

Juvenile Justice Newsletter

Monthly Newsletter of Activities Concerning Child Protection in Assam

Editorial

National Girl Child Day observed on 24 January 2014 across India by the Government. This day is observed every year to raise awareness and consciousness of the society towards girl children. This day is being observed every year on 24 January, since 2008. National Girl Child day is observed with an aim to ensure that every girl child is respected, valued and treated equally in the society.

The Constitution of India offers all citizens, including children, certain basic fundamental rights. The Directive Principles of State Policy emphasizes that the state needs to ensure that all children are provided with services and opportunities to grow and develop in a safe and secure environment.

However, in the Indian context, the adverse social attitude towards daughters has left girl children vulnerable and at a disadvantage. Their survival, education, health care, development, security and well being are a matter of national concern. A significant impact of this discrimination is reflected in the deterioration of the male-female ratio, particularly among children.

This month's issue of the newsletter particularly focuses on the National Girl Child Day. It also carries an article on a study carried out in the Observation Home, Jorhat on juveniles of the Tea Garden communities who were admitted in the observation Home. The study shows a growing rate of delinquency among the children of the tea garden communities which is a matter of concern.

Editorial Board,
State Child Protection Society, Assam

Importance of Girl Child Day

National girl child day is celebrated every year on 24th of January as a national observance day for the girl child. This celebration was started to offer more support and new opportunities to girls in the country and to increase awareness among people about the inequalities faced by the girl child in the society. Inequality about girl child is a vast problem which includes many areas like inequality in education, nutrition, legal rights, medical care, protection, honour, early marriage, etc.

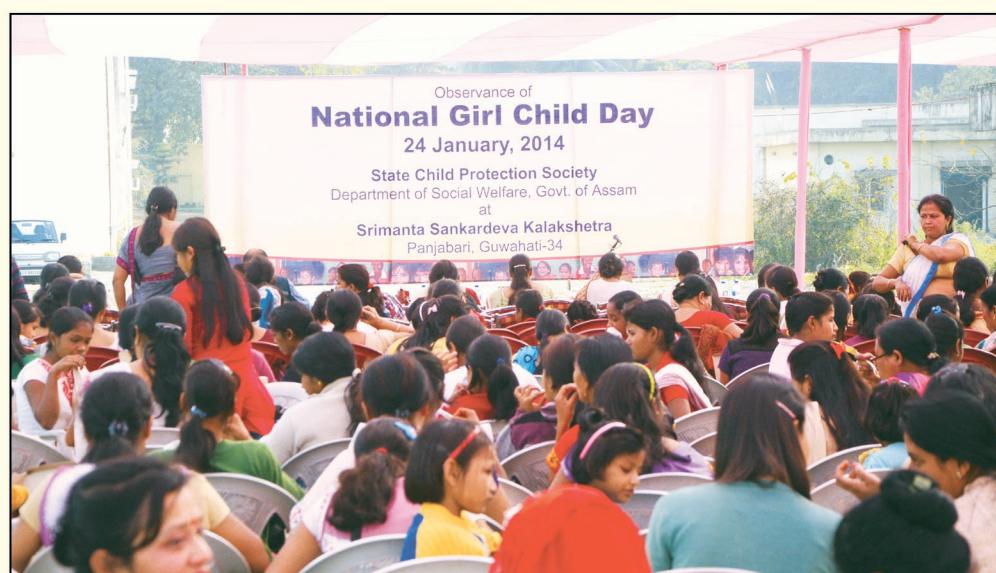
National girl child day was started as a 'National Girls Development Mission' by the Government of India. This mission raises the awareness among people all over the country about the importance of girl's protection and promotion. It enhances the meaningful contribution of the girls in decision making process through active support from parents and other community members. It is celebrated to promote the girls position in the society to make their living environment better among society.

It is very necessary to remove different types of social discrimination and exploitation that girls generally face in their life. It is also necessary to provide a safe and enabling environment so that girls could excel to their full potential. They should be aware of all their legal rights so as to access quality education, protection, nutrition and health care services.

Various events are organized all across the country to celebrate the girl child day to promote girls importance in the society. National Girl Child Day celebration was started by the Ministry of Women and Child Development Ministry since 2008 as a national observance. Through this campaign, the Indian Government has highlighted the inequalities towards the girls in our society. While observing this day, various advertisements are run by the government on the TV channels, local newspapers and radio stations to spread the message of "Save the Girl Child". NGO organizations and non government organizations also come together to celebrate this day.

Assam observes Girl Child Day

The Assam government celebrated the National Girl Child Day on 24th January, 2014. This celebration is symbolic to the consistent endeavour of the State's commitment to support girls and provide them with equal opportunities towards their survival, growth, development, participation and protection in Assam. The initiative is expected to reinforce the State's commitment towards the girl child and is a call to the people in Assam to ensure that every girl child receive services such as education, health nutrition, legal rights and rights to protection and participation.



