

Climate Compatible Development Film fest held



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The Climate Compatible [Development Film Festival](#) kickstarted the first of its regional screening in Guwahati on Friday December 19. Three films produced by the Climate & [Development](#) Knowledge Network ([CDKN](#)), and in partnership with Television Trust for [Environment](#) and the Assam Times Foundation, the film screening's objective was to galvanise discussion around climate change, its impact on [indigenous](#) communities in the [North East](#), lack of representation of women in climate change negotiations and the power of film to spur discussion and action on climate change, especially amongst youth groups.

The 3 films: For a safer future – Insights on climate resilience from [India](#); The forgotten women in [India](#)'s climate plans; Climate change and migration in [Bangladesh](#) – Living on the go, tell stories on the impact of climate change on diverse communities from Uttarakhand to Karnataka. Loss of livelihoods, distress migration, destruction of crops and fisheries, is the reality that many face on a day-to-day basis. And yet there are inspiring change strategies adopted by communities, such [as](#) in Gorakhpur, Uttar Pradesh, where different stakeholders, such [as](#) government, communities, and civil society have come together to create climate compatible development.

The panel discussion following the film screenings facilitated in bringing the diverse environmental and climate change issues in Assam and the [North East](#). Sanjin Sanbapandit states that “we should not get ‘panicky’ about communities cutting trees”, in drawing attention to the livelihoods of forest dependent communities and also stating that felled trees should be re-planted, and that in contrast the 100,000's of [vehicle](#) on Guwahati's road were doing more damage. In taking individual responsibility for mitigating climate change, Mubina Akhtar, Environmental [Journalist](#) and Activist, also demanded critical reflection from the middle class who cannot even take minor power cuts.

Today's auditorium at NEDFi House was full with a largely young audience who enthusiastically engaged with speakers on the role of civil society in climate change, the changing landscape of the [North East](#) and the lived realities of people's lives in Dhemaji district. A member from Dhemaji district informed the audience of how he spent 4-5 years living on the embankment of the River Gai [as](#) a result of having been displaced due to flooding. Increased sand deposition in the district has led to drastic changes in the geography and the livelihoods of the district.

Yet, despite the seriousness of the impact of climate change and environmental issues on people's livelihoods and women, these largely remain outside of mainstream media. Dr. Shalini Sharma of Department of Ecology & [Environment](#), Tata Institute of [Social](#) Science, Guwahati, put the issue on the table in saying that "[environment](#) is a hardcore political issue" and explained that media houses and institutions in the region were disinclined to cover serious environmental issues, something that needs to change [as](#) we move to facing the realities of climate change.

Dr. Shalini Sharma also highlighted the politics of women's participation in climate change negotiations and the need to open up 'political corridors' for women's representation in these spaces. Dr Polly Vauqueline, Women's Studies, Gauhati University, highlighted the need for more informative research on the gendered dimensions of climate change and in particularly representing the diversity of North Eastern women. The film screenings drew consensus from the audience that similar films were needed to showcase the impact of climate change on the women of the [North East](#) and the role of oral storytelling in bringing women's perspectives in climate change policies.

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