

REPORT OF NEEDS ASSESSMENT AND DISTRICT CHILD PROTECTION PLAN OF LAKHIMPUR DISTRICTS IN ASSAM

1. Introduction:

Integrated Child Protection Scheme (ICPS) is a centrally sponsored scheme of Government -Civil Society Partnership to improve the well being of children in difficult circumstances and to reduce the vulnerability to situations and actions that lead to abuse, neglect, exploitation, abandonment and separation of children. The scheme aims to create a protective environment by improving regulatory frameworks, strengthening structures and professional capacities at national, state and district levels. Integrated Child Protection Service (ICPS) envisages setting up of a District Child Protection Society (DCPS), as the nodal organization at the district level in each district as a fundamental unit for the implementation of the scheme. Given the broad scope of the ICPS of promoting protective environment for children, it is imperative that a comprehensive plan, based on a thorough analysis of vulnerabilities and child protection concerns at the district level, be developed for each district along with strengthening the statutory bodies that will contribute towards ensuring that the scheme will have a far reaching impact, and will directly facilitate the implementation of the JJ Act and other interventions towards promoting protective environment for children at the community level.

1.2. Purpose of District Child Protection Plan

The broad objective of the District Child Protection Plan (DCPP) is to ensure effective implementation of child protection activities with due cognizance of the district specific needs of children in need of care and protection. The District Child Protection Plan will serve the following purposes:

- i. Contribute to effective implementation of child protection legislations, schemes and achievement of child protection goals;
- ii. Map all child related service providers and services at district for creating a resource directory;
- iii. Identify the needs of children in need of care, protection, shelter, counseling, restoration, rehabilitation etc for wholesome reintegration in the society;
- iv. Prioritize the needs for taking action in regard to these needs;
- v. Identify gaps in and provide recommendations for strengthening the implementation of family based non-institutional services including sponsorship, foster care, adoption and after care;
- vi. Use the information for effective delivery of services under Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2000 at district level;
- vii. Provide recommendations for effective rollout of district, block and village level

child protection committees and provide context specific ToRs for these committees which will facilitate monitoring;

- viii. Identify gaps in and provide recommendations for effective Network and coordinate with all government departments and voluntary and civil society organizations working in the field of child rights and protection;
- ix. Provide a framework for maintaining a database of all children in institutional care and non-institutional care at the district level;
- x. Identify capacity gaps of personnel (Government and Non-government) working under child protection system and provide a plan for training and capacity building to ensure improved child protection services to children;
- xi. Provide a framework for effective monitoring and supervision of ICPS in the district to review the progress and achievement of child protection activities.

1.3. Scope:

The needs assessment has captured information on:

- i. Nature and magnitude of problems of children without family care, children engaged in various occupations, child victims of trafficking and early marriage, child abuse, children engaged in begging, children with special needs, children affected by HIV/AIDS, child victims of substance abuse, children prone to disaster, children of vulnerable groups like commercial sex workers, prisoners, child victims of migration to places within and outside the state;
- ii. Institutional care facilities for CNCP and JCL, care standards, status regarding restoration and rehabilitation of children, adequacy of manpower, capacity building of staff, funding pattern etc;
- iii. After Care and rehabilitation programme for children above 18 years;
- iv. Functioning of statutory bodies like CWC, JJB, SJPU, disposal of cases etc;
- v. Need for day care services for the street and working children, existing schemes to address the needs of child beggars; access to CHILDLINE services, if exists;
- vi. Status regarding non-institutional care options like adoption, foster care and sponsorship, etc. to children without family ties, functioning of SAAs, SARA;
- vii. Areas un-served/under served by child protection programmes;

1.4. Strategies:

Major strategies accomplished for District Need Assessment are as under:

- i. Identify, compile and complete desk review of all the relevant district specific reports, documents, available at state and district level from Government, NGOs, media and other sources. These could include reports from DWCD&SW/other concerned

department, SSA and Education Dept, Labour Dept, NCLP, media, research organizations, educational institutions including Universities, NGOs and others;

- ii. Undertake field visits to select sites (communities, children's institutions, adoption agencies, drop-in shelters, and others, as necessary);
- iii. In-depth interviews with key informants, including the CWC, JJB, SJPU, SP and DC of District, community leaders, educators, NGOs, Panchyats and concerned others;
- iv. Draft a District CP Situation Analysis and a District Child Protection Plan (DCPP);
- v. Share findings of the District CP Situational analysis and the draft DCPP with the DCPS;
- vi. Finalize the Situational analysis and DCPP with inputs from the DCPS.

1.5. Methodology:

The DCPP has been prepared in the following manner:

- i. Examine the tool for Needs Assessment at the District level and the performa for District Level Child Protection Plan (DCPP) prepared by MWCD, GoI;
- ii. Finalize the tool and the format for DCPP and customize it, if necessary, to make it state specific;
- iii. Organise orientation programme for the team members who will facilitate collection of information for Needs Assessment at the district level;
- iv. Consulted the District Administration and DCPS about the need for developing the DCPP and for which the nature of information required from the concerned district;
- v. Team members collected information as mentioned in the tool from Govt. officials, NGOs, Panchyats, Police etc to understand the child protection need of the district;
- vi. Team members organized some small group discussions with the NGOs and individual interaction with some key persons like GRP, Labour Commissioner, Tea Associations etc;
- vii. Team members collected the filled in tools from the District officials with their inputs;
- viii. The information received from secondary sources and from field survey and discussion with various stakeholders were collated and the major gaps in the child protection services were identified;
- ix. On the basis of the needs identified, a draft DCPP was prepared and shared with the DCPS and finally submitted to the SCPS through UNICEF, Assam.

1.6. Name of the District covered: Lakhimpur

1.7. Time period: May-June, 2012

DISTRICT: LAKHIMPUR



2. Demography:

Lakhimpur district used to have several other districts of Arunachal Pradesh within its fold and was known as the Lakhimpur Frontier Tract. After independence, the district contained the present day Dibrugarh district, Tinsukia district and Dhemaji district. Its head-quarter was at Dibrugarh. In 1976, Dibrugarh district was separated from Lakhimpur. This was repeated on 14 October 1989, with the formation of Dhemaji district. The district was notified as Lakhimpur District through a proclamation issued by then Governor General on July, 1839 as per Lakhimpur District Gazette (1976:4).

On 2nd October, 1971 the district was reorganized with two sub divisions viz. Dhemaji and North Lakhimpur. Later it was again reorganized in the year 1989 with two sub-divisions viz. Dhakuakhana and North Lakhimpur leaving Dhemaji as a separate district. A beautiful place on Mother Nature's lap, located in the north-east corner of the Indian State of Assam, the district of Lakhimpur lies on north bank of the mighty river Brahmaputra. It is bounded on the north by Lower Subansiri and Papumpare Districts of the state of Arunachal Pradesh and on the east by Dhemaji District. Majuli, the largest river-island belonging to Jorhat District is on the south and Gohpur sub division of Sonitpur District is on the West.

The district has its head quarter at North Lakhimpur and the sub-divisional head quarter at Dhekuakhana includes seven Revenue Circles. Lakhimpur, Dhekuakhana, Kadam, Nauboicha, Narayanpur, Bihpuria and Sabansiri (Ghilamara).

The District covers an area of 2277 Sq. km out of which 2257 Sq. km is rural and only 20 sq. km is urban. The district population is 10, 40,644 and the density of population is 457, as per Census 2011. The sex ratio of Lakhimpur is 965, fifth highest sex ratio in Assam.

