

## **DRAFT REPORT OF NEEDS ASSESSMENT AND DISTRICT CHILD PROTECTION PLAN OF DHEMAJI DISTRICT 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:**

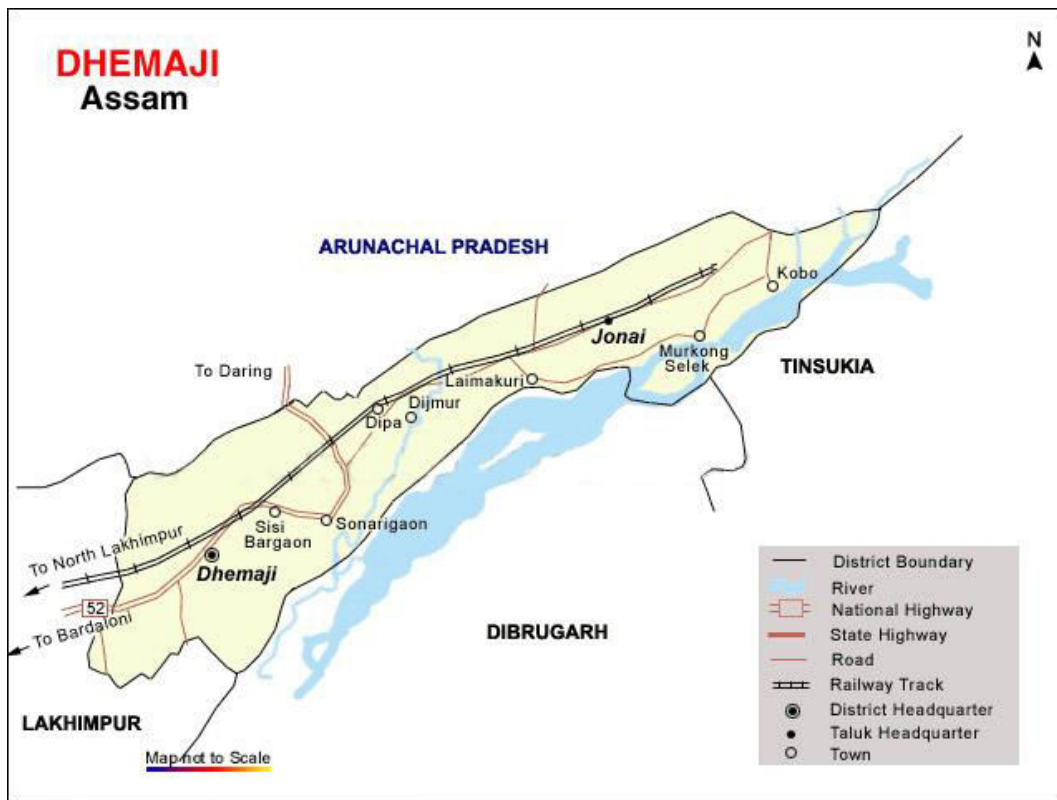
The DCPP has been prepared in the following manner:

- 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 SCPS through UNICEF.

**1.6. Name of the District covered:** Dhemaji

**1.7. Time period:** June – July, 2012

## DISTRICT: DHEMAJI



### 2. Demography:

Dhemaji district is an administrative district in the state of Assam. The district headquarters are located at Dhemaji. The district occupies an area of 3237 sq.km and has a population of 6,88,077 as of Census 2011. It is one of the districts situated in the remote corner of North East India on the north bank of river Brahmaputra. The boundaries of the district are the hilly ranges of Arunachal Pradesh to the North and the East, Lakhimpur district in the West and river Brahmaputra in the South.

The river Brahmaputra flows from east to west in the southern part of the district. Different tributaries viz. Dihingia, Jiadhal, Moridhal, Telijan, Kaitongjan, Laipulia Nadi, Kapurdhuwa, Sissi, Gai, Tangani and Guttong originating from Arunachal Pradesh in the north. South-West carry enormous amount of alluvium through the district before meeting the river Brahmaputra. The district is very much vulnerable to flood and occurrences of floods are a regular feature of the district, which causes lots of damages in many nature. Nearly 27% of the net cropped is flood prone as well as flood affected. The soil of the district is mainly alluvial and sandy. The riverbeds are generally higher than the level of land.

The entire Dhemaji district area was originally inhabited by the various indigenous tribes like Mising, Sonowal Kachari, Deori and Laloong. In addition to these different tribes Ahom, Rabha, Tai-Khamti, Konch, Keot, Koiborta, Brahman, Kayastha, Kalita etc. were migrated during different moments of time span.

Initially, the present geographical area of Dhemaji district was a part of the then Lakhimpur district with its head quarter at Dibrugarh. In 1971 Dhemaji was declared as a Sub-Division, including Jonai and Dhakuakhana (presently in Lakhimpur district). On 1<sup>st</sup> October 1989, Dhemaji was declared as an independent district covering Jonai and Dhemaji (Sadar) Sub-Divisions.

Riverbank erosion during high flood period in the valley is a regular annual feature. Over bank flood due to breaches in the embankment render the fertile cultivable land unsuitable for crop production due to deposition of coarse sand on the surface of a variable depth. As per Assam Government Revenue Department records, an area of 6166 hectares of land was affected by soil erosion in upper Brahmaputra Valley and North bank plain zone during 1994.

The economy of Dhemaji is generally agro-based. Sericulture, fishing and driftwood business are practiced in smaller scale. However, sand deposition and other adverse effects of chronic floods on fertile agricultural land have made even affluent farmers landless. Therefore, a large number of such people shifted to greener pastures within the district to carryout horticulture practices. Lack of good communication system, storage of power and lack of proper irrigation and marketing facilities added to the poverty of the district.

