on 21st and 22nd March 2022, in collaboration with the Open Government Data (OGD) - project management team at the National Informatics Centre (NIC). The objective of this consultation was to understand how to improve the publishing of government data and enable data sharing to strengthen access to information and enhance the state's efficiency in governance. The objective was also to hear from the non-government actors working in different sectors about the public data they use, how they use it and the challenges they face.

The event had key speakers from the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology, Assam State Disaster Management Authority, Assam Finance Department, Assam Panchayat & RuralDevelopment Department, Assam State Child Protection Society, World Bank, IIT Guwahati, Universal Team for Social Action and Help (UTSAH), among others.
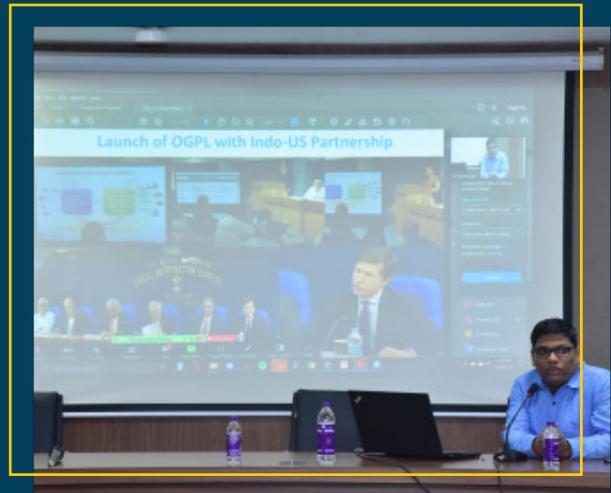
01

The Role and Status of Open Government Data in India

Speakers

Mr Durga Prasad Mishra

Senior Technical Director (Scientist-F), National Informatics Centre and Head of Department – Open Data Technology.
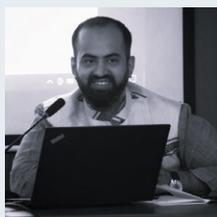
Mr Abhishek Singh, IAS

Managing Director and CEO at Digital India Corporation;
President and CEO at National E-Governance Division (NeGD);
CEO at MyGov, Government of India.

Mr Sitanshu Mahapatra

Technical Consultant, MyGov and National Informatics Centre, Government of India.

Mr Gaurav Godhwani

Co-Founder and Director, CivicDataLab

Discussion Summary

Mr Mishra and Mr Abhishek spoke about the large amount of data that exists in different forms like documents, photos, videos, social media posts, search queries, etc.; the benefits of data in decision-making; the policy framework of open data in the country; and the need for capacity building of government officials for better utility of open data.

Mr Sitanshu spoke about the data.gov.in platform – single-point access to datasets, applications, tools and services published by various ministries and departments of the government.

Importance of data

Data is an essential asset for any country's development and a key driver of the digital economy. The volume of data collected today, not just in India but worldwide, is enormous, and the adoption of public data platforms and digital transactions has increased. Different digital systems built by the government are generating a lot of data, which are likely to grow exponentially in the coming years. The question is how this data can be used to improve public service delivery.

Sharing data across silos and verticals in the government can significantly improve public service delivery. For example, data on MGNREGA beneficiaries and that from the health ministry or food and public distribution can be used to check beneficiaries' eligibility under different government schemes. Many government initiatives and schemes at the central and state level like the Swachh Bharat Mission, Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojna, National Pension Scheme, etc., make extensive use of data and employ analytical tools to drive value out of data.

Policy Landscape of Open Data

In 2012, the Government of India formulated National Data Sharing and Accessibility Policy (NDSAP) to facilitate data sharing in the government. The fundamental objective of the policy was that the government should release data generated using taxpayers' money and public funds. The policy mandated the government to release data in a machine-readable format so that anyone could use the data, including researchers, innovators, and the citizens. It established the need for open data for transparency and accountability, principles for data sharing, classification into open, restricted, registered and negative lists, and a suitable protocol for sharing data from a particular category. It covers all types of data, such as big data, structured, unstructured, semistructured data, timestamped, machine-readable data, open data, geospatial data, and so on.

The states could either adopt the central policy or create their policy based on the central policy. Several states have come out with their open data policy and data sharing frameworks. These policies across states and ministries address several topics, including data privacy, data monetisation, data security, data use and licensing, quality and interoperability, data retention, policy governance, and enforceability. Some state policies, like Karnataka's, address all of these topics, but other few state policies are not as comprehensive, missing out on some of these topics. Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Telangana, Odisha, Sikkim and Punjab have their open data policy, and Assam is also working on drafting an open data policy.

About Data.gov.in

NDSAP talks about developing a central platform that can be the single gateway for government data released in an open format, to improve data accessibility. Data.gov.in platform has evolved over the years to become more user-friendly and adaptive to the changing data ecosystem with multiple functionalities where anyone can contribute, visualise and consume the data. Data.gov.in also offers a separate data platform to different states and other urban local bodies.

Institutional Framework

NDSAP suggests that every ministry and department should have a nodal officer, the Chief Data Officer (CDO). These CDOs are the contact person of their respective ministries and departments to release the data. There have been efforts to ensure that state-level departments also have the Chief Data Officers. They are at the rank of Joint Secretary or above so that they can take decisions on the dissemination of data. These Chief Data Officers can have data contributors under them. The policy suggests that each ministry and department should have an NDSAP cell that is responsible for data-related activities such as cleaning, formatting and disseminating in the ministry or department. However, Mr Sitanshu highlighted the need to empower the NDSAP cell in every ministry and department to get quality data on the platform.

Feedback mechanism

If there are any discrepancies in the published data, then the contact details of the publishing ministry or department are available on the platform so that the end-user can directly contact the respective CDO to resolve the issue with the dataset. There is a feedback mechanism where users can request a particular dataset that is not available. The CDOs can monitor these feedbacks along with other indicators, for example, frequency, on their dashboard. In cases where the ministry or department does not collect data on specific themes or indicators, the closest dataset to the required dataset is shared.

Datasets published on the portal

Further, intending to reduce human involvement, there is a constant effort and push towards data through API. There is a dedicated 'High-Value Dataset' page on the platform. These are self-declared datasets based on set parameters, and CDOs are encouraged to check for these parameters. In the next version, instead of self-declared high-value datasets, Mr Sitanshu mentioned that they aim to have an auto classifier on the platform based on these parameters.

State dashboards currently contain data contributed by the central government ministries and departments for the respective states. A few states like Karnataka and Tamil Nadu have contributions from the state-level ministries and departments, but many states do not contribute to the state-level data. There is a sub-platform for Smart Cities Mission, where all the Smart Cities contribute similar and comparable data. There is a separate functionality where standardised metadata can be created, so all the Smart Cities can use the template to fill in the values and upload the data.

There is targeted and focused engagement by sensitising and supporting government departments in publishing data through web services. Constant engagement with the community through hackathons, sector-specific events, and collaboration with researchers and academia has been crucial to keep the portal updated.

Challenges

Mr Mishra highlighted certain challenges in the implementation of NDSAP. For example, a lot of work has been done on Open Government Data Portal (OGD), and many departments have contributed many datasets. Out of nearly five lakhs datasets, more than 2000 are classified as high-value datasets. They found certain issues like inconsistencies with the source data, accessibility issues with the data files, integration issues with source websites, unavailability of historical datasets, variation in data file format, latency in data update, issues with dataset cataloguing and naming, missing data in highly used datasets, etc. They also found that only 22% of the datasets have APIs, and only 2% have visual access enabled. The data governance platform that National Informatics Centre (NIC) is developing right now is attempting to address these challenges.

Furthermore, Mr Abhishek highlighted particular challenges with data sharing and use:

1. Lack of institutional framework for data sharing,

2. Absence of non-compliance to meta-data standards,

3. Siloed data portals and initiatives,

4. Suboptimal policy monitoring and enforcement of NDSAP 2012.

5. Absence of a data-sharing toolkit for inter-government data sharing

    a. To date, some states are concerned about not having access to data generated by other states.