District	Year	Population	Density per sq. km	Sex Ratio	Literacy Rate
Lakhimpur	2001	889,010	390	951	68.56%
	2011	1,040,644	457	965	78.39%

2.1 The Administrative System is divided into:

1. Village (Total no of Villages 1185)
2. Block (Total no of Blocks 9)
3. Gaon Panchayats (Total no. of Gaon Panchayats 81)
4. Zilla Parishad (Total no. of Zilla Parishad 1)
5. Sub-division: 2
6. Revenue Circles: 7
7. Town: 4
8. Police Stations: 9

2.2 Population Composition:

District	Total Population 1,040,644		% of urban population	Per cent SC population	Per cent ST population	Per cent Muslim population
Lakhimpur	Male	Female				
	5,29,484	5,11,160	7.32%	7.88%	23.49%	16.14%
No. of Inhabited Villages	No. of Primary Schools	No. of MM Schools	No. of High Schools	No. of H.S. Schools	No. of PHC	No. of Sub-Centre
1185	1505	338	128	25	14	156
Rural poverty (% BPL)	Avg. HH Size	Sex Ratio	Literacy Rate (%)	Female Literacy Rate (%)	Work Part. Rate (%)	Agri. Labour (%)
	22452	965	78.39 %	71.91 %	56%	41.95%

Source: Census, 2011

3. Major Vulnerabilities of Children in Lakhimpur:

India is a home of almost 19% of the world's children. The provisional population of Census 2011, Assam has population of 3.11 Crore, an increase from figure of 2.67 Crore in 2001 census. Total population of Assam as per 2011 census is 31,169,272 of which male and female are 15,954,927 and 15,214,345 respectively, which is 3.41% of total population of India. In 2001, total population was 26,655,528 in which males were 13,777,037 while females were 12,878,491.

In 2011, Lakhimpur had population of 1,040,644 of which male and female were 529,484 and 511,160 respectively. The district occupies 3.34% of total state population, which indicates 14th position within 27 districts of Assam. There was change of 17.06 percent in the population compared to population as per 2001. The initial provisional data suggests a density of 457 in 2011 compared to 390 of 2001. Total area under Lakhimpur district is of about 2,277sq.km. The child population in Lakhimpur is 1,50,880 (Boy: 77,064 & Girls: 73,816) while the total child population of Assam is 4,511,307. According to the Census report 2011, the percentage of child population of the Lakhimpur district is 14.5%, which shows a negative trend while comparing figures for 2001 and 2011. This is also observed in 12 other districts in Assam. The negative trend in growth of child population in the district needs through investigation.

District	Year	Child Population (0-6 years)		% of child population	Sex Ratio
		Boys	Girls		
Lakhimpur	2001			16.91	967
	2011	77,064	73,816	14.50	958

Among the total child population of 0-6 years, number of girl children is 73,816 compared to 77,064 boy children; thus the contrasting Child Sex Ratio is 958 per 1000 male compared to 2001 census figure of 967. On the other hand, Census 2001 reveals that Assam clutched Child Sex Ratio as 965:1000 and it has experienced a steady decline of 8 points to 957 in 2001. On the basis of child sex ratio, Lakhimpur poses 5th amongst the 27 districts of Assam, is a negative picture from Census 2001. The position was 4th during the last Census year. However, the general sex ratio in Lakhimpur has increased from 951 to 965 per 1000 male. Noticeable in rural areas of Assam recorded an alarming decline in this ratio from 967 in 2001 to 957 in 2011. In urban areas, 7.32% of the total population, the CSR went up from 943 in 2001 to 955 in 2011. It is a positive approach in respect to the dominant rural population of the district. The sex ratio speaks off a significant rise compared to the other states, which indicates the gender construction and transition of the society within the district.

The overall sex ratio in Lakhimpur is 965 in census 2011, which indicates an escalation of 14 points over 2001 when the Child Sex Ratio (CSR) was 958. Thus, the reason behind lower child sex ratio than over all sex ratio is matter of probing. Probing is also required

when proportionate ratio between total population and number of children of 0-6 years across the two census reports is taken into consideration: children under 0-6 years formed 14.50% of Lakhimpur District population of 2011 compared to 16.91% in 2001. There was net change of -2.41%. Reasons of such decline can be attributed to various reasons ranging from armed conflict to trafficking, female feticide to missing children.

3.1 Health:

The SRS 2010 data reveals that Crude Birth Rate (CBR) is significantly higher than the Crude Death Rate (CDR); 23.2 and 8.2 respectively. The Infant Mortality Rate (IMR) in Lakhimpur district is 56 per 1000 live births¹ and Maternal Mortality Rate (MMR) is 254 per 1, 00,000 live births² while the national profile registers Infant Mortality Rate as 58 per 1000 live births and Maternal Mortality Rate as 301 per 1,00,000 live births. National Plan of Action for Children, 2005 clearly envisaged that the Infant Mortality Rate and Maternal Mortality Rate would be reduced below 30 per 1000 live births and 100 per 1, 00,000 live births respectively within 2010, however, both the statistics are far below the expected target. This is an area of concern for the children of Lakhimpur. There are 6 numbers of hospitals, 14 numbers of Primary Health Centres, 156 numbers of Sub-Centres, 6 numbers of Block Primary Health Centres and 6 numbers of State Dispensaries in the districts. According to the data form Health department, a child who was affected by HIV/AIDS last year succumbed to death. Hence, the mother and child health in Lakhimpur district is a matter of concern and needs serious attention for registering an overall growth of the maternal and child health.

3.2 Education:

According to 2011 Census, the literacy rate in Assam is 73.18 (Male 78.81 and Female 67.27) and the corresponding figure in Lakhimpur district is 78.39 which shows much better condition than the state average and much better than the literacy rate 68.56 of 2001 . On the basis of literacy rate Lakhimpur is on the 8th position among 27 districts of Assam. If things are looked out at gender wise distribution, male and female literacy were 84.66 and 71.91 respectively. For 2001 census, same figures stood at 77.06 and 59.59 in Lakhimpur District. Total literate in Lakhimpur District were 697,526 of which male and female were 383,026 and 314,500 respectively. According to the data of Education Department of Lakhimpur, there consists of 1505 numbers of primary schools, 338 numbers of junior high schools, 127 numbers of high schools and 25 numbers of high secondary schools. There are 17 numbers of colleges in the district. In Lakhimpur, 1288 numbers of children in the age group between 6-14 years never attended school.

¹Annual Health Survey 2010-11

²Health Department, Lakhimpur district

Primary Education: The status regarding primary education in Lakhimpur district is encouraging. At the primary level, the enrolment ratio of the girls is higher than the boys viz, the gross enrolment ratio of boys is 107.56 and the girl is 110.51. On the other hand, the percentage of gross drop out of boy is 0.21 and the girl is -4.21. According to the Inspector of School (Primary Education), most of the children drop out in the class of II & III due to lack of interests in studies and non-availability of support from the families.

Secondary Education: The comprehensive coverage of the primary schools somehow got shrunked at the secondary level. The total number of enrolment in VI-VII is 14,928 (boys: 7544, girls: 7384). The status of the dropout rate is little better than the primary level (0.76% boys and -2.27% girls). However, the drop out rate of the girls is low. In Lakhimpur, the enrolment rate seems to decrease in class VI-VII and shows a significant increase in the high school or intermediate level (Total number of enrolment in IX-X is 60541).

SSA run Bridge Course Centre: There are 142 numbers of SSA run Bridge Course Centres in six blocks in the district namely, Bihpuria, Bordoloni, Dhakuakhana, Lakhimpur, Narayanpur, Nowboicha. In rural areas the enrolment of boys is higher than the girls whereas in the urban places the scenario is just opposite. There are 5 numbers of residential schools in Lakhimpur district. Here also the enrolment ratio of the boys is higher than the girls. According to the Inspector of School (Secondary), the rate of drop out of girl children especially the rural girl children is high in class VII-VIII due to early marriage, gender discrimination in terms of educational neglect, the distance between schools and residences, and high incidences of child labour (it was reiterated by various duty bearers of child protection, including the Labour Officer).

Observation:

- Drop out among children are largely due to lack of interest of and support from the families on education, engaging children for work at an early age, early marriage among the adivasis, parental ignorance,
- In Lakhimpur district, the schools are well aware of the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009 and status regarding implementation of the law is found good.
- Distance between the high schools and the residences (most of the schools situated within 7 km/area) is another major factor for dropouts.
- Lack of sensitization among the adibashi community, mainly among Missing and Miri communities.
- It is an achievement of the Sarba Shiksha Mission, Lakhimpur that they have taken a step to promote education within the district for the Child Domestic Workers, by sending them to formal school. These children are receiving education and other facilities provided by the SSM.
- Lastly, due to poverty most of the children can not continue their studies.

3.3. Children in ICDS:

Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS) implemented in Lakhimpur district through 10 projects. 1,04,952 children are attending preschool education under ICDS scheme. Along with pre-school education, other components of ICDS are being catered to the children through 2875 centres and by 9 numbers of Child Development Project Officers, 50 numbers of supervisors and 2851 numbers of Anganwadi workers (AWWs). The needs of the adolescent girls, however, remain largely undressed through ICDS and the children in the correctional home do not have access to such services. Some posts of supervisors and AWWs are lying vacant. In an interview with the Child Development Project Officer of Karunabari block, it revealed that most of the children coming to centers belong to muslim community. Almost all children attend the pre-school education. There is also an ICDS centre in brick kiln area near Pani Gaon of the district.