District	Year	Population	Density per sq. km	Sex Ratio	Literacy Rate
<b>Dhemaji</b>	2001	571944	177	941	64.48%
	2011	688077	213	949	69.07%

## 2.1 The Administrative System is divided into:

1. Village (Total no of Villages 1315, out of which 79 villages are un-inhabitated)
2. Block (Total no of Blocks 5)
3. Gaon Panchayats (Total no. of Gaon Panchayats 65)
4. Zilla Parishad (Total no. of Zilla Parishad 1)
5. Sub-division: 2
6. Town: 2
7. Revenue Circle: 4 (Dhemaji, Sissiborgaon, Jonai and Gogamukh)
8. Police Stations: 6 (Chengajanghat, Dhemaji, Gerukamukh, Gogamukh, Jonai and Silapathar)
9. Police Outpost: 4 (Bordoloni, Machkhowa, Sissiborgaon and Simenchapori)
10. Border Outpost: 5 (Likabali, Simen, Galipathar, Rajakhana and Majulipur)

## 2.2 Population Composition:

District	Total Population 6,88,077 (Census 2011)		% of urban population	Per cent SC population	Per cent ST population	Per cent Muslim population
Dhemaji	Male	Female				
	353043	335034	1.85%	5.33%	47.29%	15%
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
1236	1136	168	54	15	19	98
Rural poverty (% BPL)	Avg. HH Size	Sex Ratio	Literacy Rate (%)	Female Literacy Rate (%)	Work Part. Rate (%)	Agri. Labour (%)
40%	5	949	69.07%	62.13%		5.44%

### Population Profile of Assam and Dhemaji:

According to 2011 Census of India, Assam's population has reached approximately 3.11 crore, an increase of 16.93 percent from the past decade. Assam shares approximately 2.58% of India's total population. As per census report of 2011, out of the total population of 31,169,272, male and female figure 15,954,927 and 15,214,345 respectively. In 2001, Assam's population was approximately 2.67 crore. In Dhemaji district, the total population according to 2011 census is 688,077, of which male and female are 353,043 and 335,034 respectively.

The state of Assam witnessed improved sex ratio in both rural and urban areas. The sex ratio (females per 1000 males) in rural areas increased from 944 in 2001 to 956 in 2011 and in urban areas, it rose from 872 in 2001 to 937 in 2011. In the district of Dhemaji, the overall sex-ratio has increased from 941 in 2001 to 949 in 2011. The district occupies 2.21% of total state population, which indicates 25<sup>th</sup> position within 27 districts of Assam. There was change of 20.30 percent in the population compared to population of 2001. The initial provisional data suggests a increase in density of 213 in 2011 compared to 177 of 2001. Total area under Dhemaji district is of about 3,237 sq.km. The child population in Dhemaji is 99,692 (Boy: 51266 & Girls: 48426) while the total child population is 4,511,307 of Assam. According to the Census report 2011, the percentage of child population of the Dhemaji district is 14.49%, 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 thorough investigation.

District	Year	Child Population (0-6 years)		% of child population	Sex Ratio
		Boys	Girls		
Dhemaji	2001	50531	49027	17.41%	970
	2011	51226	48426	14.49%	945

### Child Population

The population of 0-6 age-group of a state shows whether the population of country is increasing or decreasing or stabilized. In the state of Assam, the general trend of age-group 0-6 is declining from one census to another. In 2001, the percentage of population in the age-group 0-6 was 16.87, which has come down to 14.47 in 2011. The total child population in Dhemaji district is 99,692 as per 2011 census which is 14.49% of the total population of the district. The child population of Dhemaji in 2001 census was 94166. Child sex ratio in the 0-6 year age group in Dhemaji district declined to 945 females per 1000 males in 2011 from 970 females per 1000 males in 2001.

The overall sex ratio in Dhemaji is 949 in census 2011, which indicates an escalation of 8 points over 2001 when the Child Sex Ratio (CSR) was 941. 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 14.49% of Dhemaji District population of 2011 compared to 17.41% in 2001. There was net change of -2.92%. 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 Dhemaji district is 44 per 1000 live births<sup>1</sup> and Maternal Mortality Rate (MMR) is 367 per 1, 00,000 live births<sup>2</sup> 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 Dhemaji. There are only 1 hospital i.e. District Hospital, 15 numbers of Primary Health Centres, 98 numbers of Sub-Centres, 5 numbers of Block Primary Health Centres, 3 numbers of Community Health Centres and 2 numbers of State Dispensaries in the districts. According to the

<sup>1</sup>Annual Health Survey 2010-11

<sup>2</sup>Annual Health Survey 2010-11

data from Health department, 37 children are affected by HIV/AIDS. Hence, the mother and child health in Dhemaji 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 among districts the literacy rate is highest in Kamrup (M) (88.66) and lowest in Dhubri (59.36). In Dhemaji district, the literacy rate has slightly decreased from 69.59 in 2001 to 69.07 in 2011. The sex wise distribution shows that 75.66% male are literate as against 62.13% female.

Total literate in Dhemaji District were 3,89,726 of which male and female were 2,21,532 and 1,68,194 respectively. According to the data of Education Department of Dhemai, there consists of 1136 numbers of primary schools, 168 numbers of junior high schools, 54 numbers of high schools and 15 numbers of high secondary schools. There are 16 numbers of colleges including junior colleges in the district. In Dhemaji, 164 numbers of children in the age group between 6-14 years never attended school.

**Primary Education:** The status regarding primary education in Dhemaji 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 106.5 and the girl is 106.7. On the other hand, the percentage of gross drop out of boy is 0.034 and the girl is 0.025. According to the DMC, SSA, Dhemaji, 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 shrinked at the secondary level. The enrolment ratio in V-VIII among the boys is 100.3 and girls 103.4. The status of the dropout rate in secondary level is more than the primary level (0.586% boys and 0.452% girls). However, the drop out rate of the girls is low rather than boys in Dhemaji district.

**SSA run Bridge Course Centre:** There are 142 numbers of SSA run Bridge Course Centres in five blocks in the district namely, Dhemaji, Machkhowa, Bordoloni, Sissiborgaon and Murkongselek. In rural areas the enrolment of boys is higher than the girls whereas in the urban places the scenario is just opposite. There are 2 numbers of residential schools in Dhemaji district. There are 140 numbers of NRSTC in rural areas in the district run by SSA, Dhemaji in three blocks namely, Dhemaji, Bordoloni and Murkongselek of the district through which 3433 numbers of children are getting their education. The SSA, Dhemaji also runs 2 numbers of KGBV Schools in 2 Blocks namely Dheaji and Murkongselek, out of which one KGBV School situated at the border area of Dhemaji & Sissiborgaon Block. Here 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 residence, and high incidences of child labour.

