Capacity Building Workshop Report

Cyber Security Capacity Building Workshop for MSMEs in India
June 10, 2025 | Darrang, Assam

In collaboration with the Department of Industries and Commerce, Assam, CUTS International conducted a cybersecurity workshop for MSMEs on June 10, 2025, in Darrang. The event, supported by The Asia Foundation and Google.org, was organised under the APAC Cybersecurity Fund initiative, aimed at enhancing digital resilience among small businesses..

The workshop brought together entrepreneurs and workers from different places of the Darrang district, representing diverse industries such as garments, food processing, artisans, tailoring, jewellery, stationery and others. The workshop attracted 120 participants.

Shri Subham Ghosh, Programme Associate, CUTS International, began the session by welcoming the distinguished guests and participants. This was followed by brief remarks by Shri Uttam Saika, General Manager, DICC, Darrang, Shri Surajit Das, Agricultural Officer and Dr Banani Das, Veterinary Officer.

Shri Uttam Saikia, General Manager of DICC Darrang, emphasised the critical need for cybersecurity among Assam's MSMEs, highlighting their increasing vulnerability to digital threats like phishing, ransomware, and data breaches due to limited resources. He stressed that while Assam's rapid digitisation and geographically dispersed businesses require tailored solutions, effective protection doesn't need to be costly—simple measures like regular software updates, strong passwords, and staff training can significantly reduce risks. Citing successful examples like local agricultural cooperatives that mitigated fraud through awareness campaigns, Saikia urged MSMEs to utilise government-sponsored cybersecurity tools and workshops while fostering community-based knowledge sharing. He called for collaborative efforts between DICC, industry associations, and Assam's cyber cell to develop localised training programs, framing cybersecurity resilience as fundamental to achieving the state's self-reliance goals and securing its economic future.

The cybersecurity workshop attracted 120 participants, with a significant majority (80 attendees)

representing MSMEs and the remaining comprising representatives from NGOs, business associations, and related organizations. Demographic data indicated that most participants were aged between 35-42 years and had completed at least secondary education. During the sessions, a prevalent lack of awareness about cybersecurity threats emerged as a key concern, though 10 participants reported having experienced cyberattacks previously. Notably, the workshop revealed strong enthusiasm among attendees, with most expressing concrete interest in implementing cybersecurity measures within their respective organisations, demonstrating a positive shift in recognising the importance of digital protection for business sustainability.

The workshop was designed to raise awareness among MSME owners, employees, and business partners about diverse cybersecurity threats from obvious risks to commonly overlooked vulnerabilities. Through interactive sessions, participants learned fundamental cybersecurity principles, including the importance of strong passwords, regular data backups, software updates, and proper inventory management. To solidify knowledge and maintain engagement, each segment ended with a quiz, where attendees demonstrated their grasp of the material through active participation, with prizes awarded for correct answers. This approach not only reinforced key concepts but also created an energetic learning environment that encouraged the practical application of cybersecurity measures

Analysis of participants' feedback after the workshop illustrated that 90 of them (75 per cent) rated the workshop as highly relevant and expressed strong appreciation for the quality of the content and the practical value of the case studies presented. 105 participants (87 per cent) termed their experience as positive and indicated interest in attending future cybersecurity workshops.

Rumi Baro, a 38-year-old handicraft exporter from Darrang, Assam, lost INR 82,500 when she unknowingly downloaded malware-infected invoice files from a phishing email impersonating a buyer, an attack that froze her business operations for 11 days. After attending CUTS International's cybersecurity workshop, she was going to implement three critical changes: staff training to verify payment requests via phone calls, installation of free government-approved antivirus software, and segregation of operational and payment accounts.

Workshop Glimpses of the training sessions and Group Photo

with support from Google.org