Observation:

- There is no such option in M.P.R. for maintaining the data of child marriage and migration.
- Kishori Shakti Yojna (K.S.Y.) or any kind of vocational training for the girls in the age group 12-18 years, are not functional in this district.
- There is no ICDS center within Correctional Home of Lakhimpur, so the children of prisoners do not receive any support for their development.

3.4. Child Labour:

As per the census report of 2001, Assam has 3, 51, 416 child labourers of 5-14 years age group. Incidentally, the number in the whole country counted to the tune of 1.26 crore as per that census. In 2005, the district identified 1763 numbers of child labour. Most of the children were engaged in domestic help, hotel, Dhabas sector etc. Apart from this, many child labourers were identified in the urban areas who were mostly migrated from other districts in Assam. Most of the families employ children for domestic help. In all the cases, the children are denied access to education, recreation, cultural practices and participation in play activities.

In the tea gardens of the district, it has been common for children to work alongside their parents to augment their income. Children with their nimble fingers are preferred to pluck the tea leaves (being a delicate job) and also undertake weeding, hoeing and nursery activities during off-season. The mothers working in the gardens normally bring their children to the work-place as there is no one back home to look after the children and the crèche facility as stipulated under the Plantation Labour Act is mostly non-existent. As a result a child grows up observing his/her mother plucking the leaves and gradually assists her. The Child Labour Prohibition and Regulation Act of 1986 amended certain portions of the Plantation Labour Act of 1951 by raising minimum age

for employment from 12 to 14 years of age. Yet these guidelines are summarily ignored in the tea gardens as indicated in Government report as well as ILO studies. A 1992 report on child labour in tea plantations in Northeast says: *“Most of the child workers are employed as casuals. Children are found to do such strenuous work as plucking under very severe climatic conditions; they are assigned to nursery work, fertilization, carrying of heavy loads and household work. They are also made to work in the factories, against established law.”* (Vasanthi Raman, Child Labour in the Tea Plantations of North East India, UNICEF & Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare, Govt of India, 1992).

In Lakhimpur, there are ten tea gardens where the children are also engaged as hidden labourers. There are 27 special schools for child labours in Lakhimpur district of which ten schools are situated near the tea estates. These schools are run by the NGOs. Most of the children belong to the SC, ST and OBC families. The Labour Officer, Lakhimpur district, reported that the number of children has gone considerably shares the following data on child Labour in the district:

Table:1:Age wise distribution of Child Labour

Age	No. of Children
Children below 9 years	407
Children below 9-12 years	422
Children below 12-14 years	149
Total	978

Table: 2: Educational Status wise Child Labour

Educational Status	No. of Children
Not attended in any school before tracking	197
Class I-V	781

Table: 3: Caste wise distribution of Child Labour

Caste Distribution	No. of Children
General	Nil
Schedule caste	55
Schedule Tribe	49
OBC/MOBC	874
Total	978

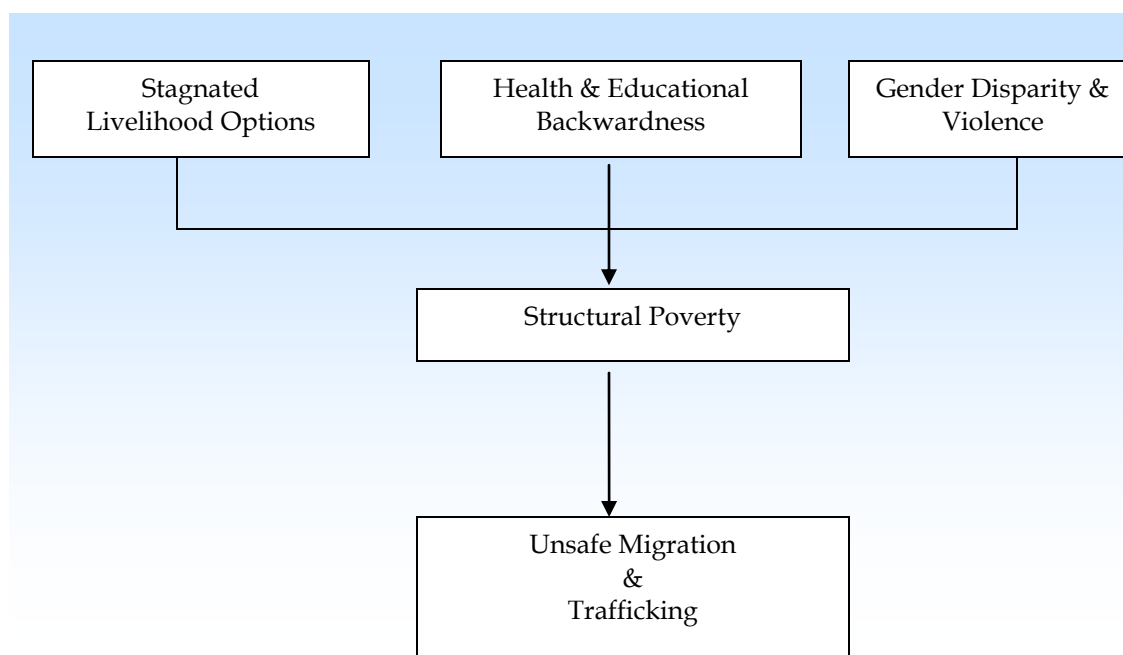
According to the Labour Officer, Lakhimpur, 221 children were mainstreamed to normal schools last year. But due to poverty the parents and guardians often withdraw

the children from the schools and engage them in work to supplement their income. NCLP cannot squarely address the problem of child labour as enrolment ratio and dropout ratio are high enough to take full advantage of the programme. At present, the child labour issues are mostly dealt by the Department of Labour, but there is a strong need to link its existing efforts with that of Department of Social Welfare and Dept of Health in providing non-formal education, health and also to ensure that the children are covered by the service delivery mechanisms under ICPS, CHILDLINE etc.

In 2005, the Committee on Welfare of Women and Children of the Assam Legislative Assembly had observed that engagement of child labour is still going on in the State and recommended that the Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act, 1986 should be enforced strictly. The State Sarba Shiksha Abhijan Mission too had recognized the magnitude of the problem and had given special focus to mainstream the children through special Residential Bridge Course Centers. Nagaon, Kokrajhar and Lakhimpur are presently covered under NCLP. Yet as per a query filed by Bachpan Bachao Andolan, Union Labour Ministry had informed that 1,261 inspections were carried out in Assam between 2006-08, of which only 46 violations were detected and 1 prosecution registered. (16th October, 2008, IANS). This calls for the need to further probe the extent of practice of child labour in Assam.

3.5. Child Trafficking:

From the discussions with the district officials and NGO representatives, it revealed that children of poor families living in remote areas are vulnerable to trafficking. Due to poverty these children are pushed by their parents to take up any kind of economic activity at a tender age. Most of them are being trafficked to other states to meet the demand for cheap labour. A significant portion of trafficked victims is sent to Nagaland for peddling of narcotic drugs or other psychotropic substances. It has been reported that many children are trafficked to Arunachal Pradesh from the border area of Lakhimpur viz, Laluk, Narayanpur, Nowboicha, Kadam etc. mainly to work as domestic child labour, goldsmith, labour in the road-side dhabas etc. Girls from Missing community move to Arunachal Pradesh for cultivating their skill in weaving in the local market. Report of girl child trafficking is not very rampant in the district. Lakhimpur mainly serves as the source district and the phenomenon of trafficking of children from other districts/state to Lakhimpur has not been a major issue, reported by the NGOs. However, the migration of children especially girl children has become an area of concern in the recent times. Many of such girls are reported to be engaged in beauty parlours which have mushroomed in Itanagar. Children mostly from adivasi and bodo communities are trafficked through Bandardah (a place in Assam-Arunachal Border) as the main transit point. However, according to many sources, there are many such transit areas dotting the dense jungle of Assam-Arunachal border.