**Observation:**

- In Dhemaji 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 residence sometimes becomes a factor for dropout.
- Lack of sensitization among the adibashi, SC, ST & Muslim community, mainly among Missing and Riang communities on evils of child marriage.
- The Sarba Shiksha Mission, Dhemaji have taken a step to promote education within the district for the Child Domestic Workers, by sending them to formal school. Presently around 10% of 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 Dhemaji district through 4 projects. 54,335 children are attending preschool education under ICDS scheme. Along with pre-school education, other components of ICDS are being catered to the children through 1320 centres and by 4 numbers of Child Development Project Officers, 35 numbers of supervisors and 1206 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 Officers of Murkongselek & Machkhowa block, it was revealed that most of the children belong to Muslim & Tribes' community. Almost all children attend the pre-school education. There is also some ICDS centre in Flood Prone area of the district.

**3.4. Child Labour:**

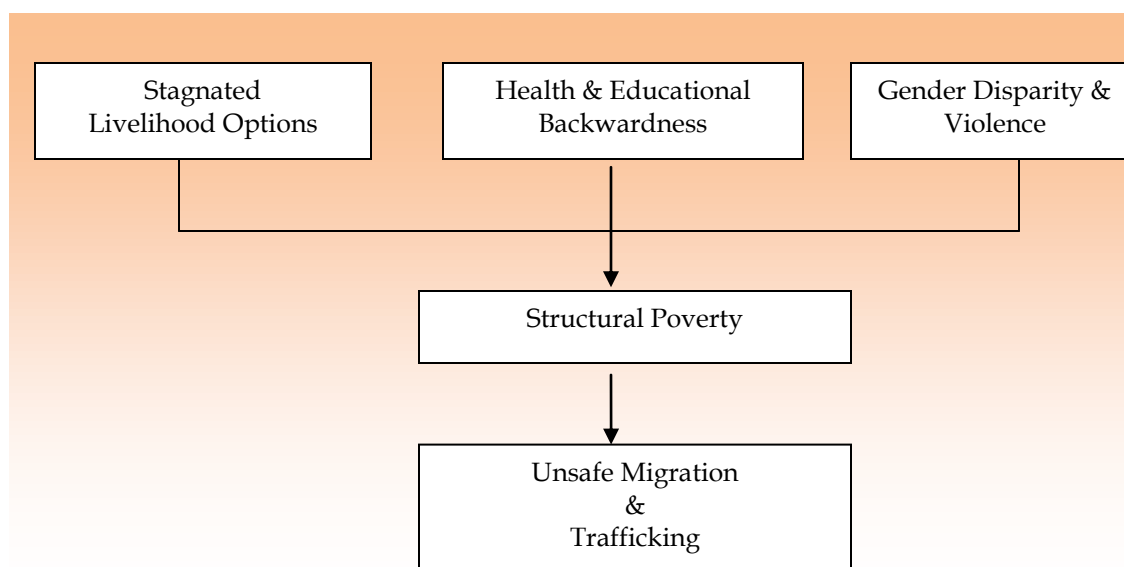
The office of the district Labour Officer don't have any figure related to child labour, as no survey has been conducted in last 10 years to identify the children engaged in various occupations as child labour. According to Mr. S. Konwar, Representative, SMILE, Dhemaji, most of the children were engaged as domestic help, and work in hotel, Dhabas and other unorganized sector etc. Apart from this, many child labourers were identified in the urban areas, who were mostly migrated from the neighbouring districts of Assam like Jorhat, Lakhimpur, Dibrugarh etc. and from other state like Arunachal Pradesh, which is situated adjacent to Silapathar. Among these families,

most employ the children for domestic help and in agricultural work. In all the cases, the children are denied access to education, recreation, cultural practices and participation in play activities.

According to the Labour Officer, Dhemaji, Child Labour in the District was not a matter of concern. However, he admits that there are no as data available with his office. The district is not covered under NCLP. At present, the child labour issues are grossly ignored in the district but there is a strong need to take initiative by the Department of Labour, Department of Social Welfare and Dept of Health in providing non-formal education, health support and also to ensure that the children are covered by the service delivery mechanisms under ICPS, CHILDLINE etc mainly in Silapathar area.

### **3.5. Child Trafficking:**

From the discussions with the district officials and NGO representatives, it revealed that children of poor families mainly from Muslim religion, 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 (Arunachal Pradesh) 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 Dhemaji through Akajaan, Likabali, Liadhol etc. to the Pasighat, Along of Arunachal Pradesh which is directly connected through road. The children are being trafficked mainly to work as domestic child labour, labour in the road-side dhabas, shops etc. Girls from Karpunpuli and Chaboti societies move to the different districts of Assam and even different states for cultivating their handicraft skill. In an interview with Mr. Atul Samuah, Secretary, North-Eastern Regional Multipurpose School & Handicraft Training Centre, Dhemaji, it was learnt that in many cases girl children are trafficked through false promise of marriage. Dhemaji mainly serves as the source area of trafficking and the phenomenon of trafficking of children from other districts/state to Dhemaji is also 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. The district shares a long border with Arunachal Pradesh which is inhabited by mainly tribes. This community due to their lack of livelihood options, poor education and lack of awareness often are lured for better employment opportunities and are taken to Arunachal Pradesh; many of them are trafficked at a later stage. As far as Arunachal Pradesh is concerned, many traffickers use Likabali (a place of Dhemaji-Arunachal Border) as the main transit point. It is also gathered from discussion with cross of Govt. officials and members NGOs that trafficking for labour is more pronounced than commercial sexual exploitation.



### Socio-economic Causes of Unsafe Migration & Trafficking

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
Dhemaji	Akajaan, Likabali, Liadhol	Tezpur, Guwahati, Pasighat & Rangapara	Guwahati, Delhi, Mumbai, Pune	Tribal girls are most affected to work as CDW
			Arunachal Pradesh	

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 be 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:

Child marriage is practiced mainly among certain communities like the Muslims and the tribal population. It was also predominant in the rural areas, char (riverine) areas, 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 communities. Some of them were marriage of their own choice with consent of parents.