While observing this Girl Child Day, various Child Care Institutions (Children Homes) had participated in a programme held at 'Kalakshetra,' in Guwahati. This event provided an occasion for the girls to share their experience with each other and participated in sessions which provided them with knowledge on their legal rights, the right to education, access to nutrition and health services and other related services. The programme was organized by the Department of Social Welfare, Govt. of Assam which is the nodal department for all schemes and programmes of Ministry of Women & Child development. Other relevant departments of the state machinery also participated along with various non-government organizations.

The Department of Social Welfare has also advertised the importance of Girl Child on various Vernacular News Papers to share the message of the States commitment towards the girl child.



Objectives of Celebrating National Girl Child Day

It is celebrated as a national observance to increase the consciousness of the people and offer new opportunities to the girl child in the society.

- To remove all the inequalities faced by the girl children of the Indian society.
- To make certain that every girl child is getting proper respect and value in the Indian society.
- To ensure that the girl children are enjoying all their human rights in the country.
- To work against diminishing the child sex ratio in the India and to bring an attitudinal change in the mind set about the girl child.
- To address issues associated with their health, respect, education, nutrition and etc.
- To propagate the spirit of gender equality among our society.

Rights of Girl Child in India

Sex determination during pregnancy through the clinics has been blocked by the government. (Pre-Conception and Pre-Natal Diagnostic Act, 1994 and Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act, 1971).

- Child marriages of the girls have been restricted (The Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006).
- Antenatal Care facilities are being provided to pregnant women to avoid malnutrition and to reduce mortality of infants.
- Various schemes to save the girl child had been introduced by the government to save the girl child. While programmes for improvement of nutrition benefit all children including girl children, like the Integrated Child Development Scheme, National Rural Health Mission, Mid-day meal scheme etc., specific interventions for girl children include implementing the Pre-Natal Diagnostic Techniques (Prohibition of Sex Selection) Act, 1994, pilot cash transfer scheme of 'Dhanlakshmi', setting up a Sectoral



Innovation Council for improving child sex ratio, and the pilot scheme 'Sabla' for a comprehensive Intervention for adolescent girls in the age group of 11-18, with a focus on out of school girls. Presently in Assam Dhanalaxmi scheme hasn't been started and SABLA is functional in 8 Districts of Assam.

- Girl child education status in India has been improved through the free and compulsory primary school education for both boys and girls till 14 years of age.

To improve the status of the girl child in India, the government of India has reserved 1/3 seats in the local government for women.

- School children are well availed with the uniforms, noon meal and educational materials and repayments to the SC and ST caste girl's families.
- Rajiv Gandhi National Creche Scheme is functional and presently after ICDS Mission, AWCs will function as Creche Centres. Presently approximate 500 AWCs are functioning as AWCs cum Creche Centres.
- Integrated Child Protection Scheme provides Non-Institutional and Institutional Care Facilities to all Children in Need of Care & Protection in the age group of 0-18 years through its various components. ■



Delinquency an increasing concern among tea communities in Upper Assam

Introduction: Juvenile delinquency is a major concern in our society. The incidences of delinquency are more prominent in socially and economically backward communities. Crime committed by adolescents is called Juvenile Delinquency. Any child in age group of 9 to 18, who violates the law, is regarded as delinquent. A number of the factors namely family, peer group, neighbour, educational curriculum, poverty etc. are identified as important determinants of juvenile delinquency. It may be noted that among child right activists, the term juvenile delinquency is no more popular. The preferred term is "Children in conflict with the law".

Tea garden communities or the tea tribes represent around 20% of the total population of Assam. This community although contributes immensely to the economy of the state, but the plight of the community is no better than any of the under privileged section of Indian populace. Majority of the families belonging to tea tribes are socially and economically backward and are living with or without scant basic amenities, nutrition, medical care, schooling, recreation etc.

Tea garden community in Assam can be divided broadly into two categories; those residing in the lines (Colonies) in the tea gardens and the others who live in basties (Villages) near tea gardens. The population in living in the 'lines' of tea gardens forms the major part of tea garden community. The plights of the populace in the basties are considerably better than those of the lines.

Considering the socio-economic condition of the tea tribe community and the higher frequency of occurrence of delinquency in this community it was felt worthy to carry out an investigation with the following objective:

- 1) To understand the extent of delinquency among the adolescents in tea garden community.
- 2) To identify the major contributing factor of the occurrence of delinquency among the adolescents in tea garden community.

Methodology: The children who were admitted in to the Observation home Jorhat, during the years 2008 to 2013 were taken as sample for this study. This observation home accommodates the male juveniles from eleven districts of Assam namely 'Tinsukia, Dibrugarh, Sivasagar, Jorhat, Golaghat, Karbi-Anglong, Sonitpur, Lakhimpur, Dhemaji, Nagaon and Marigaon'. The data obtained were analysed on percentile basis and the results were interpreted.

Results and Discussion: Table 1: Year wise admission of children belonging to Tea garden community (as percentage of total) in to the Observation home Lichubari, Jorhat.