Socio-economic Causes of Unsafe Migration & Trafficking

Assam shares a 142 km border with Arunachal Pradesh which is inhabited by Bodos. This community due to their lack of livelihood options, poor education and lack of awareness often are lured for better employment opportunities and taken to Arunachal Pradesh; many of them are trafficked at a later stage. As far as Arunachal Pradesh is concerned, many traffickers use Bandardah (a place in Assam-Arunachal Border) as the main transit point. However, according to many sources, there are many such transit areas dotting the dense jungle of Assam-Arunachal border.

The following key trafficking routes were identified after analyzing the secondary data, police records, media reports as well as first hand information collected from the NGOs as well as survivors of trafficking.

District	Key Source Areas	Transit Areas	Important Destination Areas	Comments
Lakhimpur	Laluk, Narayanpur, Nowboicha, Kadam	Tezpur, Guwahati, Rangapara & Rangiya	Guwahati, Delhi, Mumbai, Pune	To work as CDW or sex worker, tea tribe girls are most affected
			Arunachal Pradesh	To work as CDW

Although a few homes under Ujjawala scheme have been functioning in Assam (including one in Guwahati), there is a distinct demand for more homes, considering

the survivors of trafficking as Children in Need of Care & Protection (CNCP). These homes need to set up in the far flung source areas as well as transit areas for their shelter, rehabilitation and subsequent reintegration with the mainstream.

3.6. Child Marriage:

In Assam, the median age at first marriage for boys is 26.9 and for girls the corresponding figure is 20.8 (DLHS,2007). In Lakhimpur, the corresponding figures are 25.8 and 21.00 respectively. Rampant child marriage was observed in the minority-dominated pockets of Lakhimpur. Girls getting married at 14-15 years were a common practice and as per Muslim Personal Law, the permitted age of marriage is 15 years.

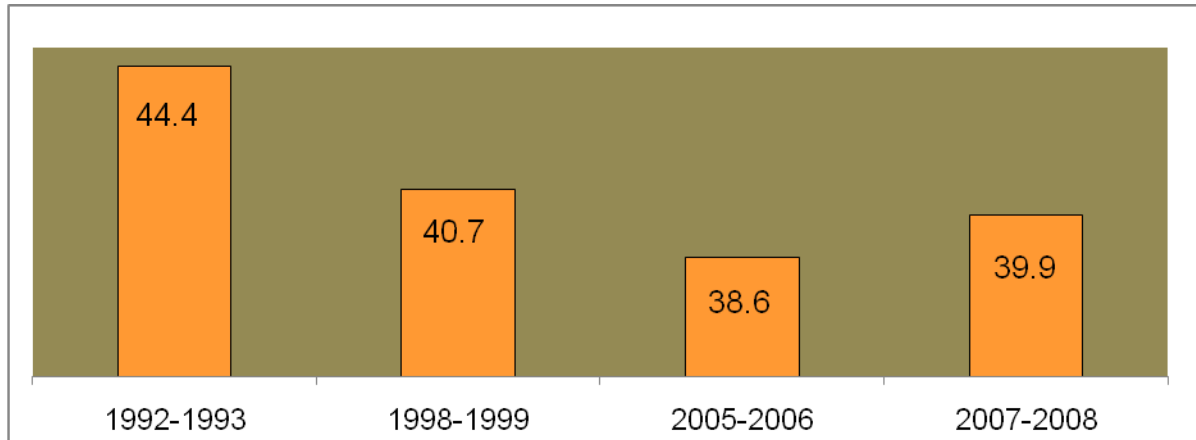
The 2001 Census of India showed that 19.22% of them were married off between the ages of 10 to 19 years in Assam. It is found that percentage of child marriage is highest in Dhubri District (11.1%), followed by Goalpara (10.1%), Bongaigaon (9.8%) and Barpeta (9.7%) districts in lower Assam, Tinsukia (9.7%) in upper Assam and Morigaon (9.6%) and Kamrup (9.5%) districts in central Assam. Prevalence of child marriage is lowest in NC Hills (6.9%), followed by Cachar (7.5%), Hailakandi (7.6%) and Karimganj (7.9%) districts in south Assam. This trend portrays a similarity in districts that are geographically situated near one another which contributes significantly either to the practice or prevention of child marriage in the district.

As per the NFHS Survey (2005-06), among young women age 15-19 in Assam, 16 percent have already begun childbearing, a level similar to the national average. Three percent of women age 15 have started childbearing, but among women age 19 years, almost two-fifths (39%) are already either mothers or pregnant. Teenage pregnancy and motherhood is more prevalent among women with no or little education and among women in lower wealth quintiles than among other women.

The Situational Analysis brought out significant findings. Child marriage was prevalent among certain communities like the Muslims, the tea communities, tribal population, among the Biharis and Nepalis and the rural Assamese community of upper Assam. It was also predominant in the rural areas, char (riverine) areas, tea gardens and in the urban slum areas. The Nature of marriage was either arranged by parents or relatives as in the orthodox communities or love and elopement among the tribals or tea garden communities. Some of them were marriage of their own choice with consent of parents.

In an interview with Dr. Jeuti Baruah, Director, Law Research Institute, Guwahati, it was gathered that Child marriage is prevalent in the Lakhimpur district, and one-fifth of the girls are married before attaining the legal age of marriage. She informed that most of the child marriages are among the Karbis (one village), followed by the Muslims, Nepalis and Adviasis, though child marriages are found more or less in all communities of the area.

Although there has been a steady decline in proportion of girls married before the legal age of 18 years, the levels still remain high. As per the NFHS Survey (2005-06), among young women age 15-19 in Assam, 16 percent have already begun childbearing, a level



In Barpeta more than 53 per cent³ followed by Kokrajhar (50.6 per cent) and Dhubri (48.8 per cent) of girls marry before reaching the legal age of marriage

similar to the national average. Three percent of women aged 15 have started childbearing, but among women aged 19 years, almost two-fifths (39%) are already either mothers or pregnant. Teenage pregnancy and motherhood is more prevalent among women with no or little education and among women in poverty than among other women.

The gender disparity, social norms prevalent, perception by parents and the level of awareness were contributing factors for child marriage in the communities. Other aspects being poverty, illiteracy, tradition, religious factors, large family size and lack of knowledge about ill effects of child marriage on health and family.

Dr. Barooah also mentioned that the harmful practice of child marriage can be contained through following measures:

- Mobile phones should not be provided to the under-aged, as they consider it enhances easy communication and elopement of the minors.
- Parents should be conscious and responsible in guiding the adolescents
- Topic on child marriage, including its consequences, should be included in the high school syllabus of classes 8-12th standard.

³ National Family Health Survey - 1992-1993, 1998-1999 and 2005-2006
District Level Household Survey - 2007-2008

- Awareness on legal aspects of child marriage and on family planning should be made at local levels.
- Counselling should be given to the newly married under-aged couples on various aspects of maintaining a family life.
- Schemes should be launched for the welfare of the child married persons, especially for those who are not accepted by their families / parents. Such unaccepted couples face lots of problems relating to their shelters and earnings.

Children, especially girl children who drop out or slide back from school are more vulnerable to be married off at early age. This, as a result, contributes to higher MMR or IMR, neo natal death, mal -nutritious mother and child along with other denials of rights. Relevantly, elopement should be taken into consideration when this issue will be addressed.

Last year (2011) the Government of Assam has launched a new schemes 'Na-Bowari' (newly wed), implemented by the state social welfare department, to discourage marriage among girls before they turn 20 years of age. Under the scheme, below poverty line (BPL) women, who got married after attaining the age of 20 years, will be paid a one-time financial assistance of Rs 10,000 by the state government. It is hoped that the scheme will also be of great help in reducing the number of female school dropouts- as they are often forced to discontinue education after being married off at an early age. The very necessity for such government initiatives goes to prove beyond doubt that contrary to the popular belief, child marriage is prevalent in various parts of Assam depending upon the societal structure, economic status of the population, literacy, education, religion, ethnicity and such other factors. Consequently, one finds child marriage in Assam, especially among the Muslim immigrants in Char areas, tea labourers or ex-tea workers community. Altogether, 10,000 beneficiaries will be covered under this scheme in the fiscal 2010-11, and an amount of Rs 10 crore has been earmarked for this.⁴

3.7. Children in Slum:

In Lakhimpur there is no slum, but some people stay together in slum like condition. Basically they migrated from other states and other districts of Assam. It has been reported that children of most of slum dwellers do not attend schools; they are engaged into rag picking and victimized of several kinds of exploitations and abuse including sexual abuse. Due to poor standard of living, children are denied from their rights.