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 are: poverty, illiteracy, tradition, religious factors, large family size and lack of knowledge about ill effects of child marriage on health and family.

The 2001 Census of India showed that 19.22% of them were married off between the ages of 10 to 19 years in Assam and the corresponding figure in Dhemaji is 17.27. It is found that percentage of child marriage(0-19 years) as per 2001 census in Dhemaji district is 8.6 which is little better than the incidences in other districts like Dhubri District (11.1%), Goalpara (10.1%), Bongaigaon (9.8%), Barpeta (9.7%), Tinsukia (9.7%) Morigaon (9.6%) and Kamrup (9.5%). 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.

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. In Barpeta more than 53 per cent<sup>3</sup> followed by Kokrajhar (50.6 per cent) and Dhubri (48.8 percent) of girls marry before reaching the legal age of marriage.

Mr. M. K. Goswami, NGO representative, Dhemaji has mentioned that the harmful practice of child marriage can be contained through following measures:

- Parents should be made conscious and responsible in guiding the adolescents.
- Topic on child marriage, including its consequences, should be included in the high school syllabus of classes 8-12<sup>th</sup> standard.
- 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 under aged married girls, especially for those who are not accepted by their families / parents. Such unaccepted couples girls.

Children, especially girl children who drop out or slide back from school and engaged themselves as CDW / Child Labour, 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 to address the issue.

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<sup>3</sup> *National Family Health Survey - 1992-1993, 1998-1999 and 2005-2006*  
*District Level Household Survey - 2007-2008*

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, SC & ST immigrants in Char areas and economically poor families. Altogether, 10,000 beneficiaries were targeted under this scheme in the fiscal 2010-11, and an amount of Rs 10 crore was earmarked for this.<sup>4</sup>

### **3.7. Children in Slum:**

In Dhemaji there are no as such slum areas, but some people stay together in jhupri like condition, mainly in Silapathar area. 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 drug abuse. Due to poor standard of living, children are denied their rights.

### **3.8. Street Children:**

In a recently conducted survey (2012) on street children conducted by Jayaprakash Institute of Social Change, Kolkata, 163 such children were identified mainly in the urban centres in the district. Among the children, 110 were male and 53 were female. The sex wise distribution shows that 37% children are in the age group between 7 and 9 years and 28% belong to the age group between 9 and 12 years. Children in the age group ranging from 9 to 12 and 12 to 15 comprise the majority (65%). The young adolescents who are dropped out are mostly engaged in some form of economic activity. It is also interesting to note that girls within this age group are engaged mostly as domestic workers. In Dhemaji district, the street and working children are mostly observed in Silapathar and these children migrate mostly from Arunachal Pradesh in search of livelihood. Some children from Bihar, UP was also found in Silapathar and Dhemaji town. The occupational distribution shows that majority of the children are engaged in rag-picking, pursuing domestic work and in hotel/restaurant/dhaba. The

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<sup>4</sup> Report of The Telegraph, 27 Dec, 2010

other major occupations are: wage labour, helper in transport etc. About 57% of the children do not have any kinds of identification proof and about 40% of them stay mostly in the market place and 16% in the employer's place. The children suffer from various diseases e.g. cold and cough, skin diseases, diarrhoea, fever, cuts and burns etc. which are caused mostly due to their occupational hazards and unhygienic living. Substance abuse is very common among these children, be it a boy or a girl. Majority (55%) of children were found to be addicted to substance in one form or other. Gutka has been the most preferred substance among them, which they buy for consumption. 25% children take tobacco also. Sniffing glue was also observed among some children who lived on stations and are engaged as rag pickers. Barring some health care services organised by the NGOs, the children do not have any access to any support programme for education and livelihoods.

### **3.9. Children Affected by Natural Disaster:**

The district of Dhemaji is known as flood / erosion affected district of Assam due to its perennial flood. The region falls within the highest seismic belt and experienced two major earthquakes, one in 1897 and another in 1950. The great Earthquake of 1950 changed the topography of the District and also changed the course of the principal tributaries like Moridhol, Jiadhal, Subansiri and Gainadi.

#### **Recurrent Floods in Dhemaji:**

Gogamukh is a Revenue Circle of the district, which is annually affected by flood erosion and storms of which flood is more devastating causing a great loss. The area of the circle is 231.46 Sq Km surrounded by Arunachal Pradesh in north, Dhakhuakhana subdivision in south, Kumatia and Dhemaji circle in the east and Subhansiri river & Lakhimpur district in the west. The total no of villages in this circle are 174 with 1 Police station. The rivers and tributaries under the circle are Kumatia, Na-nadi, Subansiri, Chengalisuti Cheniajan and Tarajan. The tributaries of Na-nadi flow out of Arunachal Pradesh through Subhansiri reserve forest towards Gogamukh circle creating a network of rivers and during rainy season these branches of rivers swell up creating flood. On the eastern part of the circle at the western bank of Kumatia river there is likelihood of flood to at least 20-25 villages due to breach in the embankment.

Dhemaji revenue circle is flood prone due to its topography and geographical location numerous tributaries flow out of Arunachal Pradesh towards Dhemaji which forms an intricate network of rivers. The entire circle is in riverine tract and flood may lasts from weeks to month. Siltation is another major problem causing great damage to cultivation. The western part of the revenue circle is more floods prone to the river Jiadhol. It is surrounded by Arunachal Pradesh and Jonai Subdivision in the north, Dhekuakhana revenue circle in the south, Kanibil river and Sisiboraon circle in the east and Kumatia river and Gogamukh circle in the west. It has 299 nos of revenue villages with 18 nos of

Lot Mondols. The police station is only Dhemaji PS. Its main rivers are Brahmaputra, Jiadhol, Kumatia, Laipulia Kanibil, Gainadi.