Year	Total Admission	Tea Garden Children	Admission from Tea garden Communities (% of total)
2008	248	58	23.38
2009	198	59	29.79
2010	188	48	25.53
2011	167	46	27.54
2012	182	64	35.50
2013	182	44	24.17

Table.2. Profile of children from Tea Garden Communities who were admitted in to the Observation Home.

Year	Educational status of Juveniles (In %)			Family status of Juveniles (In %)				Categorisation of Offence (In %)				
	Illiterate	Drop out	School Going	Have Family	No Parants	Single Parents	Dysfunctional Family	Petty Offences	Murder	Rape	Kidnap	Others
2008	48.27	48.27	03.44	37.93	17.24	31.03	17.24	50.0	32.75	08.6	08.6	0.0
2009	49.15	45.76	05.08	25.42	10.16	49.15	15.25	64.4	25.4	06.7	01.06	0.0
2010	47.91	45.83	06.25	35.41	02.08	37.5	25.0	79.16	10.4	10.4	0.0	0.0
2011	52.17	45.65	2.17	30.43	30.43	10.86	04.34	53.47	32.6	10.86	04.34	10.86 (WLP)*
2012	48.00	47.63	4.36	34.90	13.81	33.81	15.27	60.00	23.27	12.5	6.25	1.56 (Insurgency)
2013	41.07	17.80	13.07	45.45	15.90	25.00	13.63	31.81	29.54	20.45	11.36	11.36

* Wild Life Protection Act

A perusal of the data presented in table 1 reflects that during the period between 2008 and 2013, an average 27.42 % of Juveniles were from tea garden communities. So far as the educational status of inmates belonging from Tea Garden Community, 48.7 % are school drop outs followed by 46.7% illiterates and 4.6% inmates are regular school going.

This clearly depicts that, there is a need for strict enforcement of compulsory education for the children of this community.

Table 2 highlights that, an average 31.35 % of the inmates from this community comes from family having single parent. Though 33.43 % of the total inmates come from a back ground of having both Parents, the dysfunctional family appears to be an important contributing factor towards incidence of conflict with law because as much as 16.7 % of the total inmates belong from dysfunctional families.

During this period 61.4 % inmates from this community were charged for Petty Offences, which appeared to have got direct linkage to their economic compulsion, compounded with unhealthy neighbourhood and social problems, viz. lack of education, widespread use of alcohol etc.

Murder appeared to be the second most frequent crime committed by the children and in most of the cases it was found to be associated with the consumption of alcohol and lack of healthy family environment. Off-late the children of this community are seen to be involved in violation of wild life protection act (WLP) by indulging in poaching of wild animals for money.

It can be concluded that a significant rise in offences committed by juveniles has been seen from 2008 to 2013. There is also an alarming increase of admittance in Jorhat Observation Home from children from Tea Communities. This study highlights that this increase of juveniles from a particular community has to be handled positively and in a time bound manner. Involvement of the children in insurgency related activities has become a major matter of concern because the children of this community are becoming the more vulnerable and are getting lured by various insurgent groups, primarily due to backwardness in every sphere of this community. Considering these facts the need of the hour is to critically analyse the increase of delinquents in tea communities in its real perspective and accordingly initiate some intervention programme, both at the family and the school level to avoid children from 'falling out of the family and social protection net'.

**Status Report on the functioning of the Juvenile Justice Boards and Child Welfare Committees in Assam
for the month of December 2013**

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	17
2	BONGAIGAON	6	3	38	2	4	6
3	BARPETA	4	5	101	0	0	1
4	CACHAR	3	9	96	6	3	6
5	CHIRANG	0	0	27	1	1	0
6	DARRANG	0	5	145	6	2	6
7	DHEMAJI	5	2	36	4	4	13
8	DHUBRI	10	2	183	3	0	5
9	DIBRUGARH	8	2	73	12	11	4
10	DIMA HASAO	0	0	0	1	1	1
11	GOALPARA	3	2	99	9	7	5
12	GOLAGHAT	4	13	34	0	0	2
13	HAILAKANDI	0	2	11	2	3	5
14	JORHAT	2	3	28	4	5	8
15	KAMRUP (M)	4	2	171	38	48	33
16	KAMRUP (R)	Cases are jointly dealt with Kamrup (M) JJB			0	2	14
17	KARBI ANGLONG	2	2	39	1	1	0
18	KARIMGANJ	0	0	32	3	3	1
19	KOKRAJHAR	10	0	130	2	1	9
20	LAKHIMPUR	9	2	40	7	3	13
21	MORIGAON	2	6	0	5	8	8
22	NAGAON	8	4	206	36	31	14
23	NALBARI	6	4	25	0	1	9
24	SONITPUR	4	1	147	2	1	41
25	SIBSAGAR	3	8	67	2	1	3
26	TINSUKIA	2	2	52	2	2	28
27	UDALGURI	2	6	13	3	1	27
Total		97	85	1793	151	144	269

Source: MIS Cell, SCPS, Assam

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DSW, Government of Assam