3.8. Street Children:

⁴ Report of The Telegraph, 27 Dec,2010

Lakhimpur district is situated in the extreme north eastern part of Assam adjoining the foothills of Arunachal Pradesh. Earlier Lakhimpur was famous for surplus highest production of food grains and vegetables but due to flood production is gradually diminishing. Hence BPL families are increasing day by day. Therefore the number of child labour is increasing. From the findings of the study: street children in Assam, it observed that, there were 51 street children (46 boys and 5 girls) in Lakhimpur district. Most of the children belonged to Hindu families. The educational status of the street children was very poor. It's like a pyramid because most of the children were never been to school and those children were got the basic education, they were not continued their secondary level. Based on the study findings, it may be said that most of the children were migrated from other districts in Assam to look for a job. Apart from this, approximately 60% of children in Lakhimpur are physically abused by his/her parents and choose to run away from their home and started to eke out a scanty living. In the district, rag picking was the most prominent work for the children. Though many children were also engaged in the hotels, dhabas, tea stalls as a child labour. They worked as a daily wage labour but they got minimum wage for their uphill struggle. Most of the children approximately, 41% of children earned Rs. 30/-to 60/- per day. From the findings, it revealed that, the children had a compulsion to earn money for own survival and it was the only reason behind opting early employment. The health status of the children in Lakhimpur was average in comparison to other districts in Assam. There they got the facilities of government hospital for treatment. According to the findings, approximately 52% children were getting the facilities of government hospital. Addiction was a big problem in Assam. The children were taking substances mostly for fun and peer pressure. They used to take Gutka and Tobacco. In Lakhimpur, approximately 39% of children took Gutka and 26% of children took tobacco for enjoyment with their friends. It was also their pastime. The street children are mostly observed in the slums namely, Bethmohal (W-10), Khelmati (W-14), backside of burning Ghat, Pubchandmari, Paschimchandmari etc. in the town.

3.9. Children Affected by Natural Disaster:

Lakhimpur is a major flood prone district in the state. A large part of the district gets inundated during monsoon and causes a great deal of misery to the people especially the women and children. The major flood prone areas of Lakhimpur district are: Dolaghat, Kutori, Chapori Narayanpur, Nowboicha, Birpuria, Doknakhan etc. Last year, at Dolaghat to Arunachal border, around 350-400 people including children were affected by Sianjra river and at Kutori to Chapori, around 600-700 people including children were affected by Soan-Siri river.

The district administration responds to emergency situation by making an initial assessment by the Mandals prepare a list of the affected persons and send it to the Circle Officer for further action by the District Level relief Committee. The administration uses the existing infrastructure like the raised platforms and local boats for rescue and rehabilitation of the evacuated persons. The district administration

maintains enough stock of food grains and tarpaulin to respond to the emergency needs of the affected persons. Children suffer this time because schools remain closed and they are resettled in other place along with their families. The outbreak of intestine disorder is also observed among the children, reported the NGOs.

3.10. Children and Law Violating Activities:

The incidents of juvenile offences have increased in all over the India; it is especially, true for serious offences viz: rape, murder, dacoity and robbery. In Lakhimpur, average 14-18 years of children committed offences like: kidnapping, rape, murder and theft.

However, it is somewhat true that existing gaps in child protection mechanism leads to survival and corroboration of such detrimental factors that can lead a child towards exhibition of law-violating behaviour. The increase in incidence of juvenile offences was observed under some other serious offences like: rape, murder, dacoity and robbery. However, the majority of the children apprehended are accused of minor offences like petty thefts, burglary etc. The failure of primary socializing institutions like family, schools and neighborhoods in providing opportunities for healthy growth of children leads of growing incidences of law violated behavior amongst children and young persons. Finally, poverty, community disorganization, availability of drugs and peer influence are also linked to increased risk for later violence. The problem of law violating behavior among children reflects child's socio-economic mal adjustments.

3.11. Child Abuse:

In the district of Lakhimpur, 128 cases of Kidnapping and Abduction (u/s 363-369, 371-373 IPC) and 39 cases of rape (u/s 376IPC) were reported in NCRB, 2010. The following table shows the total crimes committed in the district:

Sl. No	Crime Heads		2010
1	Murder (Sec. 302)		45
2	Attempt to commit Murder (Sec. 307)		17
3	CH not amounting to Murder (Sec. 304, 308)		03
4	Rape (Sec. 376)		39
5	Kidnapping & Abduction (Sec. 363 - 369, 371 - 373)	Of Women & Girls	109
		Of Others	19
6	Dacoity (Sec. 395 - 398)		03
7	Preparation & Assembly for Dacoity (Sec. 399 - 402)		00
8	Robbery (392 - 394, 397, 398)		12
9	Burglary (sec. 449 - 452, 454, 455, 457 - 460)		103
10	Theft (sec. 379 - 382)	Auto Theft	33
		Other Theft	108
11	Riots (Sec. 143 - 145, 147 - 151, 153, 153A, 153B, 157, 158, 160)		14

Sl. No	Crime Heads	2010
12	Criminal Breach of Trust (Sec. 406 - 409)	20
13	Cheating (Sec. 419, 420)	57
14	Counterfeiting (Sec. 231 - 254, 489A, 489D)	00
15	Arson (Sec. 435, 436, 438)	10
16	Hurt (Sec. 323 - 333, 335 - 338)	387
17	Dowry Deaths (Sec. 304B)	00
18	Molestation (Sec. 354)	60
19	Sexual Harassment (Sec. 509)	00
20	Cruelty by Husband & Relatives (Sec. 498A)	229
21	Importation of Girls (Sec. 366B)	00
22	Causing Death by Negligence (Sec. 304 A)	168
23	Other IPC Crimes	440
	Total	1876

From the data on crimes committed against children available from the office of the Superintendent of Police, Lakhimpur, it is observed that no of cases of rape has increased from 6 in 2009 to 10 in 2010 and two cases on kidnapping and abduction were registered u/s 366(A)/372 IPC, 371/34 IPC) in 2010 as against no such incidences in 2009. The procurement of minor girls u/s 366(A) has also increased to 27 in 2010 from 26 in 2009.

Cases Registered under Crimes against Children, Lakhimpur, 2009 and 2010

Crime Heads	Cases Registered	
	2009	2010
Infanticide (Sec. 315 IPC)	NIL	NIL
Murder (Sec. 302 IPC)	NIL	NIL
Rape (Sec. 376 IPC)	06	10
Kidnapping & Abduction (Sec. 363 - 369, 371 - 373 IPC)	NIL	02
Foeticide (Sec. 315, 316 IPC)	NIL	NIL
Abetment to Suicide (Sec. 305 IPC)	NIL	NIL
Exposure & Abandonment (Sec. 317 IPC)	NIL	NIL
Procurement of Minor Girls (Sec. 366A IPC)	26	27
Buying of Girls for Prostitution (Sec. 373 IPC)	NIL	NIL
Selling of Girls for Prostitution (Sec. 372 IPC)	NIL	NIL
Child Marriage Restraint Act, 1929/ Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006	NIL	NIL
ITPA, 1956	NIL	NIL
Other Crimes	NIL	NIL
Total	32	39

Source: SP Office, North Lakhimpur

The incidences of child abuse are also reported from various places in the district. The major forms of child abuse include: assault, including rape and sodomy, touching or fondling a child, forcible kissing, and sexual advances towards a child during travel, sexual advances towards a child during marriage situations etc. As per the report of a survey by National Commission for Protection of Child Rights, as many as 62.55% boys and 51.19% girls from Assam reported facing one or more forms of sexual abuse, which was highest among all the 13 sample states. Factors like difficult geographical terrain, poor infrastructure, chronic poverty and lack of awareness of the community about trafficking aid. In terms of commercial sexual exploitation, Assam has now emerged as source, transit as well as destination state. The National Child Abuse Study, 2007, shows a picture on types of various forms of abuse perpetrated on children:

State	Type of Abuse	Boys	Girls	Total
Assam	Physical Abuse	-	-	84.65%;
	Physical Abuse in Institutions	81.52%	18.48%	-
	Corporal Punishment	-	-	99.56%
	Sexual Abuse	53.48%	46.52%	-
	One or more forms of severe sexual abuse	-	-	57.27%
	Emotional Abuse	50.21%	49.79%	71.31%
	Abuse through humiliation	-	-	68.26%
	Girls Reporting Neglect	-	-	70.19%

Assam being a poverty ridden state marred by ethnic clashes, armed conflicts, natural disaster, it is quite obvious that there would be a large number of destitute and orphaned children as children being the worst victims of any natural or manmade disaster.