Sisiborgaon revenue circle is located in the middle of Dhemaji District and North East side of Dhemaji Sub-division. The Circle is bordered by Arunachal Pradesh to the north, Jonai Circle on the east, Dhemaji circle on the west and then mighty Brahmaputra on the south. The area of the circle is 921.6 sq. Km. The area of this circle is a narrow strip of plains stretching from Brahmaputra to the foothills of Arunachal Pradesh. The main river affecting area is Brahmaputra and its tributaries as Simen, Dimow, Jalakiasuti Gainadi. The flood in this basin is mainly caused by 2 factors – Excessive rainfall in nearby Arunachal Pradesh hills and bursting of blockades formed by landslides. There is only one police station at Silapathar and one outpost at sisiborgaon. The most flood prone Gaon Panchayts are Namani Sisitangani, Madhya sisitangani and Amguri. The Circle has identified 81 nos of highly flood prone villages with a population 29213.

The major flood prone areas of Dhemaji district are: Paschim Dhemaji, Samarajan, Bordoloni, Uttar Dhemaji, Sissiborgaon, Jelem, Rajakhana, Jonai, Somkang, Michamara, Dekapam etc. In 2009-10 around 303 nos. of villages and 104180 nos. of people including children were affected in Gogamukh, Dhemaji and Sissiborgaon revenue circle in Dhemaji district by Subansiri, Brahmaputra, Kumatia and Jiadhol river.

#### **Response:**

The district administration with the help of State & National Disaster Management Authority responds to emergency situation make an initial assessment by the Mandals and prepares a list of affected villages and number of persons for further action by the District Level relief Committee. The administration with the chairmanship of Addl. Deputy Commissioner & CEO, District Disaster Management Authority has made a District Disaster Management Plan for 2012 and Committee and Circle wise Committee for the district by using the existing infrastructure of the district like list of Boat Owners, mapping of transportation system, identifying raised platforms and places for Relief Shelters, procedure for supplying of food grains, medicines and tarpulins etc. The district administration maintains enough stock of essential materials to respond to the emergency needs of the affected persons. The Children suffer most this time because schools remain closed and they are resettled in other place along with their families. The outbreak of intestine disorder is also reported by the NGOs.

## Flood History

	Year wise Flood History in Dhemaji					
	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012 (till July)
Village affected	454	140	333	423	351	325
Population affected	2 Lakh	50800	142350	148732	195617	137303
Area affected (in Hector)	25080	6976	33210	5463	37795	19612
Agriculture Land affected (in Hector)	34410	-	18804	2060	8300	800
House Damage	21000	3339	-	1882	2500	24113
Relief Camp Opened	13	13	10	-	-	-

## GP wise numbers of Primary Schools affected by Flood

Sl. No	Name of GP	No. of Primary School
1	Machkhowa	07
2	Pub Machkhowa	03
3	Madhya Sissitongani	02
4	Namoni Sissitongani	09
5	Muktia	06
6	Bahir Jonai	10
7	Ramdhon Dikary	20
8	Sissimukh	08
9	Gorkata	26
10	Gali Cikari	08
11	Lai Mekuri	07
12	Misamara	02
13	Chille	01
14	Simenchapari	01
15	Borlung	06
16	Bayang Bijaypur	02
17	Benganagarh	02

## Name of the High Schools affected by Flood:

1. Jonai High School
2. Dakshin Jorkata Mishing High School
3. Luitpahria Mishing High School
4. Borpak High School
5. Khaliamari Pamua High School
6. Jorkata Girls' High School
7. Sissimukh Higher Secondary School

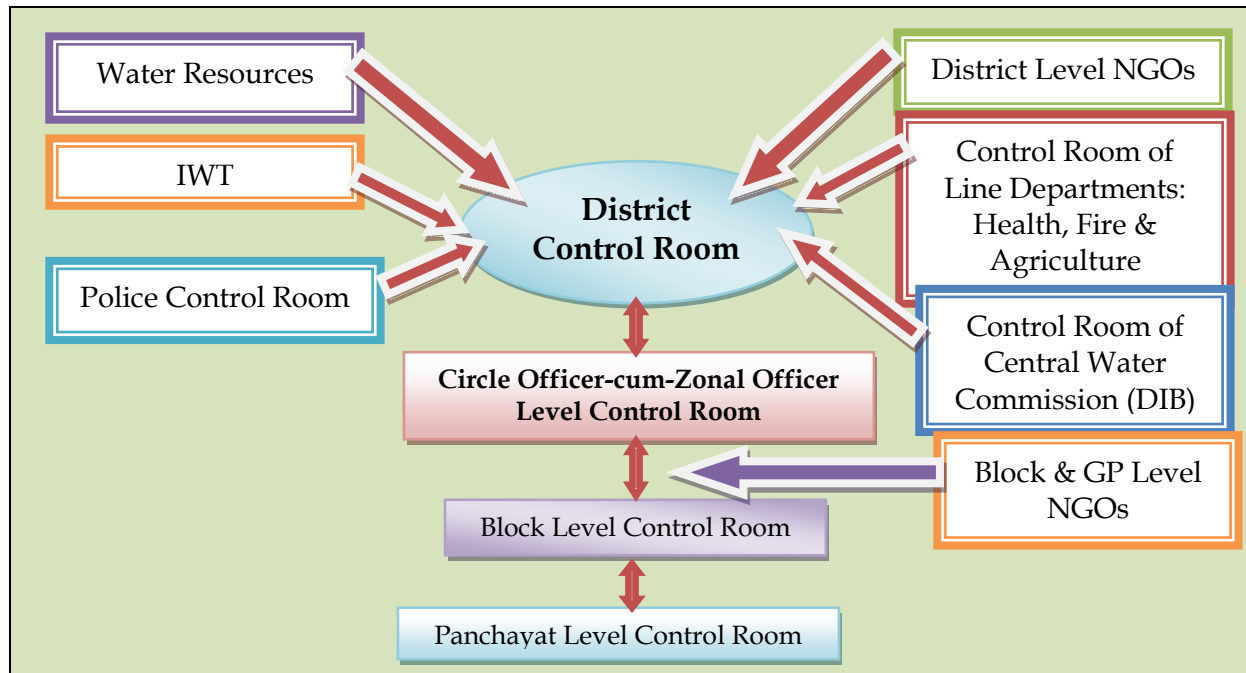


8. Sissimukh Girls' High School
9. Deberajan Tribal High School
10. Borchapori Tribal High School
11. Naharburisuti Rawad High School
12. Beramilon High School