6. Poor data discoverability

7. Absence of data anonymisation

8. Lack of dedicated data management teams

9. Absence of licensing models for unlocking the value of data

Conclusion

There is a need to align and create a basic minimum data governance framework with protocols and policies for handling issues of privacy, accessibility, interoperability, and quality, among others. The draft India Data Governance Policy, which is being discussed in the parliament, seeks to enhance access, quality and use of non-personal data, to cater to current and emerging technology needs.

There is a need to inculcate the culture of open data among the government departments at various levels. To maximise data dissemination and consumption, there is a need to build data capacity across the government departments and enhance data literacy. Therefore, the training programmes should align with the open data goals and focus on expanding the data ecosystem.

Click here to watch the session

THE ROLE OF DATA SHARING & REUSE IN SHAPING THE DIGITAL INDIA

Mr. Abhishek Singh, IAS

Click here to watch the session

OVERVIEW OF OPEN GOVERMENT DATA(OGD) PLATFORM INDIA - DATA.GOV.IN

Mr. Sitansu Mahapatra

02

State of Public Procurement Data in Assam

In recent years, Assam state has made multiple efforts to improve efficiency, ease of doing business and transparency in its Public Financial Management. In this session, we discussed these initiatives, their impacts and the path ahead, especially from the lens of public procurements.

We heard from our distinguished panellists about the journey of the Finance department so far and the experience of the World Bank and CivicDataLab with the hope to find new ways for citizens and governments to engage in the future. We planned this session with the following objectives in mind.

Objectives

1. To discuss the state of public procurement data in Assam and understand recent government initiatives and reforms made in this space.

2. To understand the World Bank's experience with public procurement reforms in Assam.

3. To discuss our work in the space of public procurements in Assam.

4. To initiate a multi-stakeholder dialogue on the need for public procurement reforms and its possibilities.

Panelists

Ms Laya Madduri (IAS)

Secretary, Finance Department, Government of Assam.

Ms Swayamsiddha Mohanty

Senior Procurement Specialist, World Bank Group

Mr Kabeer Arora

Program Lead, Open Contracting India, CivicDataLab

Discussion Summary

This session started with Ms Laya Madduri setting up the tone for the discussion on the need for dialogue on the use and potential of government data and laying out the initiatives taken for public procurement reforms in Assam. Ms Sawayamsiddha Mohanty then elaborated on the World Bank's initiatives and experience working in Assam and across the country. In the last part of the session, Mr Kabeer shared our journey in working with public procurement data and launched the Assam Public Procurement Portal.

Government of Assam's Initiatives

The Government of Assam (GoA), with the support of the World Bank-funded project and the Assam Society for Comprehensive Financial Management System(AS-CFMS), has been working on bringing transparency and equality into public procurement processes.

National Informatics Centre (NIC) is developing the State Public Procurements Portal, a single point for all procurement-related data. It is undergoing a quality check and will be released soon,

said Ms Laya. The portal will host all procurement data and the departments' procurement plans based on their approved annual budget. This will open up the dialogue between procurement entities and suppliers, allowing for equal participation.

The aim is also to use this data to help prioritise schemes when budget decisions are made. She mentioned that this year the department partially used this data to see schemes in the advanced stage of their procurement life cycle and schemes in the initial stages of the process to rationalise the distribution of budget and efficiently use the resources.

Challenges faced

As the portals get ready, there is a massive task of building the departments' capacities to prepare procurement plans, upload the data and keep it up to date.

Recommendations/ Suggestions

- The nomenclature in procurements is not uniform currently, which can be standardised to help analyse the data better.

The World Bank's Initiatives

Initiatives taken

- The World Bank started working with the Assam Institute of Management to establish a Public Procurement Observatory under which they conducted analysis on themes like bidders' perspectives, the need for public procurement law, etc. For example, they analysed the need for public procurement law as there were no standard bidding documents. All departments had rules derived from General Financial Rules, but all departments differed in operationalising these rules.

- The World Bank has been working on the ASPIRe (Assam State Public Finance Institutional Reforms) project with GoA since 2017. There are various verticals in it, public procurement reforms being the most important.

As part of the ASPIRe project, the World Bank engaged with various stakeholders through the Finance department. The Finance department was committed to strengthening public procurements, bringing in transparency and improving government service delivery through procurement function. The three broad aims of the project were - (i)Transparency, (ii) Institutional Strengthening, and (iii) Capacity Building.

- The ASPIRe team under the Finance department generated department-wise reports about Award of Contract (AoC)[2] on a monthly basis. They also regularly followed up with the departments that were not doing this and achieved the target of 60%. Now it is a standard practice in Assam. This became a model to inspire other states, about how a huge behaviour change can be brought about.

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2   The Award of Contract (AoC) data provides all the important information using which multiple performance parameters can be assessed

They did this through a three-pronged approach- system changes, operational changes and capacity building. They made bid security/ earnest money deposit (EMD) online. All unsuccessful bidders would get bid security back only after AoC data is published by the departments, creating pressure from the bidders on the procuring entity to publish the data. They also released a government order to mandate the publishing of AoC and undertook steps for capacity building.

- The government of Assam is also working on SPPP (State Public Procurements Portal), which is currently in its advanced stages. It will be a repository for all the information about public procurement data for Assam. It is a one-point portal for various things. It has three critical features - (i) Department-wise Procurement Plans, (ii) an online procurement complaints management module, and (iii) Data analytics. The Assam government is trying to create a massive open learning curriculum portal. It will have learning modules for the public procurement process and rules. Any user that is from the government of Assam can enrol in it.

Recommendations/ Suggestions

- All governments should have a team of data analysts who could conduct data analysis with the domain experts and help the decision-makers.

The World bank has played an essential role in data analysis. They conducted an internal study to see how procurement data could be analysed and ran multiple hypotheses to see what could make the process more efficient. For example, they found that waiving bid security for start-ups increased the competition, helped get better processes and did not impact the outcome negatively. In the case of Assam, it was seen that the seasons play an essential role in the success of contracts; the monsoon season shows more failed contracts.

CivicDataLab's Initiatives

Initiatives taken

Our journey in the space of procurement data started with the Taiwan Presidential Hackathon 2020, which the government of Taiwan organised to promote the innovative use of data for social good. The project attempted to combine budgetary and spending data on a single platform for the state of Himachal Pradesh through budget data, expenditure summary and district treasury receipts. In this process, we realised the importance of procurement data to understand government spending, performance and priorities.

Following the hackathon, we partnered with Open Contracting Partnership to scale this work holistically in other states of India. The work started with Assam based on earlier experience working with the state departments. The Finance department shared data of over 30,000 contracts from the last five years of e-procurements, which we analysed to understand the trends and shared with the department.

To understand and share how data could be used for better service delivery and decision making, we focused on three areas - (i) Health, (ii) Water supply and sanitation, and (iii) Flood prevention and

response. We documented a case study using data analysis to spot gaps in access to maternal and child health services and is available in the public domain. We are working on another project to analyse floods-related public procurement data in Assam.

We have mapped five years of public procurement data to Open Contracting Data Standards (OCDS) and published it on an open-access platform along with key performance indicators that can be used to analyse this data. We are also producing public resources to help create awareness and dialogues between various stakeholders in public procurement processes.

Conclusion

Assam has been proactively making efforts to bring around public procurement reforms to encourage transparency, competition and efficiency, the results of which have started showing. The government, as well as private/non-governmental actors, are playing essential roles in this endeavour. Systemic reforms happen faster, but behavioural changes to break away from old practices in actual implementation take time and continuous effort. As more data is published and more reforms are realised, there is a need to build the capacities of government departments and citizens to use this data and collaborate constructively. Behavioural change can be brought about by dialogues between all stakeholders and proactive collaborations.

