

CHILD PROTECTION BULLETIN

STATE CHILD
PROTECTION
SOCIETY, ASSAM

MONTHLY BULLETIN OF ACTIVITIES CONCERNING CHILD PROTECTION IN ASSAM

EDITORIAL

Adolescence is a period of storm and stress. In this period a child faces lot of changes - bodily and psychologically. The caregivers need to support their children to cope up with the changes. There are lots of issues which the caregivers need to look at. Pressure & stress make the children become failure & lose their self-confidence. The caregivers should encourage the children to strengthen their potentialities. Communicating in a constructive way will help the caregivers to understand the children in a better way.

Instead of blaming the children we need to look at the possible circumstances which lead them to behave in a particular way. We have to build self-esteem in our children. Self esteem is not static. But it changes from day to day or from year to year, but overall self-esteem tends to develop from infancy and keep going until we are adults. Children who know their strengths and weaknesses and feel good about themselves seem to have an easier time handling conflicts and resisting negative pressures. They tend to smile more readily and enjoy life. These children are realistic and generally optimistic.

This month's bulletin deals with how we can encourage our children to grow in a healthy manner. And as an adult it is our responsibility to motivate them in a positive way.

Editorial Board,
State Child Protection Society, Assam

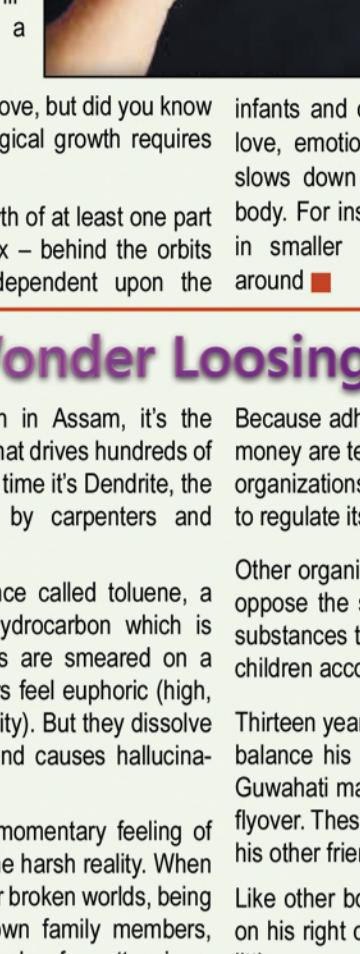
CHILDREN NEED TO GROW

"Help your children to understand that perfection is never the goal in life-excellence is". When children strive to be perfect or when parents pressure them to strive for perfection - it can send them to a tailspin of despair.

In such circumstances people fear, more failure & often become despondent & give up trying. Perfectionists can be vulnerable to every kind of mood swing & emotional projection, so failure becomes a threat and totally unacceptable to them. Help your children understand that life is not a destination but a journey.

It's pretty obvious that babies need love, but did you know that their actual physical and biological growth requires love?

Research shows that the early growth of at least one part of the brain (the orbitofrontal cortex - behind the orbits of the eyes) is almost wholly dependent upon the



environment an infant is born into? The first 24 months is crucial in that it is during this time the building and shaping of this part of the brain sets the child up for life. If an infant is born into an environment lacking in love, emotional warmth, and responsiveness, the growth of its brain is hugely affected.

The problem with the orphanages was that infants weren't getting the emotional warmth or physical contact that they need. But the research teaches us an important lesson for society in general. All babies, infants and children fundamentally need love. A lack of love, emotional warmth and physical contact basically slows down the growth mechanisms in the brain and body. For instance, human growth hormone is produced in smaller amounts when there's not enough love around ■

Small Wonder Loosing Childhood

Near the Guwahati railway station in Assam, it's the feeling of being on top of the world that drives hundreds of young boys to sniff intoxicants. This time it's Dendrite, the brand name for adhesive used by carpenters and cobblers.

