



# The ANTS



## NEWSLETTER FROM the ant

JANUARY - MARCH 2018

THE NEW YEAR BROUGHT WITH IT NEW BEGINNINGS AND HENCE NEW HOPES. READ ON TO KNOW HOW THE STARTING MONTHS OF 2018 TURNED OUT FOR US, AS WE CHURN THE WHEEL OF DEVELOPMENT. HAPPY READING!

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## → Women's Day celebrations:



For all of us, especially for the women's team, March 8 was not just a day called International Women's Day but it was time to rejoice their power and celebrate womanhood. One day was too short a time for the women from more than 150 Self Help Groups to organize and celebrate. So, during the entire second week of March, Chirang district witnessed women coming out in pockets and celebrate what we call here 'Mahila Divas' in big fashion..

From songs to dance and outdoor games like tug of war, running race, it was time for women in the villages to let their hair down and enjoy. In certain new project areas, few men who weren't convinced about women going all out and playing, tried to hamper the event. But the women were caught upon the idea of celebration so much that they stood against their own kinsmen and showed them the door.

## → IDeA's New beginnings

IDeA (the Institute of Development Action), an initiative of the ant to strengthen Civil Society action in the Northeast region, has started off a new growth curve last month. With Enakshi Dutta joining in as the new Director, IDeA has also started an office in Guwahati. The next few years will definitely see us taking up exciting work and doing our bit to craft a stronger development sector in the region. .

## → Surprise survey on schools

Beginning of the new year, our Caring 4 Rights team became watchdogs of schools in the region. The team undertook a surprise survey that aimed at deciphering the functionality of schools and ICDS(Anganwadi) centres in the region. The survey was undertaken in 146 Lower Primary schools, 20 Middle schools, one high and higher secondary school and 91 ICDS centres. Overall, schools and ICDS centres from 168 villages covering 28 VDCs (Panchayats) was brought into the survey fold. The survey revealed depressing results for the ICDS centres, where only 38 out of 91 centres were found open. .

Among them only 16 centres had both Anganwadi helper and workers present. However, the schools showed encouraging signs, with about 52% of schools starting classes by the correct 9 am and 82% of schools starting latest by 9.30 a.m. The survey results were then submitted to concerned government officials for further action.

## DISTRICT LEVEL BIGYAN MELA

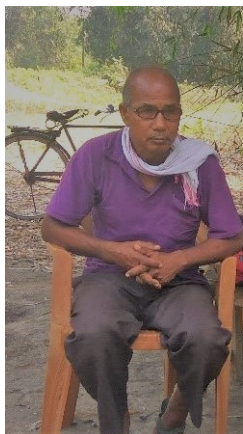


115 students and 20 teachers from 23 government schools came together for a biggest mela of a different kind, a mela of science on..... The stage was set for the display of quality working science models selected from the 23 schools where Project Bigyan is functioning. From hydraulic lifts to grass cutters and vacuum cleaners and robotic cars, the students were enthralling the judges and audience alike with their innovation and razor-sharp answers.

The event was also an opportunity to display what quality teaching of science can do to students, which saw the Director of Education, Bodoland Territorial Council and the School Inspector of District Chirang gracing the occasion. Not very long ago, children here used to drop out from schools fearing science subjects. From then to science models, the students sure have come a long way along with us in the quest for quality education.



## ➔ One man's fight becomes a united cause



Illegal quarrying of sand along the river beds was a common phenomenon in many villages here. While many fell silent on the issue, Mr. Lokicharan Brahma, one of the village headman from the Amguri cluster village in the region, decided that unity can bring about change. .

He, ever since has been on a mission to spread the word across 8 villages, bringing the people together and is rallying against illegal quarrying. Inspired by him, many youngsters have taken up the task of stopping trucks that come for quarrying. Thanks to his efforts, illegal quarrying of sand has completely stopped in his area.

## ➔ Calling out female players for Frisbee teams



The Sports 4 Development Project has been working for almost 3 years now forming adolescent groups and imparting social education through sports. Taking the efforts one notch further, we have decided to form dedicated Ultimate Frisbee teams in the 96 project villages. This time the call was on to get more girls in the team, since most girls drop out of groups once reaching adolescence.

The team was met with sweet surprise, when more than 60 girls turned up for selection from a single village, predominantly Muslim, where girls are generally not allowed to play after certain age. Even as we speak, the selections are going on full swing to select players who would compete at the cluster level and eventually at the District level tournaments.

## ➔ Other Happenings at the ant

- Top officials from UNICEF, Guwahati stayed with **the ant**, visited the remote villages and discussed ways to collaborate for better designing of projects pertaining to children.
- Child Aid Network has agreed to support the LEAP (Learning Ecosystem and Augmentation Project) formerly known as Bigyan project. The new project is designed to improve learning outcomes by stressing on 4Rs (reading, 'riting, 'rithmetic, and recreation) in 120 Lower Primary Schools and improve Science, Maths and Education and build conscious citizenry in 15 Middle Schools.
- UNICEF funded 'Caring 4 Rights' project also gets another year of go-ahead.
- For the first time, project Dolphin observed what is called 'Red Hand Day' that aims at making everyone aware of ways in which our purchases and procurements are linked to employment of children as soldiers in military or private militias ("our hands are soaked in blood") and to give a call against such abuse of children

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