



26th Annual Conference of North Eastern Economic Association

&

National Seminar

March 27-28, 2026

KKHSOU City Campus, Khanapara, Guwahati

Organized by

KRISHNA KANTA HANDIQUI STATE OPEN UNIVERSITY

In Collaboration with

**OME0 KUMAR DAS INSTITUTE OF SOCIAL CHANGE
AND DEVELOPMENT**

About the Conference

The idea of economic development has evolved over the last century from a narrow focus on economic growth to the broader concept of sustainable development. Since the adoption of the UN's 2030 Agenda in 2015, countries and international agencies have been actively tracking progress through Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) indices and integrating the SDG framework into national and sub-national policies. Economic development, as explained by Schumpeter's concept of "creative destruction," depends on continuous and dynamic innovation that replaces existing products and services in the market with new ones. In today's context, this process has become more intense and rapid, making strong innovation ecosystems essential. India's North Eastern Region, despite recent improvements in infrastructure, remains comparatively underdeveloped due to persistent gaps in innovation and institutional capacity. While infrastructure has improved over the past decade, innovation and institutional ecosystems have not kept pace. To address this gap, there is a need to strengthen research and educational institutions, improve existing universities and R&D units, and develop skilled human resources. The 26th Annual Conference of NEEA is primarily going to provide a platform to young and accomplished economists and other social scientist, development specialists and policy makers to assess, deliberate and interrogate on these gamut of issues in the contest of the North East.

About NEEA

The North Eastern Economic Association (NEEA), established on 19 February 1997, is a non-political, non-partisan, voluntary regional economic body with a national outlook, registered under the Societies Registration Act of 1860. The Association has organized 25 annual conferences focusing on economic issues of North East India and regularly conducts talks, workshops, and seminars on region-specific and contemporary issues. It also publishes conference volumes and lectures. Beyond its annual conferences, NEEA works to promote and coordinate research on socio-economic problems of the North East, provides a platform for scholarly interaction and exchange of ideas, disseminates knowledge to foster a research-friendly environment, and enhances technical competence in teaching and research in economics and related disciplines. For more please visit <https://neea.org.in/>

About KKHSOU

Krishna Kanta Handiqui State Open University (KKHSOU), the first State Open University in North East India, was established under the KKHSOU Act, 2005. As the 14th Open University in the country, it operates from its head- quarters at Patgaon, Rani, Guwahati, and is supported by a modern academic and administrative campus at Resham Nagar, Khanapara. Upholding its motto 'Education Beyond Barriers,' KKHSOU is dedicated to delivering accessible, flexible and technology-enabled higher education to learners from diverse backgrounds. With a cumulative learner base of over 5 lakhs, the university offers UG, PG, Diploma, certificate and Add-on courses designed in line with national curriculum standards. Since July 2023, KKHSOU has adopted the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 and offers programmes in accordance with the UGC's Curriculum and Credit Framework, along with the guidelines issued by the Government of Assam for NEP implementation. For more please visit www.kkhsou.ac.in

About OKDISCD

Omeo Kumar Das Institute of Social Change and Development (OKDISCD) is an autonomous Institute situated in Guwahati that undertakes, promotes and coordinates research on problems and processes of social transformation and development of Assam and other States of the North Eastern region of India and contributes to the formulation of strategies and programmes for speedier regional development. As envisaged by the founders of the Institute, it acts as a "clearinghouse of ideas and information on research in social sciences with special emphasis on the problems of Assam and other States of the North-Eastern region". For more please visit www.okd.in

CONFERENCE THEMES AND SUB-THEMES

THEME 1: SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT, INNOVATION AND INSTITUTIONS IN NORTH EAST INDIA

The historical discourse on economic development has undergone a significant transformation, moving from an identification with mere economic growth to the holistic paradigm of sustainable development. Since the 2015 adoption of the 2030 Agenda by the UN, international and national entities have intensified efforts to integrate the SDG framework into policy and practice, utilizing indices to monitor progress. Schumpeter's notion of 'creative destruction'—the required, disruptive innovation necessary for sustainable development —is arguably being realized with unprecedented

intensity today. This process is fundamentally dependent on cultivating a robust, continuous innovation ecosystem.

