

**NORTH EAST SDG  
INDEX 2021-2022 FLAWED:  
Changlang District An  
'Asprian', Not 'Front Runner'  
In Ranking**



**ASIAN CENTRE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS**

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## 1. Executive Summary: Changlang District ought to be ranked as aspirant

On 26 August 2021, the National Institution for Transforming India (NITI Aayog), established by the Government of India to replace the erstwhile Planning Commission, released the first edition of the “*North Eastern Region (NER) District SDG Index Report and Dashboard 2021–22*” prepared with the Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region (Ministry of DONER) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). The Index measures the performance of 103 out of 120 districts in the eight North Eastern States of Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim and Tripura on the expansive set of the Global Goals, including health, education, gender, economic growth, institutions, climate change and environment, among others. The index estimation was prepared based on data on indicators for 15 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) using 84

indicators, covering 50 SDG targets. SDG 14 and SDG 17 were not included by the NITI Aayog for not being relevant in the context of north eastern states.<sup>1</sup>

In this report, the Asian Centre for Human Rights (ACHR) examined “*North Eastern Region (NER) District SDG Index Report and Dashboard 2021–22*” and found that the findings of the NITI Aayog are flawed especially with respect to the ranking of Changlang district of Arunachal Pradesh.

Changlang district is one of the 25 districts of Arunachal Pradesh included in the ranking and computation. The ranking was done based on composite score ranges from 0 to 100 and denotes the overall achievement of the district in realising the targets under the SDGs. A score of 100 implies that the district has achieved the targets set for 2030. Based on the score, each district is categorised into one of the four categories of Aspirant (score of 0-49), Performer (50-64), Front Runner (65-99) and Achiever (100).<sup>2</sup>

Changlang district is ranked 35<sup>th</sup> with composite score of 68.53 among the 103 districts of the Northeast States as per the NER SDG Index of the NITI Aayog. With score of 68.53, Changlang district is in the category of “Front Runner”. The ranking of Changlang district among all the districts as indexed by the NITI Aayog is given in the table below:

**Table 1: Indexing of Changlang district by the NITI Aayog, Ministry of DONER and UNDP**

SDG	Score	Rank	Category
Goal 1 No Poverty	55	64	Performer
Goal 2 Zero Hunger	73	11	Front Runner
Goal 3 Good Health and Well-being	54	71	Performer
Goal 4 Quality Education	64	37	Performer
Goal 5 Gender Equality	95	8	Front Runner
Goal 6 Clean Water and Sanitation	84	18	Front Runner
Goal 7 Affordable and Clean Energy	100	1	Achiever
Goal 8 Decent Work and Economic Growth	60	83	Performer
Goal 9 Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure	55	67	Performer
Goal 10 Reduced Inequalities	67	51	Front Runner
Goal 11 Sustainable Cities and Communities	51	75	Performer

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Goal 12 Responsible Consumption and Production	70	54	Front Runner
Goal 13 Climate Action	33	79	Aspirant
Goal 15 Life on Land	99	13	Front Runner
Goal 16 Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions	68	56	Front Runner

The ACHR examined ten goals with respect to Changlang district of Arunachal Pradesh. These included no poverty; zero hunger; good health and well being; quality education; gender equality; clean water and sanitation; affordable and clean energy; decent work and economic growth; reduced inequalities; and peace, justice and strong institutions.

As per the NITI Aayog’s District SDG Index, Changlang district performed relatively well in comparison to other districts of the Northeast in the ten SDG Goals examined by the ACHR.

