Capacity Building Workshop Report

Cyber Security Capacity Building Workshop for MSMEs in India
June 18, 2025, Bajali, Assam

CUTS International, in collaboration with the Department of Industries and Commerce, Government of Assam, organised a cybersecurity workshop for Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in Bajali on 18 June 2025. Supported by The Asia Foundation and Google.org under the APAC Cybersecurity Fund initiative, the workshop aimed to enhance the digital resilience of Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) by building their capacity to identify, prevent, and respond to cybersecurity threats.

The workshop witnessed the participation of 252 individuals, including entrepreneurs and workers from various parts of the Barpeta district. Attendees represented a diverse range of sectors, including garments, food processing, dairy, stationery, goatherd.

The Asia Foundation
Cybersecurity Fund
Cybersecurity Capacity Building
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As part the APAC Cybersecurity Fund Project
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Shri Subham Ghosh, Programme Associate, CUTS International, began the session by welcoming the distinguished guest and participants. Brief remarks followed this, Smt. Pallavi Gogoi, Additional District Commissioner, Bajali, Sri Pranjan Rejmedhi, General Manager, DICC Bajali, Smt. Anamika Mahanta, DSP, Bajali and Sri Kesab Nath, HOD (IT), Bhattadev University.

Smt. Pallavi Gogoi (Additional District Commissioner, Bajali), Sri Pranjan Rejmedhi (General Manager, DICC Bajali), and Smt. Anamika Mahanta (DSP Bajali) inaugurated a crucial cybersecurity awareness workshop for MSMEs in Bajali district. They highlighted the growing vulnerability of local businesses, especially in Barpeta, to cyber threats like phishing, ransomware, and data breaches due to limited technical knowledge and low awareness. With MSMEs rapidly adopting digital platforms, strengthening cyber resilience has become crucial. The workshop provided practical tools and preventive strategies to help small businesses safeguard their operations. Officials emphasized that cybersecurity is essential for business survival in today's digital economy. Participants learned to identify risks and implement protective measures. The initiative aims to create a more secure digital environment for entrepreneurs. By promoting cybersecurity awareness, it seeks to minimize financial and reputational losses from cyberattacks. This training marks an important step in building a cyber-aware MSME community. Such efforts will continue to support local businesses in their digital transition.

Sri Kesab Nath, Head of the Department (IT) at Bhattadev University, delivered an insightful session on modern cyber threats during the workshop. He highlighted the rapidly evolving nature of cyber risks in today's digital era and discussed various types of threats, including phishing, ransomware, identity theft, and social engineering attacks. Emphasising the importance of cybersecurity awareness, he shared practical tips on how individuals and organisations can safeguard their data and digital assets. His session also covered real-life case studies and recent incidents to illustrate the severity and complexity of cyber threats. The interactive nature of the session encouraged active participation and deepened the understanding of the participants on key cybersecurity issues.

The cybersecurity workshop attracted 252 participants, every participant represented the MSME sector. The participants were predominantly between the ages of 35 and 42, with most having completed at least secondary education. A significant lack of awareness regarding cybersecurity threats emerged during the sessions, although three participants shared that they had previously encountered cyberattacks. Despite this knowledge gap, the workshop sparked notable enthusiasm, with the majority of attendees expressing a strong willingness to implement cybersecurity practices within their organisations. This reflects a positive and encouraging shift towards understanding the vital role of digital protection in ensuring business continuity and resilience..

The workshop was designed to strengthen cybersecurity awareness among MSME owners, employees, and business partners by addressing a wide range of digital threats, ranging from well-known risks to often-overlooked vulnerabilities. The sessions were interactive and focused on imparting practical knowledge of fundamental cybersecurity practices, such as the use of strong passwords, regular data backups, timely software updates, and effective management of digital assets. To reinforce learning and maintain engagement, each session concluded with a quiz, wherein participants actively responded to questions based on the topics covered. Prizes were awarded for correct answers, adding an element of motivation. This approach created an energetic and hands-on learning environment, encouraging real-world application of the cybersecurity measures discussed.

Analysis of participants' feedback after the workshop illustrated that 222 of them (252 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. 203 participants (80 per cent) termed their experience as positive and indicated interest in attending future cybersecurity workshops.

Biki Barah, a participant in the cybersecurity workshop, shared his personal experience of falling victim to a cybercrime. He recounted how he received a fraudulent email that appeared to be from his bank, prompting him to update his account details through a provided link. Trusting the authenticity of the message, he entered his sensitive banking information, which was later misused by cybercriminals to carry out unauthorised transactions. The incident not only caused financial loss but also emotional distress. Through the workshop, Biki gained a deeper understanding of phishing tactics and the importance of verifying digital communications, emphasizing the urgent need for digital literacy and vigilance among all users.

Workshop Glimpses of the training sessions and Group Photo

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