3.12. Child Domestic Work:

Child Domestic Work can be treated as a form of child labour that catches little public attention being confined in the safe precincts of a home. Child Domestic Work is widespread in the urban pockets of Assam especially in Guwahati and adjacent pockets. The 1991 census data reports that 6.8 lakhs boys and 4.1 lakhs girls are engaged in domestic help in the state of Assam. According to CHILDLINE Guwahati, out of every four families in the city of Guwahati there are at least three domestic-helper children and out of every four such children, three of them are girls. Also noteworthy in this connection is that these children belong to the age group of 5-15 years. According to NGO sources, the law for prohibition of child domestic worker is rampantly violated in the district especially in the urban and semi-urban centers and there is complete lack of awareness about it amongst the employers.

An earlier UNICEF sponsored study on the CDW of Guwahati revealed the place of origin of the respondents:

Place of origin	Response (n)	Percentage
Baksa/Udalguri/Chirang/Kokrajhar	30	6.30
Dhubri/Bongaigaon/Goalpara	73	15.33
Nagaon/Morigaon/Sonitpur/Darrang	51	10.7
Nalbari/Barpeta/Kamrup	154	32.35
N.C.Hills/Barak Valley	11	2.31
Lakhimpur/Demaji/Sibasagar/Tinsukia	58	12.18

(Source: UNICEF)

The predominance of the child domestic workers in the area is an indication of some form of structural disorganization and an outcome of multiple social, economic and cultural factors, of which the **immediate concerns** are:

- Poverty, illiteracy and ignorance of parents/guardians impede the healthy development of children.
- Low income owing to larger size of the family leads to destitution.
- Non-availability of employment in the area due to poor infrastructure and gaps in service delivery mechanism especially schemes like NREGP
- Strong demand for cheap labour.
- Sanction of the families to pursue economic activities at tender age.
- Lack of political will and lack of implementation of legislation are some of the key determinants to the growing phenomena of child domestic workers.
- Structural change in the erstwhile village economy owing to liberalization has led to unceremonious demise of many traditional livelihoods and putting the existence of many families at stake. This has influenced the drift of population from rural to urban areas
- Many children are lured by the glossy urban culture and move by themselves to the cities. In such cases, someone who had earlier moved to city/town often acts as the 'link'.
- An emerging vested interest group is indulged in trafficking on children and exploit the vulnerability of the children and the family, as well.

4. Gaps in the Existing Child Protection Mechanisms:

The following gaps were identified in the needs assessment:

4.1. Institutional Care: Since there is no children's home in Lakhimpur district, many children who are without families or without family care remain unprotected and often

they migrate to other places in search of living. CWC find it difficult to ensure a protected place for such children.

4.2. CHILDLINE Services: Non-availability of CHILDLINE services in the district.

4.3. Child Welfare Committee:

The new CWC of Lakhimpur district has been functioning since 4th July, 2011 and sits in the premises in the District Child Protection Officers office. The Chairperson Dr. H. Baruah reported that CWC, since inception has been playing a positive role to ensure child rights and makes effort to generate awareness on the role of the CWC to deal with the Child in Need of Care and Protection (CNCP) and children at risk.

The contact details of the members of CWC:

Sl. No.	Name	Designation	Contact No.
1	Dr. Hem Chandra Baruah	Chairperson	9435085260
2	Smt. Rekha Phukan	Member	9435086521
3	Smt. Chandra Prave Gogoi	Member	9435520586
4	Sri Susanta Bordoloi	Member	9859188256
5	Dr. Amiya Rajbanshi	Member	9435086521

The committee is sitting twice in a week from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. on Tuesday and Friday. According to the chairperson, the children mostly produced before the committee belong to broken family, and are engaged as child labour. The children are mostly produced by the Police and NGOs. The Gaon Bura, Local Leaders, Police and NGO workers provide support to the committee to in family tracing. They are able to trace the families within 2-3 days. The average age group of the children produced before CWC is below 15 years. As per record of the CWC, only two cases are pending till date and the duration of pendency of a case is not more than 4 months.

It is observed that there were some infrastructural gaps in the office of CWC since they did not have access to land phone, internet connection, fax & xerox machine, and the space was inadequate to have individual counseling. Apart from this, CWC expresses their resentment about the poor budgetary allocation and inadequate manpower. The functional liaison between SJPU and CWC is poor. According to the Chairperson and member of the committee linkages need to be strengthened with all concerned departments specially, health, education, police, Social welfare department, Labour department with CWC. CWC's role in facilitating admission to schools under RtE is found encouraging.

Gaps:

- No Children Home.
- SAA is not yet functional.
- There are no CHILDLINE services in the district.
- Lack of awareness on child protection issues. So, training is needed.
- Irregular flow of fund like since last 8 months CWC is not receiving any honorarium for them.
- Cases of illegal adoption are reported
- Lack of coordination with labour department such as: a Child labour found by Labour Department has handed over to the family/parents by department only. None are produced before CWC.
- Lack of awareness about JJ System & Justicing mechanism
- No effective network between various stakeholders on trafficking related issues
- Lack of NGOs which can effectively deal with child related issues
- Absence of children's homes in the district
- Lack of infrastructure & other financial/administrative support
- Overall lack of awareness of the community, NGOs and other stakeholders about the role of CWC.

4.4. Juvenile Justice Board:

Juvenile Justice Board of Lakhimpur district sits twice in a week in the premises of the DCPO office from 2 p.m. to 5 p.m. The contact details of the members of JJB:

Sl. No.	Name	Designation	Contact No.
1	Mr. Kaushik Hazarika	Principal Magistrate	03752-222046
2	Smt. Jugoda Phukan	Social Worker	03752-223135
3	Smt. Suprava Medhi	Social Worker	94350-84931

According to the Probation Officer of Lakhimpur, the children mostly belong to poor families. The average age group of the children is 14-18 years. As per data given by JJB, they dealt with 65 cases during last year and from that 41 cases are pending up to April, 2012, 45 children have been granted bail in the last 12 months and 31 major cases are pending due to non appearance before the JJB.

In an interview with the Mr. K. Hazarika, Principal Magistrate, of JJB Lakhimpur, most of them are apprehended for petty offences and some are charged under section 379 and 380 IPC for theft. They ensure the determination of age of a juvenile as per Rule 12 of JJ rule, 2007. The list of pending cases with JJB shows the nature and categories of offences as on May, 2012:

Sl. No.	Category of Offences	No. of cases
1	Theft	17
2	Rape	9
3	Kidnapping	3
4	Murder	1
5	Wrongful confinement for 3 or more days	1
6	Punishment for wrongful restraint	1
7	Punishment for rioting armed with deadly weapon	1
8	voluntarily causing grievous hurt or deter public servant from his duty	1
9	Punishment for voluntarily causing hurt	1
10	Lurking house-trespass or house breaking by night in order to commit offence punishable with imprisonment.	1
11	Punishment of criminal conspiracy	1
12	voluntarily causing grievous hurt by dangerous weapon or means	1
13	Punishment for robbery	1
14	Punishment for extortion	1
15	Mischief by fire or explosive substances with intent to destroy houses etc.	1

According to Mr. Hazarika, principal magistrate who has been in charge since July, 2011, the Board is facing the following problems:

- Non appearance of juvenile before JJB
- Parents/Guardians are not coming before JJB
- Delay in submission of charge sheet
- Non-appearance of witnesses
- No Observation home in the district or in the nearby district. In many cases the Pr. Magistrate has no choice but to grant 'jimma'(bail) to many children who would require institutional care for care, support and counseling.

It is observed that there were some infrastructural constraints in the office of JJB viz: inadequate rooms, lack of staffs, and lack of toilet facility. Mr. Hazarika suggested the following for effective functioning of the JJB:

- JJB should be independent.
- A full pledged Principal magistrate should be appointed.
- Separate office and independent fund should be set up.