Click here to watch the session
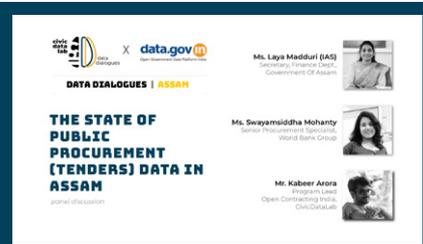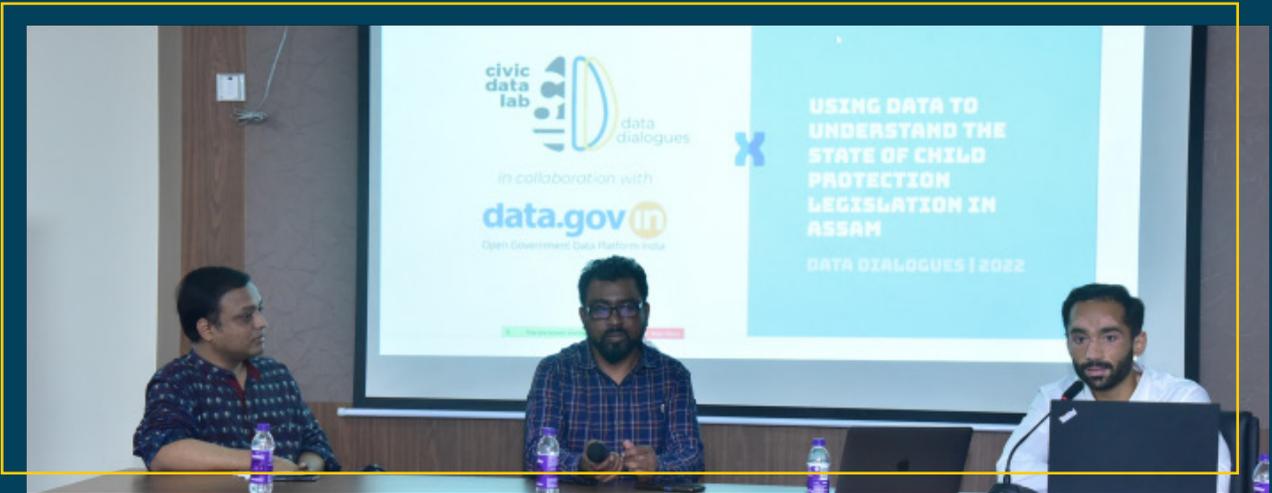
03

Using data to understand the state of child-protection laws in Assam

The core child protection legislation is enshrined in four primary laws around Juvenile Justice, Child Marriage Prohibition, Protection of Children from Sexual Offences, and Child Labour.

Unfortunately, data that can inform law and policy change does not back the vast legal framework on child rights. It is quite challenging to access systematic information on what happens in courts, how special laws and provisions pan out in practice, how they have been able to meet their purpose, etc.

To better understand the gaps and challenges in implementing these laws, we need more granular datasets at various administrative levels that multiple stakeholders can access. We planned this session with the following objectives in mind.

Objectives

1. To understand the current state of the child protection data ecosystem in Assam.

2. To explore the steps that can be taken within the ecosystem to create FAIR (Findable, Accessible, Interoperable, Reusable) datasets that can help evidence-based decision-making.
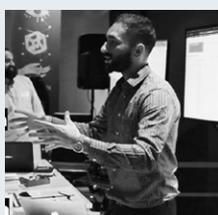
Panelists

Mr D. Savio Lakra

Programme Manager, Training, IEC & Advocacy, State child protection society (ASCPS), Social Welfare Department, Government of Assam

Mr Miguel Das

Founder and Executive Director, Universal Team for Social Action and Help (UTSAH)

Mr Apoorv Anand

Program Lead, Law and Justice, CivicDataLab

Discussion Summary

Government Initiatives - State Child Protection Society (SCPS)

The SCPS is a statutory body in all states to implement and track the Integrated Child Protection Scheme (ICPS). In Assam, they are developing a dashboard to track the state of child protection services. In the project's first phase, they identified 33 indicators for tracking. They collect data at a district level; however, collecting data for new districts is challenging. Earlier, they did not have data per se but just some pieces of information related to child protection issues. Through this initiative, they would like to consolidate their data systems, curate all critical data points in one place and create better systems for data collection by creating better data templates and providing data entry capabilities to each district.

On the dashboard, they have mapped the districts of Assam as per their performance on respective indicators. The mapping helps them follow up with districts not performing well on specific parameters. The dashboard still lacks a lot of essential indicators, which they plan to add to the project's next phase.

Challenges

1. No dedicated data analyst in the team - Data curation takes a lot of manual effort and time. They need better systems and reliable data curation and analysis support to get the most out of this initiative.

2. Availability of funds for further development - UNICEF funded the project's first phase. It is difficult to sustain this initiative without the availability of funds allocated under specific budget heads for this work. They can not divert funds from other budget heads to work on building the platform.

Recommendations

1. There is a need to develop more robust data systems to facilitate periodical integration of the data collected from the field.

2. Data systems should be able to capture the entire history of the child who gets involved within the child protection ecosystem.

Way Forward

1. To add more information sources so the dashboard can serve more data-related enquiries.

2. To add more indicators to the dashboard, as it currently has only a few aggregated indicators. It can help us in understanding the state of child protection in Assam.

The state of POCSO in Assam

UTSAH works with the Assam police to help them understand the procedures and the difference in procedures regarding special laws like the JJ Act, POCSO, etc. Mr Miguel explained that it is not easy for the police officials to understand the procedures as they usually work within the CrPC/IPC framework, and special acts have their own sets of procedures. He suggested that understanding the procedures will lead to better implementation.

Challenges

1. Lack of data

   - Absence of data to analyse whether procedures are being followed

   - Different institutions like the Police Department, CWC, District legal services authority, the courts, etc., handle special laws like the JJ Act and POCSO. Currently, no standard system or interface connects all of them. This creates a lot of discrepancies in the data reported by all of them.

   - Lack of information about the availability of funds within institutions

   - Lack of qualitative indicators like the completeness of case diary entries, trials of cases in courts, etc.

2. Tracking procedural laws

   • Tracking the procedures and guidelines being followed

   • For example, the police should ideally record the child's statement at the child's residence or where they are comfortable, but often they are called to the police station for their statements.

   • Tracking the experience of the child who came in contact with the police

3. Others

   • Lack of funds in the overall child protection umbrella throughout the country. The overall budget for child protection decreased after the launch of Mission VATSALYA.

Recommendations by UTSAH

1. Investing more in data-related initiatives through which we can curate more standardised information as it is a very crucial component for drafting better policies.

2. Setting up a standard data management system for capturing details at every stage of justice delivery.

3. Building better systems to track the procedural implementation of laws.

4. Engaging with leaders at the concerned departments who can make these decisions.

5. Engaging with three spheres - Social Welfare, Police and Judiciary

Way Forward

1. To develop the "Sishu Mitra Program", in partnership with UNICEF, to support the police department in setting up an integrated child rights centre. Here, the IOs will provide technical assistance. The focus will be on qualitatively tracking the procedural implementation of the POCSO act.

2. To document children's experiences and share and discuss them with the police department.

Using data to track the implementation of child protection laws

Tracking the implementation of laws is essential to keep the institutions accountable, identify gaps and challenges in law enforcement practices faced by various departments, for timely delivery of justice and assess the efficiency of courts. Moreover, it facilitates impact assessment of laws and allows for data-driven, evidence-based amendments to laws and policies. We collaborated with the HAQ - Centre for Child Rights to track the implementation of the POCSO Act in Assam, Delhi and Haryana. The project was part of the grant received via the Data for Justice challenge

organised by Agami. The primary data source for research was cases uploaded on the e-Courts web portal for district courts. One can access the data from the e-Courts web portal on a near real-time basis across all courts.