However, the ranking of Changlang district is flawed as it did not capture the real picture. The Index failed to include the discrimination and exclusion faced by the Chakma and Hajong communities of the district. As per 2011 census, the total population of the Chakma and Hajong is 43,027 in Changlang district. In other words, they constitute over 29% of the total population (1,48,226) of the district.<sup>3</sup>

The Chakmas and Hajongs have been facing discrimination, denial of rights and exclusion from development and welfare programmes of the government since the 1980s. All the facilities provided to them previously were withdrawn one after another. In 1980, the state government had banned the employment of Chakmas and Hajongs and stopped issuing trade licenses to members of either community.<sup>4</sup> In 1991, ration cards were withdrawn from them by the state government,<sup>5</sup> which are yet to be restored. They are not provided identity documentation such as birth certificates,<sup>6</sup> and excluded from the Panchayati Raj, most government schemes including food security,<sup>7</sup> old age pension, NREGA, voting rights, Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (PMJAY), Chief Minister Arogya Arunachal Yojana (CMAAY), Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAJ), etc.

Changlang district cannot claim to be performing under the SDG when over 29% of its population remained excluded from socio-economic welfare schemes of the government.

As per ACHR’s estimate using the same index of the NITI Aayog, Changlang district should be classified as an “Aspirant” as given below:

**Table 2: Indexing of Changlang district by the ACHR**

CHANGLANG DISTRICT					
SDG	By NITI Aayog			Ranking by ACHR	
	Score	Rank	Category		
Goal 1 No Poverty	55	64	Performer	Aspirant	Over 29% of the population in the district are excluded from government welfare schemes such as NFSA, MGNREGA, PMMVY, PMAY, PMJAY/related State schemes, etc and therefore, it had to be ranked as aspirant.
Goal 2 Zero Hunger	73	11	Front Runner	Aspirant	Over 29% of the population were deprived of food and nutritional security, agricultural schemes, etc and therefore, it had to be ranked as aspirant.
Goal 3 Good Health and Well-being	54	71	Performer	Aspirant	The ranking of the district will further fall if the exclusion of over 29% of the population is taken into account. The situation is worse in areas inhabited by the Chakmas and Hajongs.
Goal 4 Quality Education	64	37	Performer	Aspirant	The ranking will fall as the educational situation in areas inhabited by Chakmas and Hajongs is deplorable. The schools lacked teachers with no basic infrastructure and amenities as required as per norms. There is no access to technical and vocational education for Chakmas and Hajongs of the district.

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Goal 5 Gender Equality	95	8	Front Runner	Aspirant	The institutional discrimination faced by the Chakma and Hajong communities has a devastating impact towards the empowerment of women and girls of these two communities. Because of the discrimination and lack of access to women related welfare schemes, the women and girls from these two communities are not in a position to assert their rights.
Goal 6 Clean Water and Sanitation	84	18	Front Runner	Aspirant	Majority of the Chakma and Hajong population of the district is unable to access improved drinking water facilities including piped water supply in premises. Majority of schools in the Chakma and Hajong inhabited areas in the district have no functional toilet facility for girls.
Goal 7 Affordable and Clean Energy	100	1	Achiever	Aspirant	Majority of the Chakma and Hajong households still lack access to clean fuel for cooking and many villages are still to be electrified.
Goal 8 Decent Work and Economic Growth	60	83	Performer	Aspirant	Over 29% of population of the district is excluded from employment opportunities including MGNREGA.

Goal 10 Reduced Inequalities	67	51	Front Runner	Aspirant	Over 29% of the population in the district are excluded from the panchayati system and MGNREGA.
Goal 16 Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions	68	56	Front Runner	Aspirant	The Chakmas and Hajongs face discrimination even in accessing government documentation including birth certificates.

The ACHR recommendations to the NITI Aayog, the Ministry of DONER and the UNDP (1) to take into account the exclusion of the Chakmas and Hajongs in Changlang district while preparing the North Eastern Region (NER) District SDG Index Report and Dashboard in the future and (2) include the Changlang district in the Aspirational Districts programme of the NITI Aayog by to quickly and effectively transform this under-developed district by undertaking specific programmes focused on the Chakmas and Hajongs of the district.