4.5. Inactive Special Juvenile Police Unit:

Assam had taken a lead from many other states in forming the Special Juvenile Police Units in all the Police stations. However the units have mostly remained dormant as there had been no proper capacity building of the police personnel on child rights or juvenile justicing mechanism. Although the SJPUs have been formed in the district but this is yet to be functionally active and there is lack of role clarity amongst the police personnel apart from lacking basic knowledge of functioning.

4.6. Alternative Non-Institutional Care:

Alternative care stresses primarily in strengthening vulnerable families with a view to keeping the child with his or her family. It should take full account of the desirability, in principle, of maintaining the child as close as possible to his/her habitual place of residence, in order to facilitate contact and potential reintegration with his/her family and to minimize disruption of his/her educational, cultural and social life.

Jagriti Sanmilita Unnayan Kendra, Lakhimpur has been registered very recently on 25th January, 2012 as Specialized Adoption Agency (SAA) for both Dhemaji and Lakhimpur district and it is yet to be functionally active. The sanctioned capacity of the Institution is 10. They did not receive any fund from SARA. The Secretary of SAA informed that, SARA wanted a list of staffs which they have submitted, yet the fund has not been released. SAA has sufficient space to run as the SAA. Because of ignorance, the cases of illegal adoption were also reported by the NGOs.

4.7. District Child Protection Committee (DCPC) in Lakhimpur, Assam

DCPC has been formed in the district in May 2010 vide an order of the Commissioner & Secretary to the Govt. of Assam, Social Welfare Department, but it is yet to be functionally active to ensure a protective network for the children in district. The Meetings are very infrequent, the last meeting was held on 15.09.2011. The low key functioning of the committee may be due to delay in placement of staff.

Sl. No.	Name / Designation	Status / Position
1	Deputy Commissioner	Chairperson
2	Additional Deputy Commissioner (Development)	Vice-Chairperson
3	District Child Protection Officer	Member Convener
4	Superintendent of Police	Member
5	Joint Director of Health Services	Member
6	Project Director, DRDA	Member
7	Inspector of Schools	Member
8	District Elementary Education Officer (DEEO)	Member
9	District Mission Coordinator of Sarva Shiksha Abhijan	Member

Sl. No.	Name / Designation	Status / Position
10	Chairperson, CWC	Member
11	Principal Magistrate, JJB or his / her Nominee who is a Member of JJB	Member
12	Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Zilla Parishad	Member
13	One Expert in the field of Child Protection (to be nominated)	Member
14	Representative from one NGO working in the field of Child Protection (to be nominated)	Member

4.8.National Child Labour Project (NCLP):

In Lakhimpur district, National Child Labour Project is being implemented in the form of 27 schools. Those 27 schools have been divided to four NGOs catering 983 numbers of children. Among them 553 are boys and 430 are girls. 221 children (123 boys and 98 girls) were mainstreamed to primary schools. According to the labour Officer, Lakhimpur, the children are getting the educational rehabilitation and vocational training also. Most of the Children Labour Schools are part time, not attached to any employer on weekly or monthly basis. The main cause behind child labour is poverty and broken home including illiteracy and ignorance of parents. There is one programme available under NCLP viz: Residential Bridge Course under SAA. The present intake capacity of the RBC and NCLP is not adequate to take care of all child labour. Adult education/awareness is required for the parents to eliminate the child labour; those children are working in the different fields.

NCLP Special School in the district of Lakhimpur:

Sl. No.	Name of the Organization	No. of schools	Total No. of Children
1	CIEDA	6	214
2	Shradha	12	468
3	Jyoti Sangam Samiti	5	163
4	Donyi Polo youth Society	4	133

4.9. Ineffective probation system:

Although there is a Probation Officer in the district and PO have been assigned to the responsibilities of District Child Protection Officer (DCPO) of District Child Protection Unit on ad-hoc basis but there is a lack of proper mechanism for effective functioning of the probation system. Procedural communication gap has been observed among the PO, Police and Local Government.

4.10. Migration of Children:

Migration in search of livelihoods has been a major problem in the district. Mostly they move to Arunachal Pradesh. However, there are instances where children move to distant states like Himachal Pradesh. In the month of January, 2012 three children were rescued from HP with support from CHILDLINE and later restored to their parents in Harmati Tea Estate. In another incident, three girls aged between 13 and 16 years were rescued by Dhalpur Police Station while coming from Arju Mission, Itanagar and produced before the CWC on 30.3.2012. Two of them were restored to their parents and one was sent to Naogaon state home.

4.11. Major Gaps:

- No Observation Home and Children's Home for JCL and CNCP respectively under JJ Act;
- The SJPU is formed but not properly functional;
- Only one SAA working for two districts seems inadequate to facilitate non-institutional care facilities for children under ICPS;
- No CHILDLINE in the district;
- Poor infrastructure of JJB & CWC;
- Increased Pending cases of JCLs in Observation Home;
- Non/delayed submission of SIR leads to delay in disposal of cases;
- Delay in age determination;
- The nearest observation home is Jorhat, which makes it difficult for the poor guardian, especially who live in remote area, to keep contact with their children
- Children are employed in the tea gardens by their parents to support their family income;
- There is no Shelter Home for boys or girls, where the rescued children can be placed for immediate care and support;
- Lack of linkages with essential lateral services for children for example education, health, police, judiciary, services for the special children etc;
- Overall lack of awareness of the community, NGOs and other stakeholders about the role and responsibilities of the Juvenile Justice System and ICPS;
- To address the problems of child labour, the lack of inter-departmental coordination has been observed;
- No intervention programme for the street children, migrant children;
- District Child protection Committee under ICPS is yet to be functional;
- There is lack of protection programme for the street children, child labour, trafficked children, migrant children, CDWs etc;
- There are also no services for the children affected by HIV/ AIDS and no specialized care facilities for children who are mentally challenged. Issues related to drug abuse, HIV/ AIDS etc needs more attention;

5. Plan of Action for Child Protection under ICPS:

In order to address the above mentioned gaps, the following activities through District Child Protection Plan under ICPS may be considered for taking action:

1. Creating Protective environment for children under ICPS:			
	Major Activity	Key Actions	Who is responsible
1.1	Completion of recruitment of staff	Negotiate with SCPS	SCPS
1.2	Organize capacity building of newly recruited staffs of DCPC;		SCPS
1.3	Organise DCPC meeting in every quarter;	DC to monitor the activities of DCPC	DCPC
1.4	Orientation of Police on child protection issues as part of DCPC.	Negotiate with the State & District Police Department	DCPC
1.5.	Establishment of new institutions for CNCP and JCL for both Boys & Girls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recognize credible NGOs to run Children Homes Identify Land / building for initiation of Observation Homes to be run by the Govt. Identify credible NGOs namely Bikalanga Kalyan Kendra at Panigaon & Kachujoli to run children Home & Homes for the Special Need Children. Identify NGOs in areas bordering with Arunachal Pradesh like Laluk, Nowboicha, Bhimpara under Dokhuakhana to organize Child Protection Units with facilities for institutional care to arrest unsafe migration of children 	SCPS
1.6	Establishment of CHILDLINE.	Contact CHILDLINE India Foundation and its regional Office at Kolkata, AB-15, Salt lake, Sector-I, Kolkata – 700064, West Bengal	CIF, SCPS, DCPC

		for initiating CHILDLINE in Lakhimpur. The report of the Need Assessment and the Street Children Survey conducted by JPISC, may be considered as a rationale for initiating CHILDLINE in the district.	
1.7	Services for children with special needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mapping of all NGOs working in the field of disability. • Implementing Schemes for the disabled children with support from Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment, Govt. of India. 	SCPS, DCPC, MSJ &E, Commissioner, Disability, NGOs
1.8	Children affected by HIV/AIDS to initiated with immediate effect	Negotiate with the Health Department to covers the children under ICTC Programme.	SCPS, DCPC, Assam SACS, NGOs
1.9.	Organize programmes for the victim of trafficking, migrant child labor / children of migrant laborers;	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Negotiate with the labour department to rescue children engaged in hazardous occupations and the migrant children to cover them under NCLP Programme. • Initiate AWWs, SSKs in vulnerable pockets like the Tea Gardens, Brick Kilns, Border Areas to provide education and health care services to the children 	DCPC, Labour Dept., ICDS
1.10	Establishment of Open Shelter programme for street and working children through NGOs.	Open Shelter through NGOs may be initiated under ICPS in Lakhimpur.	SCPS, DCPC
1.11	Establishment of District Drug Detoxification Centre for children.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation of Schemes under DDRC of Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment, Govt. of India through credible NGOs may be initiated. • Alcoholism is widespread in the tea gardens. It is the women and children who are bearing the burnt of the alcoholism related 	MSJ & E, SCPS, DCPC, Health Dept., NGOs