We considered cases for eight years, from 2012 to 2020. We created a dataset of 19,783 cases, of which 5,786 (29%) cases were from Assam. In the data collected for Assam, 2,706 (46%) cases were disposed of and 3,080 were pending at the time of data collection. Judgments were available in 1,152 (42%) cases.

While accessing data from courts, we faced the following challenges:

1. Accessing or downloading cases in bulk

2. Data curation practices differ across courts, and hence the data is not standardised

3. Hard to identify cases registered under a particular act or section because of data standardisation issues

4. The dataset, especially orders and judgments, if available, might contain a lot of sensitive information, which makes it harder for anyone to share this dataset as a common resource.

5. Data completeness-related issues - Often, data is not available for certain essential fields like police station details, the reason for adjournments, etc.

6. Information for older cases might be harder to obtain from certain courts.

The National Crime Records Bureau publishes the Crime in India report, which can also be used to analyse certain aspects of the POCSO Act. Certain indicators related to Persons Arrested, Courts and Police can be accessed from the report.

NCRB started computing data for cases registered under the POCSO Act from 2014 onwards. This report is the only official source of crime statistics in the country and therefore is an important public data source. But there are certain limitations to using data from these reports to track the implementation of laws. These are:

1. Frequent changes in the methodology for capturing data for specific indicators make it difficult to compare indicators across years.

2. The exact methodology to compute each indicator is not documented.

3. Data is available after a gap of at least a year and sometimes more.

4. Data is not available for all states and districts.

5. Disaggregated data at the police station level is hard to procure.

E-COURTS
OFFICIAL WEBSITE OF DISTRICT COURTS

Back

District and Sessions Court, Jabalpur
Case Details

Case Type	: BA - BAIL APPLICATION	
Filing Number	: ▓▓▓	Filing Date: ▓▓▓
Registration Number	: ▓▓▓	Registration Date: ▓▓▓
CNR Number	: ▓▓▓	

Case Status

First Hearing Date	: ▓▓▓
Decision Date	: ▓▓ January ▓▓
Case Status	: Case disposed
Nature of Disposal	: Contested--Order Passed, Rejected
Court Number and Judge	: 18-XVIII Additional District Session Judge

Petitioner and Advocate

1) ▓▓▓
   ▓▓▓

Respondent and Advocate

1) State

Acts

Under Act(s)	Under Section(s)
Code of Criminal Procedure 1973	439
Indian Penal Code 1860	394,452,419,313,506,34
The Information Technology (Amendment) Act, 2008	66

FIR Details

Police Station	: ▓▓▓
FIR Number	: ▓▓▓
Year	: ▓▓▓

Case History

Registration Number	Judge	Business on Date	Hearing Date	Purpose of Hearing
▓▓▓	District and Session Judge	▓▓▓	▓▓▓	Bail and Ancillary Matters
▓▓▓	XVIII Additional District Session Judge	▓▓▓		Disposed

Orders

Order Number	Order Date	Order Details
1	▓▓▓	ORDER

Case Transfer Details within Establishment

Registration Number	Transfer Date	From Court Number and Judge	To Court Number and Judge
▓▓▓	▓▓▓	1 - District and Session Judge	18 - XVIII Additional District Session Judge

 In the current scenario, the e-Courts database is one of the most important sources to understand the implementation of laws in the country, at least for cases that enter the trial phase. One can access the indicators related to a case like Date of Registration, Data of Filing, Case History details, Case Number, Stage of a case, Acts and Sections, Type of a case, etc., for every case from the e-Courts database. But to analyse a POCSO case holistically, one needs access to other unavailable vital indicators. Some of these indicators are:

1. Time taken to file a charge sheet

2. Time taken from cognisance to completion of a child's testimony

3. Reasons for adjournments

4. Interim or final compensation to the victims

5. The time it takes for the court to grant interim compensation is also unknown.

6. Other vital indicators around shelter and witness protection support, medical support, educational support, paralegal support, etc., are not captured.

With limited indicators and unavailability of orders and judgments for cases, it is hard to understand several legal aspects of proceeding, acquittal, conviction, and bail.

To learn more about the data curation methodology and the analysis of the implementation of the POCSO Act in Assam, Delhi and Haryana, one can access the report on the Justice Hub.

Conclusion

There is an increasing trend in the number of cases registered under the POCSO Act. But, to measure the impact of child-protection-related laws like POCSO, we need to collect case-wise granular data that can tell us whether the rules and procedures listed within the Act are followed. Timely collaboration between stakeholders across various institutions and access to robust data systems at each level can help reduce these cases' pendency.
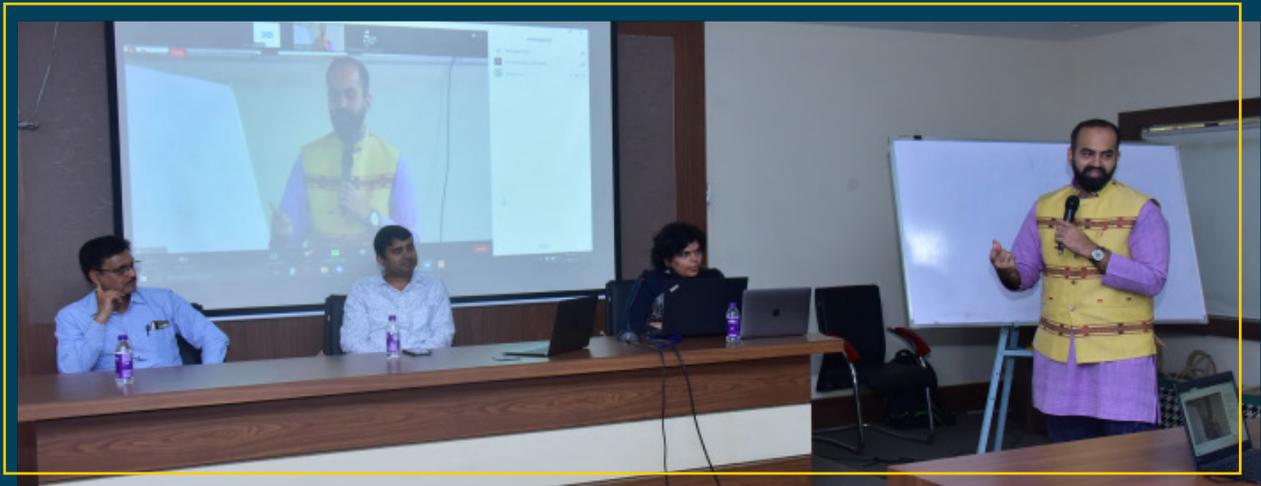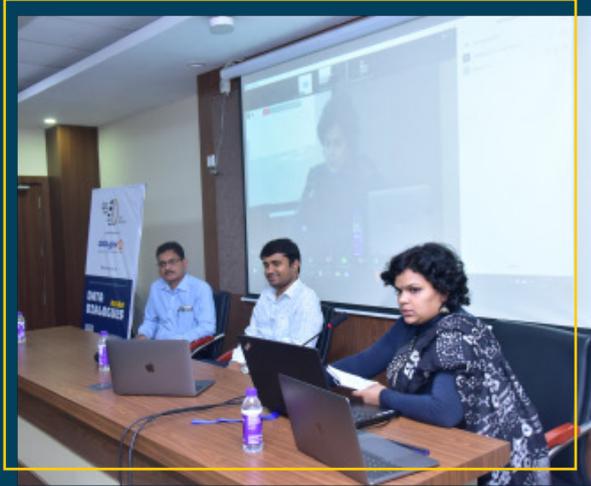
Collaboration among states can help identify case-management practices that work and those that are not as effective. To achieve this, we need much more dedicated effort to standardise the data collection procedures across institutions in each state.