## 2. Ranking of Changlang district flawed, over 29% population excluded

### 2.1 Background of the exclusion of the Chakmas and Hajongs i.e. over 29% of the population of Changlang district

As per 2011 census, the total population of the Chakma and Hajong is 43,027 in Changlang district. In other words, they constituted over 29% of the total population (1,48,226) of the district.<sup>8</sup>

However, as migrants from East Pakistan and descendants of migrants, the Chakmas and Hajongs continue to face racial discrimination and are excluded from schemes meant for effective implementation of the SDGs.

In early 1964, about 2,902 Chakma and Hajong families consisting of 14,888 persons were forced to migrate to India due to communal violence and displacement by the construction of Kaptai dam in the Chittagong Hill Tracts of then East Pakistan. The Government of India decided to settle the Chakma and Hajong families in the then North Eastern Frontier Agency (NEFA), present day Arunachal Pradesh, under a 'definite plan of rehabilitation' to beef up security following the 1962 Indo-China war. Accordingly, during 1964-1969, 2,902 families comprising 14,888 persons were settled in NEFA in three



districts namely Lohit (now Namsai), Tirap (now Changlang) and Subansiri (present day Papum Pare).<sup>9</sup>

However, in the 1970s, anti-foreigner agitation engulfed Assam and it spread to the entire region. The Chakmas and Hajongs of Arunachal Pradesh started to be targeted by the State government. Since 1980, they had been excluded from development and welfare programmes of the government.

In 1980, the state government had banned the employment of Chakmas and Hajongs and stopped issuing trade licenses to members of either community.<sup>10</sup> In 1991, ration cards for access to public distribution system were withdrawn by the state government.<sup>11</sup> They are not provided identity documentation such as birth certificates,<sup>12</sup> and excluded from the Panchayati Raj, most government schemes including food security,<sup>13</sup> old age pension, NREGA, voting rights, Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (PMJAY), Chief Minister Arogya Arunachal Yojana (CMAAY), Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAJ), etc.

In October 1995, the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) approached the Supreme Court of India to protect the lives and liberties of the Chakmas and Hajongs because of the failure of the State of Arunachal Pradesh to forcibly expel the Chakmas and Hajongs out of the State. On 9<sup>th</sup> January 1996, the Supreme Court pronounced its judgment in the case of *National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) Vs State of Arunachal Pradesh*<sup>14</sup> by declaring the Chakmas and Hajongs as citizens and directing the Government of India and the State of Arunachal Pradesh to process their citizenship applications.

However, the citizenship applications of the Chakmas and Hajongs were never processed. Another petition was filed by the Committee for Citizenship Rights of the Chakmas of Arunachal Pradesh (*Committee for C.R. of C.A.P.*) seeking implementation of the Supreme judgment of 9<sup>th</sup> January 1996. On 17 September 2015, the Supreme Court once again pronounced its judgment in *Committee for C.R. of C.A.P. & Ors vs State Of Arunachal Pradesh & Ors*<sup>15</sup> directing the Government of India and the State of Arunachal Pradesh to process their citizenship applications within three months. However, not a single application has been processed as on date.

The descendants of these Chakma and Hajong migrants are citizens by birth under Section 3(1)(a) of the Citizenship Act of 1955 which states that “every person born in India, (a) on or after the 26th day of January, 1950, but before the 1st day of July, 1987” is a citizen by birth.<sup>16</sup> However, only about 6,000 out of 60,500 Chakmas and Hajongs born in India have been included in the voter lists because of racial profiling and discrimination. The Election Commission of India in its Order No. 23/ARUN/2003 dated 3rd March, 2004 recognised the racial discrimination against the Chakmas and Hajongs for non-inclusion in the following way:



*“Under Article 325 of the Constitution, it is laid down that no person shall be ineligible for inclusion in or claim to be included in any electoral roll for any constituency on grounds only of religion, race, castes, sex or any of them. It is evident that the names of the aforesaid eligible Chakmas in the State of Arunachal Pradesh have not been included in the electoral rolls mainly for the reason that they belong to the Chakma tribe/race, which is violative of the Constitutional mandate of Article 325.”<sup>17</sup>*

The Chakmas and Hajongs continue to face systematic State sponsored discrimination which prevents them to be counted for inclusion in the SDGs.

