



Initial Poverty and Social Analysis

Project Number: 53277-002
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India: Assam Skill University Project

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Asian Development Bank

CURRENCY EQUIVALENTS

(as of 4 November 2020)

Currency unit	–	Indian Rupees (₹)
₹1.00	=	\$0.0134
\$1.00	=	₹74.43

ABBREVIATIONS

ASU	–	Assam Skill University
R&D	–	research and development

NOTES

- (i) The fiscal year (FY) of the Government of India and its agencies ends on 31 March. “FY” before a calendar year denotes the year in which the fiscal year ends, e.g., FY2020 ends on 31 March 2020.
- (ii) In this report, "\$" refers to United States dollars.

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INITIAL POVERTY AND SOCIAL ANALYSIS

Country:	<input type="text" value="India"/>	Project Title:	<input type="text" value="Assam Skill University Project"/>
Lending/Financing Modality:	<input type="text" value="Project"/>	Department/Division:	<input type="text" value="SARD/SAHS"/>

I. POVERTY IMPACT AND SOCIAL DIMENSIONS

A. Links to the National Poverty Reduction Strategy and Country Partnership Strategy

The Assam Skill University Project aims to strengthen industry-aligned and flexible skills education and training system in Assam by developing management and operating systems, business models, and faculty development and management systems for the Assam Skill University (ASU); developing environmentally sustainable and climate resilient ASU campus and facilities; designing and delivering industry-aligned and flexible skills education and training programs; strengthening engagement in industry-relevant applied research and development (R&D); and enhancing international and regional cooperation in skills education and training. The project supports Assam Agenda 2030 of the Government of Assam which envisions a total elimination of extreme poverty by 2030 through the achievement of a faster economic growth and increased opportunities for nonfarm employment.^a The project is aligned with one of the strategic priorities set out in the Asian Development Bank's country partnership strategy for India, 2018–2022, boosting economic competitiveness to create more and better jobs by addressing the skill gap to support industrialization.^b

B. Poverty Targeting

General intervention Individual or household (TI-H) Geographic (TI-G) Non-income SDGs (SDG1, SDG4, SDG8)

C. Poverty and Social Analysis

1. Key issues and potential beneficiaries. Assam was home to about 24.8 million people aged 15 years and above in 2018, of which over 11.4 million (46%) were in the labor force (84% was in rural areas) and 10.6 million (93% of the labor force) were employed. Though accurate data are unavailable, the share of nonfarm employment appears to have grown steadily, from 32% in 2005 to 44% in 2012, and to 65% in 2018. Fewer prospects for socioeconomic development have propelled out-migration for jobs and education, leading to shortages of skills for manufacturing and services in the state. The incidence of poverty in Assam remains higher than the national average (27.3% as opposed to the national average of 20.7% in 2015–2016) and is concentrated in rural areas, which has worsened amid the novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19). According to a report, the unemployment rate in Assam (about 8% in 2019) may have doubled (around 16%–27%) due to economic contraction triggered by COVID-19, which would, in turn, contribute to a sharp increase in the poverty headcount ratio close to 50%.^c In 2018, 82% of the population aged 15 years and above completed education up to grade 10 and below (including no education), while 13% attained grades 11–12, and only 5%, higher education. Technical and vocational education and training (TVET) and higher education in Assam is undersupplied, as suggested by the number of industrial training institutes (ITIs) per million population (1 in Assam as opposed to the national average of 11 in 2018–2019), the number of colleges per 100,000 population aged 18–23 (15 as opposed to the national average of 28), and the gross enrollment ratio in higher education for the population aged 18–23 (18.7% as opposed to the national average of 26.3%). The project will increase opportunities for industry-aligned and flexible skills education and training at the National Skills Qualification Framework (NSQF) level 5 and above for graduates from higher secondary schools, ITIs, polytechnics, engineering colleges, and universities, as well as professionals and other working age population. The recognition of prior learning (RPL) mechanism established at ASU will facilitate access to skills education and training for those who have no formal qualifications.