**List of Raised Platforms and Relief Camps in Dhemaji District**

	<b>Gogamukh Circle</b>	<b>Dhemaji Circle</b>	<b>Sissiborgaon Circle</b>
<b>Raised Platform</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Mingmang</li> <li>2. Berbhanga</li> <li>3. Lotak(Nopam)</li> <li>4. Gurathali Bordoloni GP</li> <li>5. Bhebeli GP</li> <li>6. Majgaon,Bordoloni GP</li> <li>7. Nagaon Cautalgaon, Michamari GP</li> <li>8. Morolchuk Bordoloni GP</li> <li>9. Bhakatkoiborta Bordoloni</li> <li>10. Gosainbvari,Bhebeli GP</li> <li>11. Chutiakari,Latak</li> <li>12. Khonakrisnapur, Bordoloni GP</li> <li>13. Bahkotika , Bordloni GP</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Dihirichapori (raised platform)</li> <li>2. Bordekere do</li> <li>3. No.1 Tengapur, (Embankment)</li> <li>4. Chesela (Embankment)</li> <li>5. No.2 Nepali khuti ,do</li> <li>6. Jangal Block,do</li> <li>7. Naruathan MV School</li> <li>8. Ratuwa (Embankment)</li> <li>9. Bordolopa (raised)</li> <li>10. No.2 Karmipathat (raised)</li> <li>11. No.1 Karmipathar (raised)</li> <li>12. No.2 Latasur</li> <li>13. Barua gaon (raised)</li> <li>14. Lamigurigohain, (raised)</li> <li>15. No.1 Borachira,(raised)</li> <li>16. Ajuha GP</li> <li>17. Bathgoria GP</li> <li>18. Dakhin Dhemaji GP</li> <li>19. Ghuguha GP</li> <li>20. Naruwathan GP</li> <li>21. Gohaingaon GP</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Pipalguri gaon</li> <li>2. Tinighoriagaon</li> <li>3. Debera</li> <li>4. Panbari bishnupur</li> <li>5. Kaliyani</li> <li>6. Keberanga</li> <li>7. Tangani Medok</li> <li>8. LaramkhutiBormukali</li> <li>9. Sababil</li> <li>10. Sechu Dighali</li> <li>11. Kashinath Missong</li> <li>12. Sunarighat</li> <li>13. Lason Chengamari</li> <li>14. Jatia Chapori</li> <li>15. Chekaimukh</li> <li>16. Amlakhi Pait</li> <li>17. Amguri Oiyangia</li> <li>18. Dhunaguri</li> <li>19. Amgurikuli</li> <li>20. Sabari</li> <li>21. Majorbari Chengajan</li> <li>22. BhekelliTangani</li> <li>23. Nalbari</li> <li>24. Kashinath Nalbari</li> <li>25. Mechaki</li> <li>26. Khjua</li> </ol>
<b>Schools/ High Raised Places to be used as Relief Shelters</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Bodoloni HS School</li> <li>2. Bordoloni Girls HS</li> <li>3. Nalbari High School</li> <li>4. Madhya Ming Mang High School</li> <li>5. Gogamukh nagar School</li> <li>6. Ming Mang Tribal School</li> <li>7. Mohori Camp High School</li> <li>8. Gogamukh Hogher Secondary</li> <li>9. Gogamukh warehouse</li> <li>10. Gogamukh College</li> <li>11. Chawldhowa High School</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Jiadhal Chariali LP</li> <li>2. Town ME</li> <li>3. Dhemaji Boys HS</li> <li>4. Girls HS</li> <li>5. Girls College</li> <li>6. Town Buniyaadi</li> <li>7. Rupnath Brahma</li> <li>8. Dhunaguri Moridhol LP</li> <li>9. Jiadhal HS</li> <li>10. Moridhol College</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Majorbari LP</li> <li>2. Lakhimi LP, Mukhtiar</li> <li>3. Sipahijan LP, Punoi</li> <li>4. HaldibariLP</li> <li>5. Bulong</li> <li>6. Amguri Ahom High School</li> <li>7. Bhodiyachuk ME</li> <li>8. Sisiborgaon MV</li> <li>9. Garumarah Kristi Bhavan</li> <li>10. Silapathar Town LP</li> </ol>

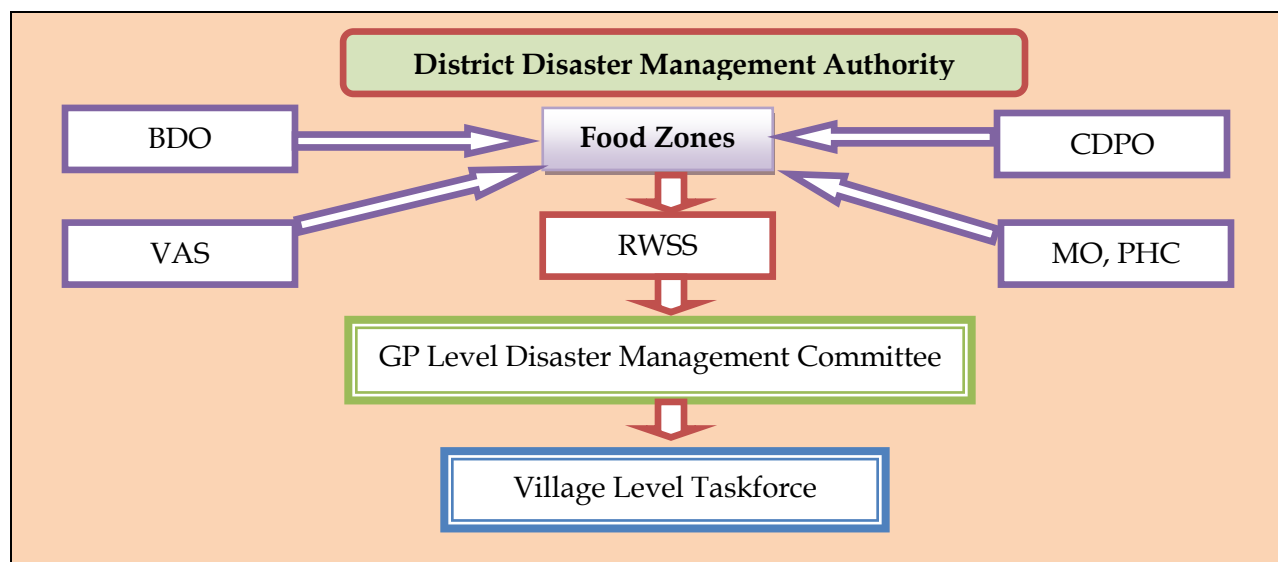
**Diagram showing functioning of District Disaster Management Authority:**