Click here to watch the session

04

Real-time Monitoring of Schemes Data at Block and Panchayat Level

Monitoring the implementation of national and state schemes becomes complex as we move from district to block and gram panchayat levels. One of the main reasons for this is the lack of standardised open data and limited data capacities of different on-ground stakeholders. Most scheme-related information is not readily available at the block or gram panchayat level. However, real-time information on scheme-related parameters at both the block and gram panchayat levels is essential to track the performance and implementation of these schemes.

Objectives

1. To understand the challenges and opportunities with monitoring schemes at block and gram panchayat level in Assam.

2. Initiatives taken, and processes in place for tracking real-time rural development schemes implementation in Assam

3. Exploring possibilities with open data to improve monitoring of schemes at block and gram panchayat level in Assam
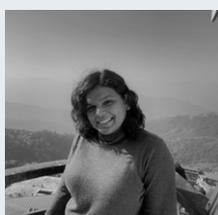
Panelists

Mr Bikram Kairi, IAS

Commissioner, Panchayat and Rural Development Department,
Government of Assam

Mr Ratul Pathak, ACS

Additional Commissioner, Panchayat and Rural Development Department,
Government of Assam

Ms Samriddhi

Economist & GIS Specialist, CivicDataLab

Discussion Summary

In this session, we tried to understand the challenges and opportunities in monitoring schemes at the block and gram panchayat level in Assam. As we delved deeper into the limitations and usefulness of the data, we also discussed processes that can increase data accessibility and help us understand better scheme implementation.

Processes in place to track real-time implementation of schemes at below district levels

Shri Bikram Kairi, Commissioner at Panchayat and Rural Development Department, spoke about the various mechanisms in place for monitoring the implementation of rural development schemes at the block and panchayat levels.

1. Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) is not just a scheme for livelihood generation but also a scheme that focuses on asset creation. Simply providing employment is not the scheme's purpose but instead creating a sustainable asset that will benefit them in the long run and reduce dependency on manual labour.

2. Implementation of the 15th Finance Commission and 14th Finance Commission Grant also comes into the ambit of the department. Basic planning of the scheme implementation

starts at the gram panchayat level for schemes like MGNREGA and PMAY-G and finally, the decision to determine beneficiaries is done at the village level by the department.

3. Department also deals with central and state social assistance programmes and their implementation at the beneficiary level. The department takes care of multiple things impacting and touching people's lives in rural Assam. The vastness of the scope raises questions about planning, implementation and verification concerning various schemes.

Challenges and Opportunities

Some of the challenges faced by the Panchayat and Rural Development Department, as highlighted by Shri Bikram Kairi and Shri Ratul Pathak, are as follows:

1. The monitoring at the village level is to ultimately strengthen the Gram Sabhas, which will ensure better planning. How Gram Sabhas deal with the scheme's preparation, planning and prioritisation determine the outcome, which is a challenge. For instance, if the planning happens but the prioritisation is not based on the requirement but convenience, this can alter the outcome. Therefore, strengthening the Gram Sabhas in this direction is needed.

2. Since the block is above the panchayat, access to block-level data is crucial. The data availability for schemes under the department is good, with robust MIS systems for schemes like MGNREGA and PMAY. Still, the challenge is integrating the data across schemes to get a holistic picture of the performance of different Gram Panchayats across the state.

3. One can do a lot of analysis from the available data. Still, it is not automated and must be done manually by extracting data from the MIS, making the process slow and cumbersome. The lack of an automated system that can help identify problem areas does not allow one to shift the focus based on the requirement. Due to the lack of automated systems in place, by the time analysis is done, there is a delay of a few days considering there are nearly a hundred parameters. The lag hinders the planning process as real-time analysis is crucial to track the progress. Therefore, even if data is available, handling the data is a significant challenge.

4. It is crucial to integrate schemes data with not just the planning but also realities on the ground to have a holistic picture. Analysis and understanding of the data should become easier to better utilise the potential it can bring.

5. There is no defined benchmark to compare with if there are improvements and therefore monitoring becomes a challenge for these schemes in absence of defined benchmarks.

Conclusion

The session highlighted the need to create an index based on a few key parameters to rank the districts, blocks and gram panchayats in terms of performance across different schemes. If the monitoring is done and the representatives at different levels are given timely, structured information about what is working, what is not and what needs to be done, then it can become more efficient. Empowering the Block Development Officers, and elected representatives at Gram Panchayat level with the same kind of data that is available at aggregate levels, can be very helpful and can as a result eliminate the information gap that exists at the present.

Click here to
watch the session
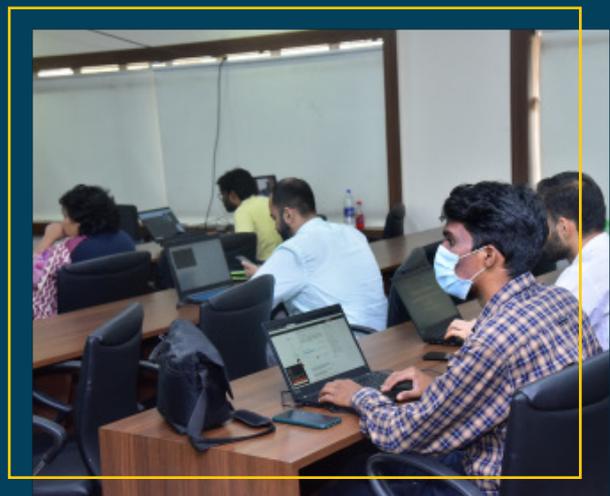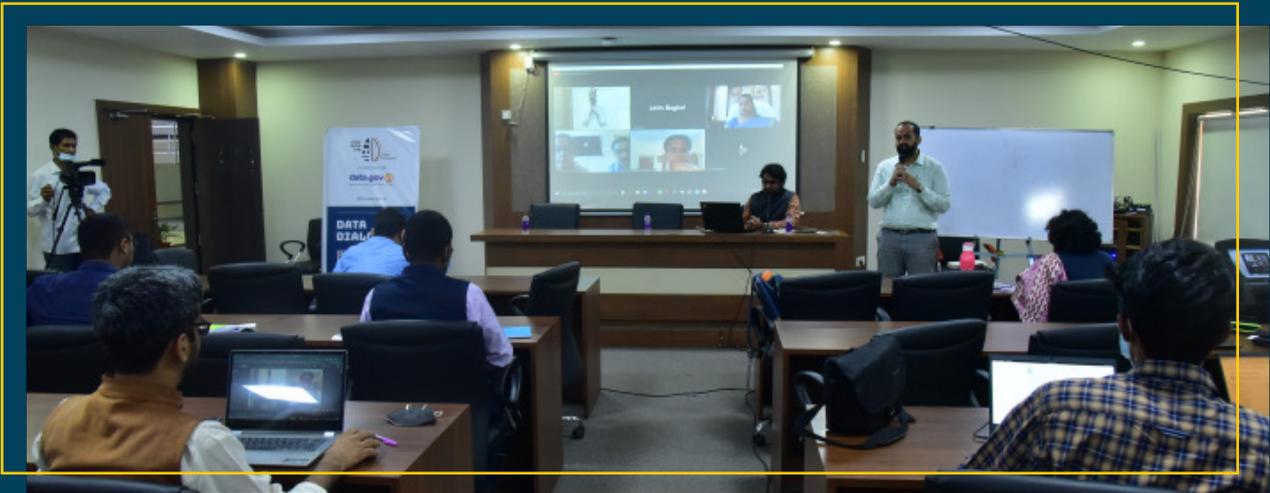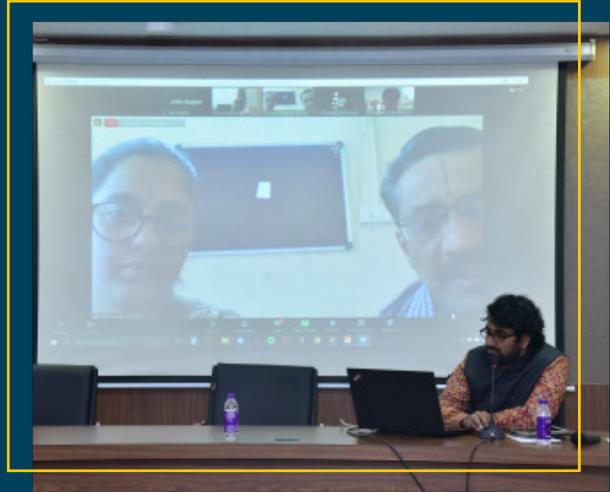
05

Opportunities with Assam Budget and Spending Data

Every year, the Union, State, and Local governments prepare a budget for the upcoming financial year. It lays out the government's estimated income and expenditure to meet its obligations. These documents reflect the values and priorities of the government and the people they represent.