2. Impact channels and expected systemic changes. Direct impact channels will be improved access to (i) career and job counselling services at ASU and associated institutions; (ii) industry-aligned, multidisciplinary, and flexible skills education and training offered in various modalities (e.g., on-campus, off-campus, online, “hub-and-spoke”, institute-industry-consortium) at ASU and associated institutions; (iii) entrepreneurship and applied R&D training and support at ASU and associated institutions; and (iv) upgraded pedagogy, assessment, and technical skills of faculty members, trainers, instructors, and assessors at ASU, ITIs, polytechnics, and engineering colleges. The improved access to (i)-(iv) will help students equip employment- and industry-relevant skills and increase their chance of getting employed. Expected systemic changes include (i) better integration of skills education and training with general education which ensures pathways for progression and mobility; (ii) increased knowledge and technology transfer to industries; (iii) higher capacity utilization and lower faculty and trainer vacancy rates at ITIs, polytechnics, and engineering colleges; and (iv) enhanced quality and industry relevance of skills education and training programs provided by various institutions in Assam.

3. Focus of (and resources allocated in) the transaction TA or due diligence. Due diligence will include (i) review of current situations surrounding the poor, scheduled castes and scheduled tribes, women, and other disadvantaged groups in terms of access to and completion of skills education and training, decent employment opportunities, and

access to student advisory, financial counseling and assistance, career and job counselling, other student services, entrepreneurship and applied R&D training and support, and assessments under the RPL mechanism; (ii) assessment of benefits and negative impacts of the project on various stakeholders; (iii) identification of measures to mitigate negative impacts and enhance benefits; and (iv) preparation of a gender equality and social inclusion (GESI) action plan and an indigenous peoples plan.

II. GENDER AND DEVELOPMENT

1. What are the key gender issues in the sector and/or subsector that are likely to be relevant to this project or program?

While women account for 49% of the total population in Assam (Census 2011), stark gender disparities exist in labor force participation, employment, and access to education. The labor force participation rate for women (13% in 2018) is significantly lower than that for men (78%). The unemployment rate for women is also considerably higher (33.9% in 2012) than that for men (8%). Among the female labor force in rural areas, those in farm employment are the majority (79% in 2012, as opposed to 59% of the male labor force in rural areas). In 2012, 91% of women employed earned cash, including 18% whose earnings were both in cash and kind, while 7% were not paid at all. Access to education is limited for women, as suggested by secondary education attainment among women aged 24 years and above (21%, compared to 31% among men in 2012) and gross enrollment ratio in higher education among women aged 18–23 (18.3% versus 19.1% among men in 2018–2019). According to a sample survey, the proportion of female students at ITIs in Assam appears high (63.6%), although their industry exposure (e.g., apprenticeship) is limited and more than half of female students are in non-engineering courses.^d As part of poverty and social assessment, gender stereotypes and issues in skills education and training, career guidance and counselling, career opportunities and choices, employment, workplace practices, salaries, career progression, and leadership and managerial responsibilities will be examined.

2. Does the proposed project or program have the potential to contribute to the promotion of gender equity and/or empowerment of women by providing women's access to and use of opportunities, services, resources, assets, and participation in decision making? Yes No

The project will incorporate measures to enhance access to industry-aligned skills education and training for women, especially in emerging occupations, promote female leadership and management, and ensure participation of female faculty members, trainers, and instructors in training. A GESI action plan will be prepared.

3. Could the proposed project have an adverse impact on women and/or girls or widen gender inequality?
 Yes No

4. Indicate the intended gender mainstreaming category:

GEN (gender equity) EGM (effective gender mainstreaming)
 SGE (some gender elements) NGE (no gender elements)

III. PARTICIPATION AND EMPOWERMENT

1. Who are the main stakeholders of the project, including beneficiaries and negatively affected people? Identify how they will participate in the project design.

The main stakeholders of the project are ASU, including its leadership, management, faculty, and staff; graduates from higher secondary schools, ITIs, polytechnics, engineering colleges, and universities, professionals, and other working age population who would receive skills education and training offered by ASU and associated institutions, as well as their families; ITIs, polytechnics, engineering colleges, academic colleges, and universities, including leadership, trainers, instructors, faculty members; industries and enterprises which would collaborate with ASU and associated institutions in skills education and training and applied R&D. They will be consulted through interviews, focus group discussions, and workshops.

2. How can the project contribute (in a systemic way) to engaging and empowering stakeholders and beneficiaries, particularly, the poor, vulnerable, and excluded groups? What issues in the project design require participation of the poor and excluded?

Access to industry-aligned quality skills education and training is critical for graduates from higher secondary schools, ITIs, polytechnics, engineering colleges, and universities, professionals, and other working age population, as well as their families, to obtain decent employment. Their interests will be considered, and measures to enhance access, industry alignment, and quality of skills education and training programs will be included in the project design.

3. What are the key, active, and relevant civil society organizations (CSOs) in the project area? What is the level of civil society organization participation in the project design?