## **2.2 Why the exclusion of the Chakmas and Hajongs in Changlang district makes the SDG ranking flawed**

The Changlang district of Arunachal Pradesh is ranked 35<sup>th</sup> among the 103 districts of the North East States as per the NER SDG Index of the NITI Aayog. The district is in Front Runner category with composite score of 68.53.

However, the ranking of Changlang district by the NITI Aayog is flawed. The NITI Aayog failed to consider the institutional discrimination faced by the Chakma and Hajong communities in the district. As per 2011 census, the total population of Changlang district is 1,48,226 persons. Of these, the Chakma and Hajong population is 43,027 or over 29% of the total population of the district.<sup>18</sup>

Due to the institutional discrimination, the Chakma and Hajong population in the district are excluded from all governmental welfare schemes/programmes including National Food Security Act, 2013 (NFSA), the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, 2005 (MGNREGA), etc. As these two communities are excluded and denied rights, they do not feature in any official data available with both at the Centre and State which have been used by the NITI Aayog to arrive at the ranking of the district. Therefore, the SDG ranking of Changlang district is completely flawed as it failed to include over 29% of population of the district.

Five SDGs i.e. Goal 9 (Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure); Goal 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities); Goal 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production); Goal 13 (Climate Action); and Goal 15 (Life on Land) are not examined in view of the irrelevance of the indicators used to measure these goals with respect to the two communities of the district.

### **2.2.1. SDG 1 No Poverty**

Goal 1 encompasses the aim of eradicating poverty - not only in monetary terms but in all forms and dimensions by 2030 including by targeting the poor and vulnerable. For this, the NITI Aayog has used eight indicators for calculation of the progress of this vital goal in Changlang district. These eight



A Chakma house displaying abject poverty

indicators are 1) percentage of beneficiaries covered under NFSA; 2) head count ratio as per the Multi-Dimensional Poverty Index; 3) persons provided employment as a percentage of persons who demanded employment under MGNREGA; 4) percentage of Self-Help Groups (SHGs) provided credit linkage; 5) percentage of women receiving benefits under Pradhan Mantri Matri Vandana Yojana (PMMVY) or any other maternity related State schemes against target; 6) percentage of affordable houses completed against sanctioned (rural +urban) under Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY) and related State schemes; 7) percentage of households with any usual member covered by a health scheme or health insurance; and 8) hospital beds empanelled under Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (PMJAY) or related State schemes.

As per the NER District SDG Index, the score for Goal 1 ranges between 84 and 24 for the 103 districts included in the ranking and computation by the NITI Aayog. Changlang district ranked 64<sup>th</sup> in the Index with score of 55 out of 100 and was placed in the category of Performer districts. Twenty districts are in the category of Aspirants with scores less than 50 including seven districts of Aruanchal Pradesh namely East Kameng (42), Kamle (31), Kurung Kumey (43), Leparada (24), Lower Siang (34), Pakke Kessang (38) and Shi Yomi (47). Leparada district with score of 24 was the worst performer and in the bottom of the Index.<sup>19</sup>

Clearly, the ranking and score of Changlang district is flawed. This is because government welfare schemes/ programmes such as NFSA, MGNREGA,

PMMVY, PMAY, PMJAY/related State schemes, etc used as indicators for calculation of the progress of Goal 1 are denied to the Chakma and Hajong communities who constitute over 29% of the population of the district.

Goal 1 refers to targeting the poor and most vulnerable. The Chakmas and Hajongs are among the poorest and most vulnerable due to institutional discrimination and exclusion. A district cannot claim to be performer when over 29% of its population are discriminated and kept backward. Therefore, Changlang district should be in the bottom of the Index and clubbed in the Aspirant category in this vital Goal.