The North Eastern Region (NER) of India (comprising 4% of the population and 8% of the area of the country) faces comparative underdevelopment. An examination of the reports with respect to the overall index score shows a gradual improvement in the overall SD situation in the NER with the improvement in the overall SDG scores for all the NER states during 2023-24 as against 2018-19 . Scores for States range from 49 to 79 in 2023-24, marking a substantial improvement from the year 2018-19. However, the latest SDG report (2023-24) also shows that four out of eight states in the North Eastern Regions are having SDG scores which are below the national average. When it comes to individual SDGs, Assam, Meghalaya and Nagaland , are below the national average score in 11 of the SDGs; Arunachal in 9 of the SDGs, and Tripura and Manipur in 7 of the SDGs. Even though Assam, Arunachal and Tripura have improved upon their relative position and Manipur has maintained its status quo, the rest of the four states of Meghalaya, Nagaland, Mizoram and Sikkim have experienced regression in their relative position in numbers of individual SDG Goals below the national average. This clearly shows that some other states and UTs in the country have done better than these NER states during this period of time. With respect to three(3) of the important goals of Good Health and well-being, Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure and responsible consumption and production, 7 out of the 8 NER states are below the national average. Similarly, with respect to the SDG goals of Clean Water and Sanitation and Sustainable Cities and Communities, six (6) of the NER states are below the national average score. When it comes to the goals of no poverty, quality education, affordable and clean energy, life on land and peace, justice and strong institutions; 5 of the states are below the national average. Altogether in 10 of the individual SDGs, more than fifty percent of the NER states are below the national average. On the front of goals of no poverty, clean water and sanitation, affordable and clean energy, responsible consumption and production, climate action and life on land, the number of states scoring below the national average has increased vis a vis the year 2018-19. This clearly shows that the region might have increased its overall score but relatively in these six SDGs, the other states in the country have done better.

When it comes sub-optimal status of sustainable development in the North East, macro-level analysis attributes it to shortcomings in infrastructure, institutions, and innovation. Although infrastructure development has seen tremendous gains in the last decade, the accompanying innovation and institutional ecosystems have not advanced commensurately. Critical development of the innovation ecosystem requires creation of appropriate research and educational institutions, finetuning the existing intuitions such as universities, R&D units of the Government and the private sector and above all creating capable, well-trained and accomplished manpower to carry on seamless innovations. It also depends on the enabling role played by formal institutions such as Government, Market and Community and informal institutions such as the values, practices, morals, customs and traditions of the society.

SUB-THEMES

- Evolution of the Sustainable Development as a concept/approach
- The current practice of Sustainable Development
- The SDG framework, and methods for measuring Sustainable Development.

- Contextualising and Interrogating SD in NER
- SDGs, SDG Index and the North East
- Creative Destruction and Sustainable Development in the North East
- Progression in Methodology to measure SD
- Formal Institutions (Market, Government, Community) and Sustainable Development in the North East
- Informal Institutions and Sustainable Development in the North East
- Innovations and Sustainable Development in the North East
- Innovations, Institutions and Sustainable Development in the North East
- Public Policy, Innovations and Sustainable Development in the North East
- Climate Change and Sustainable Development in the North East
- Indian Knowledge System, Innovations and Sustainable Development in the North East
- Food Security and Sustainable Development in the North East
- Migration, Institutions and Sustainable Development in the North East
- Climate Finance and Sustainable Development in the North East
- Tourism, Industry, Agriculture and Sustainable Development in the North East

THEME II: LABOUR MARKET IN NORTH EAST INDIA

The economic fortunes of the states in the North Eastern Region (NER) have witnessed a relative decline in the post-liberalisation period. This is evident from the per capita GSDP of most states in the region falling below the national average. The region's economic backwardness is closely reflected in its labour market characteristics. A disproportionately high share of the workforce continues to be engaged in agriculture in most NER states, not because the sector is highly productive or remunerative, but largely due to the limited availability of quality non-farm opportunities. The manufacturing sector, especially factory-level manufacturing, remains conspicuously underdeveloped, with all states in the region reporting a substantially lower share of workers engaged in manufacturing compared to the all-India level. In contrast, the service sector has emerged as the major source of job creation, although most service-sector jobs remain informal, low-productive, and subsistence-oriented. Urbanisation in the region has also followed a distinct pattern. Many urban centres historically evolved as administrative hubs or settlements built around extractive industries, resulting in weak economic linkages with rural areas. Consequently, the employment-generating potential of urban centres remains limited, restricting the possibilities for meaningful and sustainable employment. Demographically, the region has a relatively young population; in several states, individuals in the working-age group (15–59 years) account for below 50% of the total population, while others hover slightly above this threshold. The overall literacy rate is comparatively favourable, and many youth possess proficiency in English as a second language. However, technical education and vocational training remain inadequate, with most NER states reporting a share of technically trained graduates far below the national average. This raises important concerns about what the future holds for the region's young entrants into the labour force.