Information generation and sharing (M) Consultation (M) Collaboration (L) Partnership

Key CSOs are industry associations including relevant chambers of commerce and other industry representative bodies, as well as trainer and faculty, student, and family representative organizations who will be involved during project design.

4. Are there issues during project design for which participation of the poor and excluded is important? What are they and how should they be addressed? Yes No

Prospective students and their families will be consulted to identify measures to make skills education and training more accessible to them, and to improve their chance of obtaining decent employment.

IV. SOCIAL SAFEGUARDS

A. Involuntary Resettlement Category A B C FI

1. Does the project have the potential to involve involuntary land acquisition resulting in physical and economic displacement? Yes No The land allotted for the construction of ASU campus and facilities is owned by the government and no involuntary resettlement is expected.

2. What action plan is required to address involuntary resettlement as part of the transaction TA or due diligence process?

- Resettlement plan Resettlement framework Social impact matrix
 Environmental and social management system arrangement None

B. Indigenous Peoples Category A B C FI

1. Does the proposed project have the potential to directly or indirectly affect the dignity, human rights, livelihood systems, or culture of indigenous peoples? Yes No

According to the Census 2011, the scheduled tribes comprised 12.4% of the total population in Assam. 7% of the tribal population in Assam lived in Darrang District where ASU will be located. The land allotted to ASU is owned by the government and no direct or indirect negative impacts of the project on the tribal population are expected. To increase positive impacts and benefits for the tribal population, indigenous peoples safeguard due diligence is being conducted and an indigenous peoples plan will be prepared.

2. Does it affect the territories or natural and cultural resources indigenous peoples own, use, occupy, or claim, as their ancestral domain? Yes No

3. Will the project require broad community support of affected indigenous communities? Yes No

4. What action plan is required to address risks to indigenous peoples as part of the transaction TA or due diligence process?

- Indigenous peoples plan Indigenous peoples planning framework Social impact matrix
 Environmental and social management system arrangement None

V. OTHER SOCIAL ISSUES AND RISKS

1. What other social issues and risks should be considered in the project design?

- Creating decent jobs and employment (M) Adhering to core labor standards (L) Labor retrenchment
 Spread of communicable diseases, including HIV/AIDS (M) Increase in human trafficking Affordability (M)
 Increase in unplanned migration Increase in vulnerability to natural disasters Creating political instability
 Creating internal social conflicts Others, please specify _____

2. How are these additional social issues and risks going to be addressed in the project design?

The project will contribute to the creation of decent jobs and employment by increasing skilled workforce needed for infrastructure and industrial development in Assam. Compliance with core labor standards and dissemination of information on the risk of communicable diseases, including COVID-19 and HIV/AIDS, will be included in the project agreement, bidding documents, contracts, and environmental management plan, and monitored and reported during project implementation. Scholarships and other support will be considered for students from poor families and disadvantaged backgrounds to increase their access to skills education and training offered by ASU.

VI. TRANSACTION TA OR DUE DILIGENCE RESOURCE REQUIREMENT

1. Do the terms of reference for the transaction TA (or other due diligence) contain key information needed to be gathered during transaction TA or due diligence process to better analyze (i) poverty and social impact, (ii) gender impact, (iii) participation dimensions, (iv) social safeguards, and (v) other social risks. Are the relevant specialists identified? Yes No

2. What resources (e.g., consultants, survey budget, and workshop) are allocated for conducting poverty, social, and/or gender analysis, and participation plan during the transaction TA or due diligence?

Two person-months of national social development and gender specialist has been engaged under the TA facility to conduct poverty, social, and gender analysis, and indigenous peoples safeguard due diligence, and prepare a GESI action plan and an indigenous peoples plan.

^a Transformation and Development Department, Government of Assam. 2018. *Assam Agenda 2030: Strategies and Actions for Achieving Sustainable Development Goals*. Guwahati.

^b Asian Development Bank. 2017. *Country Partnership Strategy: India, 2018–2022—Accelerating Inclusive Economic Transformation*. Manila.

^c The Times of India. 2020. "COVID crisis may push half of Assam population into poverty, says study". 2 June 2020. <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/quwahati/covid-crisis-may-push-half-of-assam-population-into-poverty-says-study/articleshow/76153386.cms>.

^d Ernst & Young. 2020. *Gender Study to Identify Constraints on Female Participation in Skills Training and Labor Market in India*. Kolkata: Ernst & Young LLP.