### 2.2.2. SDG 2 Zero Hunger

SDG Goal 2 focuses on ending hunger, achieving food security and improving nutrition and promoting sustainable agriculture by 2030 by ensuring that all people, especially children, have sufficient and nutritious food all year. The NITI Aayog has used nine indicators related to food and nutritional security, including through the targeted public distribution system (PDS) and angawadi centres and improving agricultural productivity.

The score for Goal 2 ranges between 83 and 35 for the 103 districts included in the ranking and computation. Twenty one districts are in the category of Aspirants with scores less than 50. Baksa district of Assam with score of 35 is in the bottom of the Index.

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Buddhist monks distributing rice during COVID-19 given the denial by the State



Changlang district is ranked 11<sup>th</sup> among 103 districts with score of 73 and in the Front Runner category.

But the ranking is false due to non-inclusion of the Chakmas and Hajongs who remained deprived of the food and nutritional security schemes. The Chakmas and Hajongs do not have ration cards as the State government had illegally and arbitrarily seized those through an order on 25 October 1991. The ration cards are yet to be restored. The COVID-19 pandemic made their situation worse due to lack of food security.<sup>20</sup> However, the Chakmas and Hajongs were even excluded from the state's economic package for vulnerable sections in the difficult times of COVID-19 pandemic in 2020. In April 2020, the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) had to issue a directive to the State Government to address the hunger and starvation faced by the Chakmas and Hajongs due to COVID pandemic and restrictions as a matter of priority.<sup>21</sup> It was not fully complied.

Even in the second wave of the pandemic, the two communities were not extended the benefit of the foodgrain scheme of the Prime Minister. In July 2021, a Public Interest Litigation (PIL) was filed in the Guwahati High Court against the denial of the right to food during the second wave of the pandemic. The case is currently pending final adjudication.<sup>22</sup>

Similarly, there is no question of doubling or improving the agricultural productivity of the Chakmas and Hajongs as they remained deprived of schemes related to agriculture. Further, a large number of Chakmas are landless.

Therefore, the ranking is clearly false when over 29% of its population in the district lives without food security. Changlang district should be in the Aspirant category along with Baksa district and other lower ranking districts under Goal 2.



A poor Chakma woman went to collect rice from Buddhist monks during COVID-19

### 2.2.3. SDG 3 Good Health and Well-Being

The score for Goal 3 ranges between 76 and 31 for the 103 districts included in the ranking and computation. Eighteen districts are in the category of Aspirants with scores less than 50. South West Khasi Hills district of Meghalaya is in the bottom of the Index with score of 31.

The performance of Changlang district in meeting this goal is already low. The district is ranked 71<sup>st</sup> with score of 54 among 103 districts. The indicators used to measure performance of this goal include maternal mortality rate, immunisation, under-five years mortality rate, health spends and the number of healthcare workers as a percentage of the population, etc.

The low ranking of the district is indicative of the performance under this important goal. The district will further fall below the ranking if the exclusion of over 29% percent of the population is taken into account to measure the indicators relating to good health and well being. The district lags behind in improving access to quality health care or availability of quality health care centres. The situation is worse in areas inhabited by the Chakmas and Hajongs.

Therefore, Changlang district should be in the Aspirant category.

### 2.2.4. SDG 4 Quality Education

Goal 4 calls for ensuring the completion of primary and secondary education by all boys and girls, and guaranteeing equal access to opportunities for access to quality technical and vocational education for everyone. The progress under



Anganwadi school at Brajapur, Deban, Miao

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this goal is measured by indicators like net enrollment ratio, dropout rates, basic educational infrastructure, availability of qualified teachers, teacher-pupil ratio, etc.