Most adhesive contains a substance called toluene, a sweet smelling and intoxicating hydrocarbon which is neurotoxin. When these intoxicants are smeared on a piece of cloth and inhaled, the users feel euphoric (high), and experience a sense of invincibility. But they dissolve the membrane of the brain cells and causes hallucinations.

For these boys - it is, but just a momentary feeling of euphoria and a chance to escape the harsh reality. When real life hits, the boys go back to their broken worlds, being exploited - some times by their own family members, being beaten up - when caught by the law for petty crimes and the cycle of struggles begin.

Because adhesive is affordable, boys after earning some money are tempted to buy it from shops next door. Social organizations like World Vision India are seeing the need to regulate its sale.

Other organizations working in the field go all the way to oppose the sale of adhesive legally "Giving intoxicating substances to children in public places is a crime against children according to the Juvenile Justice Act 2000,"

Thirteen year old Bitu looks fresh and sporty as he tries to balance his act on the railway bar not too far from the Guwahati main railway platform, just below the Lakhota flyover. These days he doesn't sniff much, so much so that his other friends were willing to certify his sobriety.

Like other boys in the neighbourhood - Bitu's cut marks on his right calf, the razor marks on his left hand and the little scar on his chest tell stories of his life's adventure. When Bitu doesn't sniff adhesive he would roam around

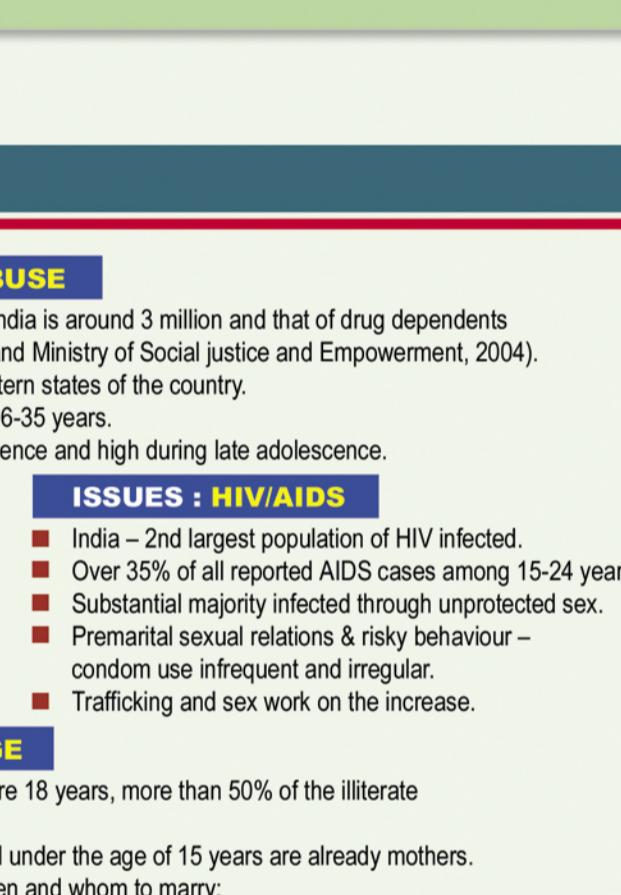
"Childhood means simplicity. Look at the world with the child's eye - It is very beautiful"

- Kailash Satyarthi

town to collect scraps including old shoes, carton boxes, and bottles of all kinds, then puts them in his white poly-sack to sell it to the scrap dealer nearby. Whatever small money he gets - he gives it to his father and also spends a bit on getting high. Bitu's father is somewhat aware of this cycle but distances himself from knowing more because he cannot monitor his boy's daily whereabouts. "I live with my father and my mother is in the village", narrates Bitu.