Littered across several hundreds of websites, these are often difficult to find, access, and consume, not just for the general public but also for government officials and agencies. Opening up the budget and spending data for easy accessibility and shareability, therefore, has enormous untapped potential. We planned this session with the following objectives in mind.

Objectives

1. To understand the current state of openness of budget and spending data in Assam.

2. To explore opportunities arising from furthering openness.

Panelists

Ms Laya Madhuri, IAS

Secretary to the Government of Assam in the Department of Finance

Ms Simonti Chakraborty

Senior Programme Officer, Centre for Budget Governance and Accountability (CBGA)

Mr Madhusudhan B V Rao

Senior Research Advisor, Centre for Budget and Policy Studies (CBPS)

Ms Shiboni Sundar

Research Associate, Centre for Budget and Policy Studies (CBPS)

Mr Arun sudarshan

Economist and Policy Researcher, CivicDataLab

Discussion Summary

Government Initiatives

1. The Finance Department has two major IT systems to work with the budget and spending data - (i) FinAssam or the IFMIS (Integrated Financial Management Information System) and (ii) the Central Treasury Management Information System (CTMIS). Together, they give data on the account head-wise budget allocation, actual expenditure, progressive expenditure etc. This information is available on a near real-time basis. The data helps the finance department understand the capacity of various administrative departments to spend the allocated budget

and thereby come up with better estimates. While the two systems are not yet integrated into a single platform, it's a work in progress that the department expects to complete soon.

Nevertheless, data analysis has helped substantially change the state's financial management processes. The finance department has further decentralised and delegated financial powers to administrative departments and removed redundant approvals. For projects less than INR 2 crores, there is no need for inputs from the finance department. These changes have sped up projects as they no longer have to be stuck in a long loop of approvals.

2. Assam has started publishing within-year budget execution data through FinAssam (https://finassam.in/). To date, one can view state expenditure through the portal at an overall, grant, and object head level.

Opening up more granular information would require crossing the threshold of apprehension by the government and other stakeholders. The state is also trying to clean up its budget books to remove unused and redundant codes. This internal focus would help Assam make its documents more open and understandable for a layperson.

Public Expenditure on Children in Assam and the Benefits of Public Finance Data

Public Finance data should be in the open to increase transparency and accountability. An analysis is meaningful when the data is available for a more extended time (i.e. time series data) and valuable when it can be churned out faster, particularly during the budget discussions in the Parliament and State Legislative Assemblies. The ability to compare across states, while currently limited by the availability of data in open formats, and the differences in accounting heads, must be aspired for and worked towards. However, none of this matters if the analysis is not used. The recommendations and suggestions from data analysis must be discussed, deliberated, implemented and monitored for it to be refined over time.

Centre for Budget and Governance Accountability Initiatives

Preparing a Child Budget

The Centre for Budget and Governance Accountability (CBGA) worked with the Assam Finance Department in 2018 to prepare a child budget in collaboration with UNICEF. The collaboration started with a training program with the officials of the finance department and administrative department to understand their thoughts on child budgeting. They took lessons from Kerala and Bihar, two other states publishing child budget at the time. Further, they conducted training to ensure that one can take up the work on specialised budget documents focussing on children, gender, elderly etc., even in the absence of technical support from non-government organisations.

Recommendations

1. States can keep 1%-2% of the state budget for public suggestions and inform which suggestions were incorporated into the main budget. This will complete the feedback loop, and with simplified documents accompanying this, it can play a huge role in popularising budget preparation.

2. Participatory budgeting would be helpful if localised, as citizens are interested in engaging with hyperlocal issues — for example, district-specific or sub-district-specific budgets.

CivicDataLab's Initiatives

Open Budget Data Standard (Alpha version)

As part of the session, we released the alpha version of the developed Open Budget Data Standard. OBDS is a data standard to map Indian budget documents, particularly the detailed demand for grants (detailed expenditure) and detailed receipts to enable easy inter-state comparison. However, as we move towards the beta & release versions, we hope to engage with multiple stakeholders to open up its development. We hope to encourage state finance departments to publish their budget data in the open in a machine-readable format, making it easier to engage in inter-state comparisons that can lead to sharing best practices in the spirit of cooperative federalism.

Conclusion

The session presented various pathways for advancement through government and non-government organisations. Assam is one of the pioneering states in opening up its public finance data. The state is progressively discovering the benefits of open data and collaboration with other organisations. While the efforts are commendable, there's a long way to go before substantial benefits are visible within and outside the government. The openness of data should precede efforts to move citizens from the role of passive to active stakeholders in the state's public finance system.

Click here to watch the session

06

State of Data on Flood Preparedness and Response in Assam

Assam is one of the most flood-prone states in the country that faces huge lives and livelihood losses due to flooding every year. The majority of its districts and around 60%-70% of the revenue circles[2] get affected by floods every year. Since Assam is primarily an agricultural economy, agriculture loss is also a significant issue. Moreover, wetlands and forests have shrunk over the years, leading to changing flooding patterns in recent years. We planned this session with the following objectives in mind.

Objectives

1. To understand the state of data and how it can facilitate data-driven decision-making for better flood preparedness and response in Assam.

2. Initiatives taken, and challenges faced by CSOs, government and other stakeholders in flood preparedness and response in Assam.

3. Exploring possible avenues for these stakeholders to collaborate and work together

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2   Revenue circles are an administrative unit below the district-level and above the Gram Panchayat-level.

Panelists

Dr Kripaljyoti Mazumdar

Project Officer, Assam State Disaster Management Authority (ASDMA)

Ms Bindu Aggarwal

Focal person for Global Surge Roaster, Indian Red Cross Society

Ms Bianca

Associate Researcher, CivicDataLab

Discussion Summary

In this session, we discussed the institutional mechanisms/arrangements, challenges faced, and initiatives the government and non-government actors take for better flood preparedness and response in Assam.

Government's Initiatives

Dr Mazumdar, Project Officer at ASDMA, spoke about the various mechanisms through which ASDMA undertakes flood monitoring, response and management. These mechanisms are listed below:

1. Circle Disaster Management Committee (CDMC)

These committees are the most granular administrative unit for disaster management, functioning at the level of revenue circles. This committee conducts pre-flood preparedness meetings and monitors preparedness and disaster management at the revenue circle level.

2. District Disaster Management Authority (DDMA)

The Disaster Management Act of 2005 mandated setting up DDMAs at the district level. They are responsible for disaster preparedness and management at the district level. They prepare District Disaster Management Plans (DDMPs), conduct regular flood preparedness meetings and monitor disaster preparedness at the revenue circle and district level.

3. Flood Preparedness Assessment Scorecard

ASDMA, in collaboration with UNICEF, has introduced Flood Preparedness Assessment Scorecard, a technology platform for assessing the district's preparedness and actions. It ranks districts based on parameters on flood governance and management and encourages healthy competition among districts.

4. India Disaster Resource Network

It is a nationwide web-based platform for monitoring the inventory of equipment, human resources and critical supplies required for emergency response. DDMAs update this portal regularly, even though it is a centralised platform.