		abuses. There needs to be a sustained campaign against alcoholism & gambling linking them with gender violence	
1.12	Establishing web enabled tracking system for missing children.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contact with NIC to initiate a missing Children Portal to track all Missing Children and pour information with the DCPC & Police. • Training of functionaries on the process of uploading information 	SCPS, DCPC, NIC
1.13	Strengthening the functioning of Statutory Bodies under JJ System.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Organize awareness activities in schools, colleges, hospitals and other public places on child protection and the role of JJS to give visibility to these bodies. ▪ Organize training programme for the members of CWC / JJB at the district level. ▪ Giving information to all BDOs of the district about the role and function of the justicing bodies under the Act to ensure greater visibility of these bodies. ▪ District officials to take responsibility to network with other service providers like Support NGOs, ICDS, Drug Counseling Centers, Police, ICDS, GRP, RPF, District Information office, facilities for the challenged children, Health Department and other related offices/organizations for effective functioning of CWC and JJB. ▪ Linkages need to be established with Missionaries of Charity home at Kachajuli and NGO namely Bikalanga Kalyan 	SCPS, DCPC, NIPCCD, JPISC, UNICEF

		<p>Kendra, working with challenged children (visual and physical) at Bihpuria and Laluk to explore whether support facilities could be availed for children referred by CWC. These organizations may be recommended for declaring 'fit institutions'.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> POs should be allowed to concentrate more on JJS instead of engaging themselves in administrative activities pursued by the DSWOs. Strengthen Infrastructural support for CWC & JJB. 	
1.14	Stronger mechanism for Supervision, Monitoring and Evaluation	Apart from the routine monitoring by DCPC, a Monitoring Committee at the district level under the chairmanship of DC & with other professionals may be formed to strengthen the Monitoring Activities.	SCPS, DCPC
1.15	The newly set up SAA needs to initiate non-institutional care services e.g. Sponsorship, Foster Care;	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organize awareness / campaign in remote areas on the procedure for Adoption. Initiate drive against Illegal Adoption. Develop linkages with Health department to arrest sale of babies Identify families who are in need of sponsorship support to continue education for their children. Identify families for Foster Care. 	DCPC, NGOs, Health Dept, SARA, CARA
2	Dealing with Migrant Children		
2.1	Mapping the gamut, nature & problems of migrant Children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> District authorities should survey families who have migrated in search of work or for any other reasons; District authorities should 	DCPC, Recognized Research Institution.

		<p>immediately issue cards / documents that entitles migrant/potential migrant families to civil supplies.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Migrant families should be given priority to provide employment under Mahatma Gandhi NREGS; • Migrant families should be given BPL cards to facilitate their access to poverty reduction schemes; • Arrange Education through SSK / MSK for the migrant Children. • Organize Sponsorship support to vulnerable families to arrest migration of children. • Organize Crèche, AWW, SSK, programmes under NRHM in vulnerable pockets to arrest migration of children. 	
3	Prevent children being separated from families		
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • District authorities should initiate a birth registration drive, and ensure that children have a form of legal identity. • CWC should be assigned to cover areas where children affected by natural disaster; • CWCs and district authorities must pay particular attention to children who are separated from their families. • Government personnel must ensure that separated or unaccompanied children have access to the same emergency care and services as other children. • District Authorities must pay special attention to the health, 	<p>DCPC, Labour Dept., NGOs, Management of Tea Gardens, Police Dept.</p>

		nutrition, education and psycho-social needs of children out of family care.	
4	Anti trafficking Activities		
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Initiate Bridge Course Centres, Remedial Coaching (RC) centres and Vocational Training units in source areas in partnership with PRI and other community based organizations. Formation of Anti Trafficking Committee (ATC) with PRI initiatives; ▪ Motivate youth organization for ensuring child protection rights; ▪ Life skills training for adolescent girls; ▪ Bridge Course Centres through SSA may be formed at GP level to bridge the gap for drop outs and make arrangements for their mainstreaming; ▪ Provision for Vocational Training for adolescents based on the interest and considering the viability of each trade in collaboration with District Industries Centre, RVTI, and Professional Vocational Training institute. ▪ Dissemination of information about child marriage, child labour, child trafficking and other harmful practices through leaflets & brochures, banners, Hoardings, Cinema/Cable TV slides in different forums / platforms on the issue. ▪ Organise Street corners and exhibition stalls in various fairs at the village level; ▪ Formation of Child Protection Committee at the block, village/ward level; 	Police, SSM, ICDS, NGOs, Panchayats Dept.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Organize Self Help Groups with the village women to initiate economic enterprises. ▪ Sensitization of Mondal Level Officials, Village headman, teachers, youth clubs, district officials on the vices of trafficking of children for labour including domestic labour, sexual exploitation etc. ▪ Form Anti Human Trafficking Unit (AHTU) and activate SJPU in each Police Station. ▪ Inclusion of child protection issues in training for teacher, Panchayat Education Committee, Anganwadi Worker, ANM & ASHA worker should be mandatory ▪ The Anganwadi centres should act like Child Protection Units to spread awareness on trafficking related issues to parents, adolescent girls and other vulnerable groups ▪ School Sensitisations programmes need to be organised to address evils of trafficking and also to form children's group for their increased participation in anti-trafficking campaign ▪ Sensitization and training programmes for judicial officials, law enforcement personnel (police, immigration, border control, customs officials, medical professionals / personnel and labour inspectors) and other concerned government officials on the issues like child protection, trafficking, child labour, child 	
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		marriage etc. These training and sensitization programmes could be organized in conjunction with the Dept. of Home Affairs, Social Welfare, Labour etc.	
5	Training, Capacity Building, Networking and Advocacy		
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capacity building program with PRI members • Capacity building of SAA on Alternative Care. • Orientation of Block level stakeholders – police, panchyat, judiciary welfare, Education, civil society on ICPS. • Advocacy campaign to include campaign on family planning. Large family size is one of the key reasons for loose familial linkage and being engulfed in the vicious cycle of poverty. • Special campaign on child marriage to be undertaken in minority belts and areas dominated by the tea tribes. • People's knowledge about various Government schemes/programmes like self-employment, wage employment, housing etc. is quite poor. IEC materials and leaflets on various Government schemes should be prepared and distributed through the SHGs / Youth Groups / CBOs / CPUs etc. • Extensive use of IEC materials focusing on child rights, legal aspects of trafficking, profile of the agents, provisions of law especially concerning child domestic workers (to be targeted in urban areas) and 	DCPC, SCPS, NGOs, Education Dept., Panchayats Dept.

		<p>most importantly the gender factors associated with trafficking.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Periodic training of all functionaries under JJ System, e.g. CWC, JJB, SCPS, SJPU members needs to be organized to develop their functional knowledge about child rights and legal procedures. 	
6	Managing Disaster Affected Children		
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> District authorities must ensure emergency service provisions during natural disaster, mainly flood, to cover health, food and nutrition and education in areas namely, Dolaghat, Kutori, Chapori Narayanpur, Nowboicha, Birpuria, Doknakhan etc; Facilitate people to develop their own disaster preparedness plans and adopt them to develop policies and practices. Mother and child care, ICDS services, the supply of baby food and milk to be provided on emergency basis, During flood school children are the most affected and fall pray to child labour and child trafficking so the authorities be more sensitive on the issues related to children in Flood situation; Standard sanitation, hygiene and clean drinking water for children, lactating and pregnant women need to be ensured by the local authorities. An information outlet must be 	<p>DCPC, Disaster Management Dept., ICDS, Village Panchayat, Health Dept., Village Headman, NGOs</p>

		<p>set-up to cater community's information need, it will help them to assess government's schemes they are eligible for in a hassle free and un-braised way.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preventive strategies need to be implemented to contain or avoid child trafficking and migration during the emergency situation. • Bring about ownership of community in relief process; community can be involved in the actual conduct and planning of distribution and need assessments. • Coordination among the government and NGOs are sometimes found wanting, hence, coordination with local NGOs / CBOs is to be developed for distribution work to prevent duplication of relief work and uneven distribution. 	
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