#### **Immediate Action Taken:**

According to the Report of flood in Dhemaji district, 2012, it revealed that due to heavy and incessant raining on 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> June, 2012 the water level of the river Brahmaputra and its tributaries started rising alarmingly. On 25<sup>th</sup> June at about 6.30 am, a breach occurred in the Brahmaputra and washed away a portion of about 100 mtrs of the Dyke at Sissimukh area. As a result, the violent current of the flood water of river Brahmaputra affected nearly the villages of Dhemaji Revenue circle. Immediately on receipt of the information, the SDRF team at Dhemaji with FRP boats rushed to the affected areas and evacuated the abandoned people. The NDRF team was requisitioned immediately which rushed to the spot for necessary rescue operation. The District Administration also brought army helicopters from Mohanbari and army rescue teams from Likabali Army camp for rescuing the abandoned villagers. Immediately relief camps were opened for giving shelter to the evacuated families to safer places at Machkhowa, Deorighat and Majorbari. Necessary G.R. materials have been distributed among affected families and the camp inmates. Mobile medical teams along with life saving drugs have been distributed with proper care. Relief materials among affected families who have been residing in their houses have also been distributed and utmost care has been taken to provide medical and material help.

## Relief Operation in Dhemaji District during Disaster:



### Situations of the People during Flood:

- 325 villages are affected during flood times.
- Machkhowa and Jonai subdivisions are most affected in flood.
- Adequate drinking water supply was ensured.
- Temporary toilet facilities were made available.
- Medicines were made available, mobile medical team organizes distribution of life saving drugs.
- Schools remain closed during the time of flood.
- ICDS centres were also closed during flood due to water logging.
- Majority of the local people do not migrate during flood.
- There is some sort of preparedness among the people to combat disaster.
- Supply of food during flood is ensured.
- Repair /restoration of the damaged infrastructure in eligible sectors like: repairing Bamboo Foot Bridge, cold weather bridge are undertaken.
- The district administration maintains a buffer stock of food grains and relief materials in advance.
- Providing training and capacity building to specialist multidisciplinary groups/ teams of the state personals drawn from different stake holders per G.P. wise.
- The Disaster Management team also makes a school disaster management committee (SMC)
- Funds have been allocated for repairing of partially and fully damaged schools.

The disaster mitigation response by the district administration has been found effective to make good the physical loss/damage, supply of relief materials, and also to evacuate people to safe places. However, there is no assessment regarding the special measures

required for destitute children in the district. Child Protection is yet to emerge as an important area during the emergencies in the district. CWC and the Child Protection NGOs like Sri Sri Sewa Ashram, SMILE etc. can take lead and negotiate with the district administration for a special focus on child protection issues since Dhemaaji is a perennial flood prone district.

### 3.10. Children and Law Violating Activities:

In Dhemaaji, children in the age group of 15-18 years are found to have committed offences like: kidnapping, rape, murder and theft etc. and are booked under section 376, 34 and 379 IPC in JJB. According to Mr. J. Ahmed, Principal Magistrate, JJB, Dhemaaji, there are a few children, who have committed heinous crimes and booked under section 376 & 302 IPC.

However, it is felt 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 theft, burglary, house trespassing, abduction etc. The failure of primary socializing institutions like family, schools and neighborhoods in providing opportunities for healthy growth of children leads to growing incidences of law violating 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.

#### **Status of Cases disposed in Dhemaaji District: (May, 2012):**

- Total Cases Registered in the district: 95
- Total Cases disposed in the district: 116
- Total pending cases at the end of May 2012: 834

*Source: Display Board, SP Office, Dhemaaji*

### 3.11. Child Abuse:

In Dhemaaji district, 123 cases of theft (u/s 379 - 382 IPC), 78 cases of Kidnapping and Abduction (u/s 363-369, 371-373 IPC) and 75 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)	20
2	Attempt to commit Murder (Sec. 307)	14
3	CH not amounting to Murder (Sec. 304, 308)	00

Sl. No	Crime Heads		2010
4	Rape (Sec. 376)		75
5	Kidnapping & Abduction (Sec. 363 - 369, 371 - 373)	Of Women & Girls	76
		Of Others	02
6	Dacoity (Sec. 395 - 398)		03
7	Preparation & Assembly for Dacoity (Sec. 399 - 402)		01
8	Robbery (392 - 394, 397, 398)		13
9	Burglary (sec. 449 - 452, 454, 455, 457 - 460)		32
10	Theft (sec. 379 - 382)	Auto Theft	49
		Other Theft	74
11	Riots (Sec. 143 - 145, 147 - 151, 153, 153A, 153B, 157, 158, 160)		10
12	Criminal Breach of Trust (Sec. 406 - 409)		00
13	Cheating (Sec. 419, 420)		06
14	Counterfeiting (Sec. 231 - 254, 489A, 489D)		00
15	Arson (Sec. 435, 436, 438)		10
16	Hurt (Sec. 323 - 333, 335 - 338)		144
17	Dowry Deaths (Sec. 304B)		05
18	Molestation (Sec. 354)		40
19	Sexual Harassment (Sec. 509)		00
20	Cruelty by Husband & Relatives (Sec. 498A)		122
21	Importation of Girls (Sec. 366B)		00
22	Causing Death by Negligence (Sec. 304 A)		61
23	Other IPC Crimes		334
	<b>Total</b>		<b>1091</b>

In Dhemaji district the incidence of sexual crimes are reported, but that is not officially recorded in the district crime book. There are no as such declared Red Light Areas in the district, but the issue of flying sex work is a growing phenomenon in the town Dhemaji district, reported the NGO representatives. The girls are residing in the town areas, sometimes they are coming from the remote places of the district for earning their livelihoods. Many of such girls are single parents. Recently a survey has been conducted in the district to identify the single parent with their children and also to identify the number of orphan children in the district. According to Mrs. Kunjalata Borah, CDPO, Dhemaji ICDS Block, there are 77 such single parent families living in the project area. Most of these families living in the Kathalguri, Jamuguri, Naharani, Rangpuria Pathalipam, Khajua, Majgaon areas of the ICDS Block.

