



One Health Initiative at the Grassroots Theme: Planting One Health in our Lives

Venue: Udalguri College Auditorium, Udalguri
Date: 20th February, 2025

One Health is an integrated, unifying approach that aims to sustainably balance and optimize the health of people, animals and ecosystems. It recognizes that the health of humans, domestic and wild animals, plants, and the wider environment (including ecosystems) are closely linked and interdependent. One Health is an idea that brings different sectors together to solve the health, productivity, and conservation challenges and has major implications for any society. India with its diverse wildlife, one of the largest livestock populations and high density of human population, and diversity of flora, creates opportunities for harmonious coexistence or conflicts such as heightened risks for inter-compartmental spread of diseases.

A seminar on 'One Health Initiative at the grassroots' was organized at the Udalguri College Auditorium, Udalguri with the theme- "Planting One Health in our lives" on 20th February, 2025. The seminar was organised by the CreIndia Team of the Indian Institute of Technology, Guwahati (IITG), in collaboration with Brooke India, and the District Administration. The seminar endeavoured to bring together the various non-governmental organisations (NGOs) working in the livelihood and development sectors in the Udalguri district such as Piramal Foundation, Hans Foundation, Kabil, Karuna Fellowship, Astha and Aaranyak. Attended by school and college students; veterans; village heads; teachers; tea garden staff; representatives of district administration; district veterinarians; medical staff; agriculture, social welfare department; fishery department; forestry departments; NGOs; and citizens of the district, the seminar attracted resources persons and speakers from national and international institutes, namely the University of Bern, Switzerland; the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) Guwahati, Assam; the College of Veterinary Sciences, Guwahati, Assam; the ICAR-National Institute of High Security Animal Diseases (NIHSAD), Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh; the Peace Gong Fellowship, New Delhi; and the Brooke India, Noida who contributed to making the seminar a great success.

Shri Pulak Patgiri, District Commissioner (DC), Udalguri was the guest of honour for the occasion and graced the inaugural session along with Dr. Salomme Durr from University of Bern, Switerland; Dr. Bhubaneshwar Swargiary, Joint Director of Health Services (Jt. DHS), Udalguri; Md. Mustafa Ali Ahmed, Divisional Forest Officer (DFO), Dhansiri Forest Division;

Dr. Purabi Phukan, AIIMS Guwahati; Mr. Rakesh Boro, Chairman of Udalguri Minicipal Board; and Dr. Luke Daimary, Principal Udalguri College. Dr. Harish Tiwari, Inspire Faculty IITG and Founder of CreIndia moderated the event and highlighted the objectives of the seminar and the importance of planting one health in our lives for the improvement of the health of the humans, animals and the environment.

The Principal, Udalguri College, Dr. Luke addressed and welcomed all the guests, dignitaries and audiences for the seminar on One Health initiative at Grassroots at Udalguri. He expressed his excitement and privilege to provide his institute for the great and noble event. He was extremely happy to be a part of the initiative and promised his support and cooperation in future similar events. He welcomed all the students and argued them to take part and listen attentively the technical sessions and learn for it.

Dr. Salomme Durr, Professor of University of Bern, expressed her happiness to be part of the seminar and to be at Udalguri, Assam, she looks forward to work more on “One Health” and rabies in the district with the team of IITG. She expressed excitement for the seminar and the talks from various experts and to gain insights for more collaborations in future for the development of health in the area.

Mr. Rakesh Boro, the Chairman, mentioned the works of the CreIndia IITG team in the district for the past months, he added how the team has been involving the tea-gardens, schools and community in the district for the improvement of health and involvement of the local authorities for the development of health.

Md. Mustafa Ali Ahmed, DFO, expressed his gratitude to be part of this seminar and ensured his cooperation for the implementation of One Health through his department for the betterment of human, animal and environment health in the district.

Dr. Bhubaneswar Swargiary, Joint DHS, addressed the audiences and the dignitaries, he mentioned about the disease rabies and its transmission in humans. He also added how to prevent the disease and about the services available for the disease in the district. He added that this initiative is first of its kind of One Health concept being brought to the common people and hopes that it will provide fresh perspective about diseases among the

community in the district. He ensured the departmental support for the initiative in the district for control of rabies and other diseases as well.

Dr. Purabi Phukan, Head of Department, Community Medicine, AIIMS Guwahati, expressed her happiness to be a part of the seminar and looks forward to contribute more in health promotion and prevention with more future collaborations in the district.

The District Commissioner, Shri Pulak Patgiri, addressed the audiences, and express his happiness on the “One Health” initiative taken by the CreIndia IITG team at the district and expressed his support in every manner to lead this initiative in the district for the better health of the community as well as the animals and environment. He mentioned how the team is been working in the district in the human and animal aspects to understand the burden and the challenges of rabies for the past few months. He highlighted about the collaring of free-roaming dogs in and around the Udalguri town and the district to understand the dog-behaviour and its movement. In his address, he highlighted key challenges concerning inter-sectorial coordination and collaboration in tackling health issues including dog-mediated rabies in the district. He urged the audience to attend the technical sessions by the experts and to gain insightful knowledge about one health to apply in their lives for better and improved health for ourselves and the environment.

Technical sessions by experts from different organisations- Dr. Anubha Pathak, Scientist from ICAR-NIHSAD, Bhopal presented on initiating One Health in marginalized communities and shared her expertise and ideas of her work from Central India. Dr. Purabi Phukan, AIIMS Guwahati presented on One Health solution to health security threats in northeast India, she highlighted animal and human health are related in transmission of diseases and how the environment plays a role in transmission of diseases too through man-animal and environment contact with progression of the cities and the needs. She also added that initiating ‘One Health’ at the granular level in an aspirational district was an event of high importance. Dr. Dinesh Kumar Gupta, Brooke India elaborated on the topic of ‘One Health and Equine connection’ and also extended his support to the CreIndia team for future activities. A presentation was done by the Dr. Parimala Mohanty, Project Manager;

Dr. Shanti Priya Kindo, Associate Project Scientist and Dr. Corina Christina Baumann, the intern from University of Bern on 'Rabies: a classic One Health example'.

A skit on "One Health" and its importance in our day to day lives was presented by the students of Ramswaroop Agarwal Memorial English School of Udalguri. And a Bodo traditional group dance and a Bihu dance was presented by Tabitha and troupe. It was followed by the panel discussion- "How can we initiate One Health at the grassroot level?" where the panelists Dr. Purabi Phukan, Dr. Salomme Durr, Miss Khushi Nigam and Dr. Dipak Deka expressed their views on multi-stakeholder participation and involving common citizens for the strengthened health security through One Health awareness.

A quiz competition on the inter-connectedness of the human, animal and environmental health was also organised and the top three student winners were given the prize money of ₹2000, ₹1000, and ₹500; and the audiences participated with enthusiasm which was focused on "One Health".

The event was concluded with a strong call for the establishment of a One Health forum, encouraging multi-sectorial cooperation to combat rabies and other zoonotic diseases in the district. Dr. Harish Kumar Tiwari expressed gratitude to the attendees and speakers for their valuable contributions, stating that the seminar marked a significant step toward strengthening One Health initiatives in the grass root level and paving the way for future collaborations. He was sanguine that true spirit of One Health can come from within citizens and we need to bring common people in the knowledge loop to achieve a better health security.



Glimpses from the One Health initiative seminar on 'Planting One Health in Our Lives' organised at the Udalguri College Auditorium, Udalguri College, Udalguri, on 20 February 2025.