Kids getting high is almost another daily affair that no one will pay attention because 'That's just the way it is here, but there is deadly consequence like chronic health problems leading to early and unnatural and accidental death. While men are into drinking alcohol and smoking, people in Guwahati slums seemed to accept the open secret of boys growing up with dendrite in their hand. Bitu's close friend, Nasir joins him sitting on the railway bar - he wears purple nail polish, his teeth has brown stains, his eyes are red and puts a plastic smiling face because of the adhesive kicks. Around his neck hangs an old rosary, in fact, many boys have rosary that they get from the different organizations nearby. In these cases carrying the small cross looks more of a fashion than expressing religious piety.

Nasir is smart and concerned about another friend who is held at the train station lockup by the police for some petty crimes. His sense of friendship and being part of that small network of care is obvious. The rest of the boys listened to Nasir their faces seem to say 'it could have been me'. "They caught him and he is there at the lockup" says Nasir worriedly and bending his head down. There was silence, and then Bitu broke the ice - "Come on, I've been caught nine times by the police and I'm still ok", he says, then alleged how they beat him up at the lockup because of some petty crimes. Six boys surrounding Nasir and Bitu have been dendrite users at one point or still are. These boys know the length and breadth of Guwahati city as kids from affluent families know their school building. They are street smart but



they may not live long because of the health consequences the addiction brought with it.

As for Bitu alone, his sobriety is a good sign. And because he attends a World Vision initiated moral school - his world view has changed. He knew he can be better than he is because Hope is more obvious now.

As for the other boys, you can never tell. Symptoms of the addiction are abdominal pain, vomiting, diarrhoea, chemical smell on clothing, hair and breath, stain on fingers and hands, drooling and spitting, watery and bloodshot eyes, headaches and dizziness. Other signs are depression, fears, and phobias, lack of concentration, emotional withdrawals, feeling of cold, hallucinations, sudden changes in routine, trouble at school, with law, and "new" friends. And the boys face all this every day of their life.

The sniffing is just another act - but it breeds social ills of all kinds creating one social dent that is not right. Government and Non-Government Organizations are working alongside institutions, juvenile de-addiction centers and other likeminded social organizations. For the last ten plus years, very few institutions have focused its work in the area of education, personality development, talent development, life skills, behavior change communication and health benefiting children, their families and their community but on substance addictions among the most vulnerable children in Guwahati city. There is an urgent need for different stakeholders to partner with social activists, journalists, local celebrities and other members of the civil society to try providing a solution. While the challenge is bigger than the solution at hand, a lot of good things have happened too. Many children have learned to dream big beyond their broken environments, so much so, that they joined the mainstream of life.

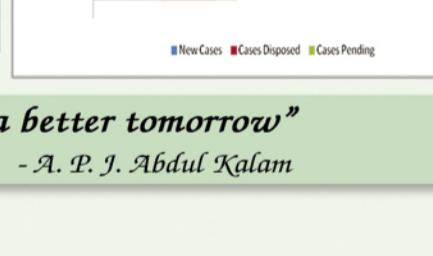
Gamlie Sherio

Senior Programme Manager - My City Initiative - Mumbai - World Vision India

ISSUES WITH ADOLESCENTS

ISSUES : HEALTH

- Adverse sex ratio 10-19 yrs: 882; 0-6 yrs: 927.
- Malnutrition and anemia - boys & girls below 18 yrs consume less than recommended diet.
- Lack of knowledge about the body and sexuality is responsible for increasing number of unwanted pregnancies.
- Higher female mortality during 15-24 yrs.
- More than 70% girls suffer from severe or moderate anemia.
- Rape victims in age group 14-18 yrs. Majority offenders known to victims.



ISSUES : EDUCATION

- Enrollment figures have improved but dropout rates are high - 68% from class 1 to X.
- Gender disparities persist - girls enrollment less than 50 % at all stages
- Young people not at school join the workforce at an early age - nearly 1 out of 3 adolescents in 10-19 yrs is working.
- Quality of education poor - students not equipped with skills to face life challenges.