5. Assam Disaster Management Manual

In 2015, the Assam Disaster Management Manual replaced the Assam Relief Manual of 1976. It is a guideline for relief and response during disasters and outlines the roles and responsibilities of departments for different kinds of disasters. It also mandates that the State Disaster Management Plan, District Disaster Management Plan and Department Disaster Management Plan[2] are in place and updated periodically.

6. State and District Emergency Operations Centre (SEOC and DEOC)

For better flood damage data reporting and verification, DEOCs are involved in incident reporting and data compilation, whereas SEOCs facilitate pre and post disaster incident analysis.

7. Flood Reporting and Information Management System (FRIMS)

FRIMS is an online platform introduced for automated data compilation and visualisation last year. It allows all field-level functionaries to feed in data directly from the field instead of manual data entry. FRIMS has helped save field officers' time, as they can now respond to the situation rather than spending time compiling information to be shared at the district level. It also saved duplication of efforts at the revenue circle, district, and state levels. This has helped in enhancing the response time.

8. Flood Early Warning System (FLEWS)

The Flood Early Warning System project started as a pilot in 2009 in one district in Assam, and now it has expanded to 14 districts. FLEWS provides information on flood severity, location (at the granularity of revenue circle), probable time, high rainfall warning and status of embankments in flood causing river pre and post monsoons. The objective is to help administrators in better preparedness and response.

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2   Certain line departments like the Revenue Department, Water Resources Department, Social Welfare Department, Panchayat and Rural Development Department, among others are involved in disaster management, hence these departments also need to have department-wise disaster management plans.

Challenges faced

Some of the challenges faced by ASDMA, as highlighted by Dr Mazumdar, are as follows:

1. Lack of interlinking of various departments to a common platform or web-based application hinders department-wise damage assessment

2. Absence of risk-aligned development infrastructure

3. Transboundary data sharing of hydrological data across countries

4. Dissemination of geo-targeted alerts about disasters with a minimum lead time

5. Lack of uniform penetration of cellular network in some areas of the state

6. Lack of last-mile access to infrastructure and services

7. Dissemination of early warning to last-mile

8. Lack of better and prompt damage assessment and reporting

9. Need for risk coverage for all

10. Lack of proper use of communication technology, geospatial technology, and warning and forecasting systems.

Indian Red Cross Society's Initiatives

Making the flood alerts accessible to citizens

To address the last-mile information gap on flood alerts, the Indian Red Cross Society (IRCS), in collaboration with Google, is working in four districts[3] in Assam. Google uses data from the Central Water Commission, applies artificial intelligence, predetermines areas vulnerable to floods and creates flood alerts. These alerts are sent as a push notification on mobile phones if the mobile has an internet connection and the location services are on. One can also get alerts over email if they are registered with Google. The flood alert gives information about (i) water level, (ii) two-line description, and (iii) flood inundation map with flood severity levels (refer to figure 1). This information is available in Hindi and English and gets updated every 12 hours.
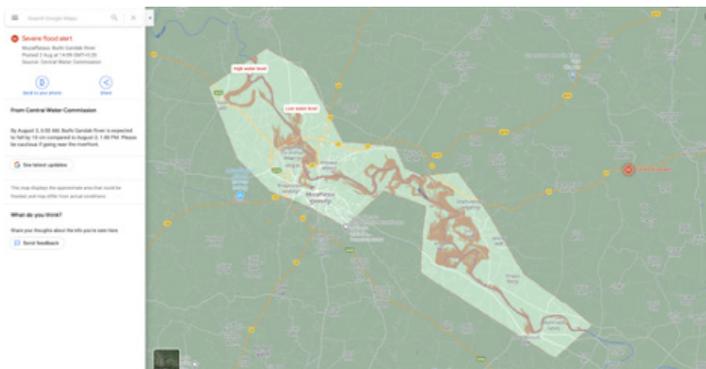
Additionally, they have a dashboard that displays flood alerts, along with information on current water level and expected water level, for India and Bangladesh. Also, they have a platform called Flood Hub, to check the efficacy of flood alerts. It allows users to submit a response on flood information, flood alert, which was released.

Figure 1: Flood Alerts on Google Maps

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3   Majuli, Lakhimpur, Dhemaji, Morigaon

Following are the activities undertaken by the IRCS for flood preparedness and response:

Activities

1. To prepare Ward Contingency Plans[4]

2. To train volunteers on fetching and disseminating alerts

3. To set up Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) in all the districts to monitor alerts and pass information from the state to districts, districts to Panchayats and then volunteers pass the information to the community through Whatsapp groups, spreading further through word of mouth.

4. To assist District Disaster Response Teams (DDRT), SDRT, and NDRT mobilised during disasters and also help in response operations through EOCs.

5. To coordinate their Disaster Response Emergency Fund (DREF) (activated during disasters) and warehouses for emergency response, thorough EOCs.

6. To coordinate Forecast-based Financing (FbF), an anticipatory humanitarian action where they mobilise people and distribute relief items based on a forecast.

7. To assess needs and distribute non-food items (NFIs) like tarpaulin, tents, clothing, hygiene kits, kitchen sets, utensils, buckets, etc.

Communication Strategy

1. Identifying vulnerable areas in project locations in pre and post-monsoon periods

2. Building community volunteer groups in these areas

3. Training them on fetching alerts, alert literacy, creating preparedness and response committees at various levels

4. At the micro-level, communicating through Whatsapp groups, door-to-door information dissemination and conducting pre-monsoon community meetings

Way Forward

1. Working on disseminating information in the absence of the internet, exploring how to work with DDMAs

2. Tracking the dissemination of information through community radio

3. Planning to expand their in other districts

4. Undertaking an impact study of the project

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4   Ward Contingency Plan is prepared to assess vulnerability, resource availability, capacity assessment of a ward. The ward committee consists of ward members, AWWs, ASHAs, school

CivicDataLab's Initiatives

We at CivicDataLab, are working on understanding flood vulnerability in Assam through data and giving data-driven insights for better decision-making for flood preparedness and response at the revenue circle level. We are using public procurement, socio-economic, and geospatial data to develop a holistic understanding of flood vulnerability based on flood exposure, the population's vulnerability, and the government's actions in response to floods. Using these datasets, we will identify vulnerable regions within districts and highlight areas that need attention. Our work is in the direction of guiding the government with data-driven insights for better flood preparedness and response.

Conclusion

Assam, through government and non-government actors, has taken a lot of initiatives for flood preparedness and response. IRCS's work on disseminating flood alerts to communities directly addresses one of the challenges highlighted by ASDMA. At the same time, our work tries to give more data-driven insights into flood preparedness and response, especially at more granular administrative levels. However, these initiatives and efforts are taken in silos without interacting or engaging with other agencies involved in doing similar work. Such interactions and collaborations could complement the work done by other agencies and also facilitate building on already existing work. For example, the vulnerability assessment undertaken by CivicDataLab was of interest to IRCS for expanding their work. The work done by IRCS complemented the work done by ASDMA. If one explores these avenues, there is a potential to contribute to flood preparedness and response.

Click here to watch the session
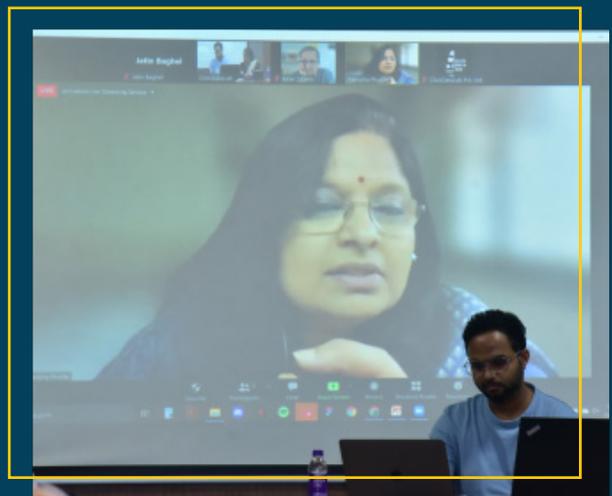
07

Making Access to Data Better By Design

Data is a valuable economic and social resource offering enormous opportunities for citizens, businesses and governments. This exponential volume growth of data and its use poses a question: is the data more accessible, understandable and equitable? This question holds especially for data in civic or public spaces, where one must consider enriching access and its utility.