The score for Goal 4 ranges between 89 and 40 for the 103 districts included in the ranking and computation. Twenty three districts are in the category of Aspirants with scores less than 50 including three districts of Arunachal Pradesh namely Kamle (48), Anjaw (47) and Lower Siang (47).

As per the NITI Aayog Index, Changlang district ranked 37 with score of 64 under this Goal. The ranking again is misleading as the educational situation in areas inhabited by Chakmas and Hajongs is deplorable. The schools lacked teachers with no basic infrastructure and amenities as required as per norms. The Chakmas and Hajongs have to hire private teachers to run the government schools. There is no access to technical and vocational education for Chakmas and Hajongs of the district. The children from these two communities are increasingly dropping out of schools.

The State government will be required to address these issues in order to make effective progress under this Goal. Hence, Changlang district should be in the Aspirant category.

### **2.2.5. SDG 5 Gender Equality**

The NITI Aayog calculated the gender equality score based on five indicators - crimes against women per 10,000 female population, sex ratio at birth, percentage of sexual crimes against women to total crimes against women, unmet need for family planning for currently married women aged 15-49 years and exclusive women Self Help Groups (SHG) in bank linked SHGs.

The score for Goal 5 ranges between 99 and 36 for the 103 districts included in the ranking and computation. Five districts are in the category of Aspirants with scores less than 50. Aizawl district of Mizoram is in the bottom of the Index with score of 36.

Changlang district is ranked 8<sup>th</sup> with score of 95 in the Index. The ranking cannot be true. The institutional discrimination faced by the Chakma and Hajong communities has a devastating impact towards the empowerment of women and girls of these two communities. Because of the discrimination and lack of access to women related welfare schemes, the women and girls from these two communities are not in a position to assert their rights.

Therefore, the district cannot be said to be doing well on gender equality when over 29% of its population, half of which are women and girl, lag behind.

### 2.2.6. SDG 6 Clean Water and Sanitation

Goal 6 of the SDG is Clean Water and Sanitation meant to ensure access to safe and affordable drinking water, sanitation facilities and hygiene for all by 2030.

The score for Goal 6 ranges between 96 and 42 for the 103 districts included in the ranking and computation. As per the Index, only three districts are in the category of Aspirants with scores less than 50. Darrang district of Assam is in the bottom with score of 42.

Based on seven indicators including in terms of the coverage of the rural population having improved source of drinking water, the NITI Aayog put Changlang district in the category of Front Runner districts and ranked in 18<sup>th</sup> position with score of 84.

However, the ranking will come down as majority of the Chakma and Hajong population of the district is unable to access improved drinking water facilities including piped water supply in premises. Majority of schools in the Chakma and Hajong inhabited areas in the district have no functional toilet facility for girls, which is one of the indicators used under this goal.

### 2.2.7. SDG 7 Affordable and Clean Energy

Goal 7 is aimed at ensuring universal access to affordable, reliable and efficient energy services by 2030. Energy security is a prerequisite for socio-economic development as it enables people to augment their income and productivity, enhance access to healthcare, water and education, and improve their overall well-being.



Chakmas are not given LPG gas and mostly rely on firewood

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The score for Goal 7 ranges between 100 and 0 for the 103 districts included in the ranking and computation. Eight districts are in the category of Aspirants with scores less than 50. East Kameng district of Arunachal Pradesh is in the bottom of the Index with score of 0. In addition, three more districts of Arunachal Pradesh – Kara Daadi (13), Pakke Kessang (16) and Lohit (38) scored less than 50 and are in aspirant category.

Changlang district is in the Achiever category and ranked first with score of 100 under this Goal. The NITI Aayog has used two indicators i.e. percentage of villages/GPs electrified and percentage of households using clean fuel for cooking under this Goal.

The ranking is false as majority of the Chakma and Hajong households still lack access to clean fuel for cooking and many villages are still to be electrified. Consequently, the ranking will drastically come down under this Goal.