Unemployment in the region remains high, particularly among youth aged 15–29 years. The unemployment rate in the region has been above the national average as reflected in the various rounds of reports of NSSO. As per the latest 2023-24 PLFS report, both in the rural as well as urban sectors, five of the states including Assam have unemployment rate

higher than the national average. The urban female unemployment rate as per NSS usual status has been substantially higher than the male unemployment in all the NER states. (PLFS: 2023-24). The economy of the region recently shows a shift towards self-employment and stagnating real earnings across all categories of employment. Additionally, labour market outcomes indicate that a significant proportion of workers are engaged in low-quality, casual employment. One distinctive feature, however, is the relatively higher labour force participation of women in the region compared to the national average, leading to a more gender-neutral labour market in relative terms. In the absence of adequate livelihood opportunities, migration has increasingly emerged as an important livelihood strategy. However, much of this migration is seasonal and distress-driven, with workers often engaged in low-paying occupations in destinations characterised by precarious work conditions and inadequate social protection. Against this backdrop, the proposed conference seeks to promote an informed and multidisciplinary discussion on the following broad sub-themes:

SUB-THEMES

- Trends and patterns of transition in labour markets in North East India
- Labour force participation across states, sectors, gender, and social groups in NER
- Employment diversification in the economy of the North East
- High-value agriculture and labour absorption in the agricultural sector
- Urbanisation and its implications for labour force participation and employment structure
- Patterns of employment by level of education
- Labour migration, remittances, and their impact on rural livelihood
- Out-migration and the feminisation of agriculture
- Gendered dimensions of migration experiences
- Livelihood diversification in the North Eastern Region
- Structural transformation and Labour Market in North East
- Industrialisation, skill gap and labour market in the North East.
- Impact of government programmes such as MGNREGA on rural employment

RESEARCHERS' FORUM:

Besides the two main themes the Researchers' Forum segment welcomes papers based on on-going or completed research works related to M Phil, PhD, Post Doctorate or research projects. Under this, young researchers and senior scholars are expected to present findings of their research work in any field of Economics or related disciplines. The scholars submitting papers for this segment should specify the basis of the paper (e.g., MPhil/PhD/Post-doc./Project etc.) and in case of being part of funded projects should acknowledge the sponsoring agency.

DATES AND GUIDELINES:

ABSTRACT (300 words) OR EXTENDED ABSTRACT (700 words) as the case may be to be sent to neeakkh@gmail.com with a copy to neeasecretary@gmail.com as document file on or before **15 February, 2026** with the subject: 'Abstract for NEEA 2026'.

- Acceptance: latest by **20 February, 2026**.
- Soft copies of full paper in MS Word (max. 5000 words): by **10 March 2026**

Registration Fees:

Category	With Accommodation	Without Accommodation
Members	INR 2500/	INR 1500/
No-members	INR 3000/	INR 2500/
Research Scholar/Students	INR 2000/	INR 1000/

*Registration fees include food, accommodation and conference kit.

** No TA will be provided to the registered participants

Payments Details

Bank Account No. 37066455347

Name of Account Holder: KKHSOU INTERNATIONAL SEMINAR

IFSC: SBIN0004419

Abstracts and Papers must be sent to neeakkh@gmail.com
with a copy to secretaryneea@gmail.com

Link for Registration: <https://forms.gle/f3FuhSEYXotDLd8J8>

Last Date for Registration: February 28, 2026

BEST PAPER AWARD AND ITS GUIDELINES:

There will be maximum three best research paper awards for young researchers. Maximum two scholars can author a paper and both must not be above 40 years of age. A proof of his/her age (e.g. class X Board Certificate or any other with date of birth mentioned) must be submitted along with the paper.

For consideration of award, full paper should be submitted within the deadline. There will be no consideration based on only abstract. Willingness to participate in the competition must be intimated while submitting the full paper.

ORGANISING COMMITTEE:

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Prof. Saswati Choudhury Director, OKDISCD

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