Through this session, we aim to bring a discussion which formulates us to think on various aspects of the design process to enrich accessibility regarding data.

Objectives:

The primary objectives of this session are to discuss the following things:

1. How the design and design process can benefit civic and public initiatives in digital space concerning data.

2. How the design ecosystem (User researchers/Product Designers /Service system Designers etc.) can add value to these initiatives.

3. Current challenges or limitations we are experiencing in the design sector and how can we overcome them.

4. How we can envision and manage the growth of data accessibility with design for open data platforms

5. In a broader context, we would like to demystify the design process in civic tech.

Panelists
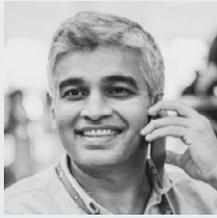
Dr Keyur Sorathia

Associate Professor, Department of Design, IIT Guwahati

Mr Kiran Sabnis

Co-Founder, Director and UX Strategy Consultant at 2Dot47 Consulting Pvt. Ltd.; Co-Founder, Managing Director, and Principal Mentor at Gurumantra Academics Pvt. Ltd.

Ms Manisha Phadke

Founder, School of Design, NMIMS Deemed to be University, Mumbai campus

Moderators

Mr Jatin Baghel

Product Designer, CivicDataLab

Ms Nupura Gawde

Design Researcher, CivicDataLab

Discussion Summary

To recap on the Data Dialogue Assam event, we discussed several topics related to data, whether concerning procurement, child protection, floods, budgets or schemes majorly catering to civic and engagement matters.

The discussion focused mainly on three factors – data, stakeholders and platforms or dashboards. The discussions aimed (i) to understand how data can be made accessible and consumable for a larger and more diverse audience by the interaction of a digital tool and (ii) to consider this digital tool as a mediator or an enabler between users and data, how design can play a pivotal role in doing the same. The panel discussions aimed to demystify this role of design and design process for accessibility of data.

Key Points

Experience in Design and Design Processes as a part of the Assam Government.

Dr Keyur Sorathia has been associated with the Assam government on various projects like the Budget portal and the Procurement Data portal.

He explained that the Assam government system is in its starting phase from the technology point of view. There is a lot of enthusiasm from the government to build the software data ecosystem. Currently, there are multiple constraints, and the primary goal is to create the features and functionalities for the government portals. The government has also taken initiatives in building software from users' point of view, where they are working on making it more interactive and intuitive. The current process aims to build the software and then fit the design process with a reverse engineering methodology.

He also emphasised that designers cannot follow a traditional design process. However, the government is taking proactive steps in thinking from the users' end by involving processes like walking the users through the platform, understanding their views and acknowledging their insights or inputs.

The Difference in conducting user studies in a Corporate space vs a Civic or Social space

In India, very few designers have worked in public or civic spaces. If we understand the complexity and interlinkages between corporate and civic sectors concerning user research, then the following differences emerge:

1. The top-down project is relatively straightforward in the corporate world, but the system is quite complex in government and social space.

2. Research component in corporate is comparatively more minor, whereas, in social space, research is a more prominent component.

Typical or sequential research processes do not work smoothly in civic sectors. One has to be flexible with their research process. One needs enough flexibility in adapting and augmenting various research methods simultaneously.

Introduction to people-centric digital transformation and how data is the new design

Ms Manisha set the context for people-centric digital transformation. She defines people-centric digital transformation as a change in the outward form of interaction. She stresses that transformation means one has to look at people from top to toe – studying their mental models, their behaviours and their aspirations.

She explained that digital tools are enablers, such as the Cowin app, which served during the pandemic's crucial time. The app's primary task was to manage the vaccines but post that, the app could have been used as a community builder or as a tool to identify steps each individual can take during a pandemic.

She also stressed that accessibility is not digital transformation. When data is put out, it needs to be chewed and granulated to make it accessible. If one looks at data as a communication channel, it is always bidirectional. It is not only how the government wants to communicate or convey to the citizens but also how the citizens are looking to communicate. From the government's point of view, there are citizens or users, but there are various personas within the larger group of citizens. One should look at it as a few citizens belonging to different personas and start clustering them based on their context, needs, aspirations and behaviours. Digital tools are just enablers, but the proper context – what builds people's well-being and behaviours – is needed.

How platforms can play a distinct role in making data accessible

Ms Manisha firmly said that one should not look at the word standardisation. She further said that if one looks at it as establishing a standard, it might lead to setting forced user flows. Instead of standardisation, one should define patterns and identify patterns that probably worked out in specific use cases. One should use these defined patterns to create a particular data platform and use it to capture, analyse, facilitate data sets, and for visualisations.

She highlighted that defining those patterns could be challenging. She suggested that one first needs to understand the use case thoroughly and answer questions like the purpose of the exercise and who it caters to. At the same time, capturing some quantitative data might help define the best patterns. One should know the platform's intent and understand the triangulation of datasets and further possibilities. One can lead toward a more futuristic platform by correctly simulating these possibilities. One has to find those lacunas and capture patterns and decide how to design for civic tech platforms.

Additionally, democratising tech and data will add a lot of value to the process, and for that to happen, there is a need to create a trusting want and use case. People generally interpret data, but building relationships between data will help. Newer technologies like Virtual Reality (VR) or gamification of platforms and building it make more sense to data. She emphasised leveraging newer technologies as they are becoming cheaper day by day. For instance, the government was keen on the digital visualisation of Covid-19 management. She concluded by highlighting that the opportunities are in abundance for everyone to build platforms with new technologies.

Conclusion

Overall, design has a growing scope in the civic-tech space. Designers should emphasise how they can make the design process and the design language simple and easy to understand for the government and the user base spread across the nation. Identifying user patterns for civic-tech or social space platforms should be prioritised to help make platforms more sustainable and accessible. Design communities should also make a substantial effort to understand the government ecosystem to support and enrich their data-driven approaches and initiatives.

Click here to watch the session

Conclusion and Way Forward

Data Dialogues - Assam was conceptualised to create a forum to bring together the experiences and perspectives of people from multidisciplinary backgrounds, including bureaucrats, data scientists, designers, economists, lawyers, policy researchers, and technologists, among others. It was an opportunity to understand how different individuals and organisations in Assam share, use and analyse public data. It also highlighted the existing policy landscape for data sharing and accessibility at the central and state level and how these policies will encourage an open data ecosystem. We hope this understanding will contribute towards more publishing and sharing of public data, allowing more people to get information and leading to better governance. Such dialogues/engagement between the government and non-government agencies, researchers and practitioners bring forth the challenges faced and best practices followed by multiple stakeholders in making public data accessible.

We hope that such dialogues will accelerate Assam's progress to proactively publish government data and invest in data sharing, harness it for better evidence-based decisions, and enhance wider uptake of government data among citizens to improve their participation in governance. We also envision conducting such stakeholder consultations in other states.

Annexure

Slide Decks

1. [Welcome Note](#)

2. [Overview of Open Government Data (OGD) Platform India - data.gov.in](#)

3. [State of Public Procurement Data in Assam](#)

4. [Using Data to understand the State of Child Protection Laws in Assam](#)

5. [Real-time Monitoring of Schemes Data at Block and Panchayat Level in Assam](#)

6. [Opportunities with Assam Budget Data](#)

7. [State of Data for Flood Preparedness and Response in Assam](#)

Other Resources

1. [Open Budget Data Standard - Demo dashboard (OBDS)](#)

2. [Fin Assam](#)

3. [Datasets and Report on the JusticeHub](#)

4. [Assam Public Procurement Explorer](#)

5. [Data Dialogues - All sessions – Youtube](#)