### **2.2.8. SDG 8 Decent Work and Economic Growth**

Goal 8 promotes sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all.

The score for Goal 8 ranges between 90 and 52 for the 103 districts included in the ranking and computation. Under this Goal, no district is in the category of Aspirants. 69 districts are in the category of Front Runners and 34 in the category of Performers

Changlang district is ranked 83<sup>rd</sup> and under the category of Performer districts with score of 60.

The computation for the district is false. It should be in the bottom of the Index and in the Aspirant category. The Goal to achieve full and productive employment, and decent work, for all women and men by 2030 cannot be realized if over 29% of population of the district is excluded from employment opportunities due to the discrimination. The two communities of Chakmas and Hajongs are not provided employment in the state including under the MGNREGA. Cases of child labour have been increasing among the Chakma community due to lack of income source.

### **2.2.9. SDG 10 Reduced Inequalities**

Under this important Goal, Changlang district is ranked 51 with score of 67 among 103 districts of the North East region. The computation was done by the NITI Aayog using three indicators – 1) percentage of women representatives in PRIs, ULBs, District Autonomous Councils, VCs, VECs; 2) women provided employment as a percentage of total employment demanded by women under MGNREGA; and 3) persons with disability (PWDs) provided employment as a percentage of total employment demanded by PWDs under MGNREGA.



The score for Goal 10 ranges between 93 and 19 for the 103 districts included in the ranking and computation. Twelve 12 districts are in the category of Aspirants with scores less than 50. Leparada district of Arunachal Pradesh is in the bottom of the Index with score of 19.

Changlang district is ranked 67<sup>th</sup> with score of 51. However, the ranking is false and the performance of the district should be below Leparada district. This is because the Chakmas and Hajongs, who constitute over 29% of the total population in the district are excluded from the panchayati system and MGNREGA, the two indicators used by the NITI Aayog to measure the progress under this Goal.

### 2.2.10. SDG 16 Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions

Goal 16 focuses on the promotion of peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, the provision of access to justice for all, and building accountable institutions at all levels. The NITI Aayog has used eight indicators including coverage under Aadhaar and birth & death registration to measure the progress under this goal. One of the targets is to provide legal identity for all by 2030.

The score for Goal 16 ranges between 92 and 36 for the 103 districts included in the ranking and computation. Only one district namely Lohit (36) in Arunachal Pradesh is in the category of Aspirants with a score less than 50.

Changlang district is ranked 56 with score of 68. However, the Chakmas and Hajongs face discrimination even in accessing government documentation including birth certificates. This effectively means denial of identity. As a result, Changlang district should be in the bottom of the Index.

## 3. Recommendations

The “North Eastern Region (NER) District SDG Index Report and Dashboard 2021–22” states that “each state has immense strength and potential across 17 SDGs, however, to overcome the disparities and achieved balanced sustainable development of the region, targeted interventions which cater to the gaps identified need to be implemented from grassroots upwards”.

This analysis identifies the specific gaps with respect to Changlang district of Arunachal Pradesh because of the exclusion of the Chakmas and Hajongs who constitute about 29% of the populations. The NITI Aayog, the Ministry of DONER and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) need to undertake specific measures to address these gaps by implementing NITI Aayog funded projects to include the Chakmas and Hajongs in the SDGs.

The ACHR recommendations to the NITI Aayog, the Ministry of DONER and the UNDP (1) to take into account the exclusion of the Chakmas and

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Hajongs in Changlang district while preparing the *North Eastern Region (NER) District SDG Index Report and Dashboard* in the future and (2) include the Changlang district in the Aspirational Districts programme of the NITI Aayog by to quickly and effectively transform this under-developed district by undertaking specific programmes focused on the Chakmas and Hajongs of the district.

## Endnotes

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*North East Sdg Index 2021-2022 Flawed: Changlang District An 'Aspirant', Not 'Front Runner' In Ranking*

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