"There can be no keener revelation of a society's soul than the way in which it treats its children"

- Nelson Mandela

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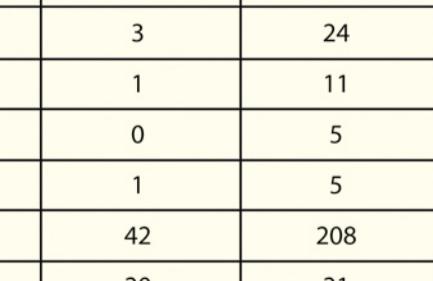
ISSUES : SUBSTANCE ABUSE

- Estimated number of drug abusers in India is around 3 million and that of drug dependents is 0.5 - 0.6 million. (Source - UNODC and Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, 2004).
- Problem more severe in the North-Eastern states of the country.
- Most drug users are in the age group 16-35 years.
- Drug abuse rate is low in early adolescence and high during late adolescence.



ISSUES : CHILD MARRIAGE

- Despite laws prohibiting marriage before 18 years, more than 50% of the illiterate married females married < 18 years.
- Nearly 20% of the 15 lakh girls married under the age of 15 years are already mothers.
- Choices are limited as to: whether, when and whom to marry.

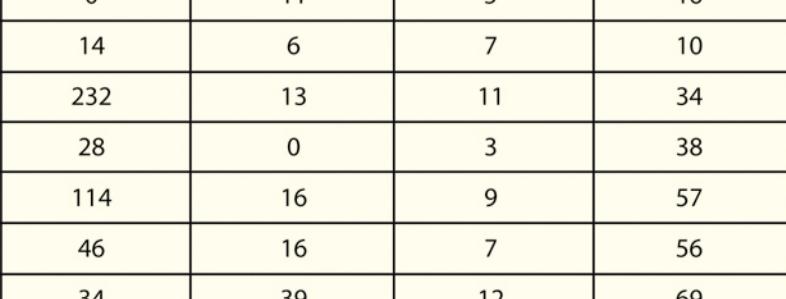


STATUS OF CHILDREN

Children in CCIs



Adoption



"Let us sacrifice our today so that our children can have a better tomorrow"

- A. P. J. Abdul Kalam

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Status Report on the functioning of the Juvenile Justice Boards and Child Welfare Committees in Assam for the month of July 2016

Sl. No.	Districts	Juvenile Justice Boards			Child Welfare Committees		
		No. of cases instituted	No. of cases disposed	Total cases pending	No. of cases instituted	No. of cases disposed	Total cases pending
1	BAKSA	Cases are jointly dealt with Nalbari JJB			0	0	0
2	BONGAIGAON	3	6	15	6	8	7
3	BARPETA	3	5	103	8	0	36
4	CACHAR	4	7	49	5	4	4
5	CHIRANG	8	6	30	2	4	5
6	DARRANG	1	10	75	9	13	11
7	DHEMAMI	9	12	38	7	2	7
8	DHUBRI	1	1	103	4	2	14
9	DIBRUGARH	7	11	40	9	8	3
10	DIMA HASAO	0	1	20	0	0	0
11	GOALPARA	9	14	93	6	3	24
12	GOLAGHAT	5	4	19	1	1	11
13	HAILAKANDI	0	2	38	1	0	5
14	JORHAT	1	8	44	3	1	5
15	KAMRUP (M)	7	15	47	72	42	208
16	KAMRUP (R)	4	3	63	21	20	21
17	KARBI ANGLONG	4	0	54	4	2	7
18	KARIMGANJ	3	6	37	3	0	41
19	KOKRAJHAR	2	3	155	2	0	14
20	LAKHIMPUR	3	3	0	11	5	16
21	MORIGAON	2	1	14	6	7	10
22	NAGAON	7	5	232	13	11	34
23	NALBARI	4	2	28	0	3	38
24	SONITPUR	3	5	114	16	9	57
25	SIBSAGAR	13	8	46	16	7	56
26	TINSUKIA	5	1	34	39	12	69
27	UDALGURI	3	4	17	8	10	39
Total		111	143	1508	272	174	742

For any feedback, write to:

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