### 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. Dhemaji is a more vulnerable district in respect of child in domestic work as the sizeable sections of people belong to

economically weaker sections. The children are migrated from the district to the neighbouring district towns and in neighbouring states like Arunachal Pradesh also for being engaged as domestic worker. Most these children are girls. The boy children also migrate from the district in search of work. 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
<b>Lakhimpur/Demaji/Sibasagar/Tinsukia</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>12.18</b>

(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 and no other options for livelihood 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.

### **3.13. Drug Addiction among Children:**

The conditions of children in the rural areas of Dhemaji are far from being satisfactory from the rights perspective. According to a survey undertaken by an organization in Assam, there is high prevalence of malnutrition amongst the children in the Muslim dominated rural areas, the dropout rate is high in the areas, though it is seen that the dropout rate of the district is less, a large number of them are engaged in labour and the incidence of early marriage of the girl child is fairly high.

It is found from a study conducted by an organization in Assam that substance abuse is widespread in the slum areas amongst children above the age of 12 years. Members of the organisation involved in the survey found that the children who are in association with the adolescent age group are taking some of the alcohol and tobacco related substances in the community.

The addiction behavior among children living in slum / jhupri areas is an area of concern in Dhemaji district especially in Silapathar.

## **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 & Observation Home in Dhemaji district, many children who are in need of care and protection and also in conflict with law remain unprotected and often they migrate to other places in search of living. CWC & JJB find it difficult to ensure a protected place for such children. Recently SCPS, Assam has selected Sri Sri Sewa Ashram in Silapathar, Dhemaji for establishing Children Home, it is expected that the CWC of the district will better functioning and the children who are being produced before CWC, will be far more benefited.

**4.2. CHILDLINE Services:** There is no CHILDLINE service in the district, which an immediate need of the district.

### **4.3. Child Welfare Committee:**

The new CWC of Dhemaji district has been functioning since 2011 and sits in the in a rented premises with monthly rent Rs. 7500/-, which is located very near to the office of District Child Protection Officer. The Chairperson of CWC Dr. S. Chutia reported that CWC, since inception has been playing a positive role to ensure child rights and it also makes effort to ensure protection for children of the district and 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 Members:

Sl. No.	Name	Designation	Contact No.
1	Dr. Sarbeswar Chutia	Chairperson	9435089226
2	Mr. Debeswar Baruah	Member	9433389617
3	Mr. Budhin Medak	Member	
4	Mr. Biren Sonwal	Member	9435509802
5	Mrs. Amiya Jamuly	Member	9957416538

The committee is sitting twice in a week from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Tuesday and Thursday. According to the chairperson, the children produced before the committee mostly from the BPL families. The children are mostly produced by the Police and NGOs and sometimes the relatives of the children also produce the children before CWC. The Local Leaders, Police and NGO workers provide support to the committee to in family tracing. They are able to trace the families within 7 days. The average age group of the children produced before CWC is 4 – 11 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, lack of cooperation from the line govt. departments and inadequate manpower. The functional liaison between SJPU and CWC is very poor. According to the Chairperson and member of the committee linkages need to be strengthened with all concerned departments like health, education, police, Social welfare department, Labour and especially Police department with CWC. CWC's role in facilitating admission of children to schools under RtE is not so much encouraging as they are not very clear about procedure for implementation of the Act.

#### Gaps:

- No Children Home.
- SAA (Lakhimpur) is not yet properly functional.
- There are no CHILDLINE services in the district.
- Lack of awareness among the stakeholders on child protection issues. So, training is needed for everybody.
- Irregular flow of fund like since last few months CWC is not receiving any honorarium / sitting allowance.
- Cases of illegal adoption are reported
- Lack of coordination with the line departments like labour, health, education, police even Social Welfare Department and NGOs also. None are aware about functioning of CWC.



- Lack of awareness about JJ System & Justicing mechanism.
- No effective network between various stakeholders on trafficking related issues
- Lack of NGOs to 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:

The Juvenile Justice Board of Dhemaji district was formed on 9<sup>th</sup> December 2012, they sits only once in a week in a rented premises provided by the social welfare department of the district with monthly rent of Rs. 7500/-, which is located near to the DCPO office. The timing of sitting of JJB is during 12.00 p.m. to 2.00 p.m. on every Friday only. The contact details of the members of JJB:

Sl. No.	Name	Designation	Contact No.
1	Mr. Jalaluddin Ahmed	Principal Magistrate	9435022717
2	Mr. Sunit Gogoi	Social Worker	9954368041
3	Smt. Banti Dutta Bhuyan	Social Worker	9954406727

According to the Mr. J. Ahmed, Principal Magistrate, JJB of Dhemaji district, the children mostly belong to poor families. The average age group of the children is 14-17 years. As per data given by JJB, they dealt with only 6 cases during last six months (Dec, 2011 – May, 2012), as the JJB was formed on December 2011 in the district. As per record of JJB, till May 2012, 43 cases are pending since last 12 months mainly due to non appearance of witnesses and delay in submission of SIR before the JJB, 28 children have been granted bail since the JJB formed.

In an interview with Smt. B. Dutta Bhuyan and Principal Magistrate of JJB Dhemaji district most of the children are apprehended for petty offences and charged under section 379 and 380 IPC for theft and a few children for heinous offence like rape and and charged under section 376 IPC. They ensure the determination of age of a juvenile as per Rule 12 of JJ rule, 2007 i.e. school certificate & ossification test. The list of pending cases with JJB shows the nature and categories of offences as on May, 2012:

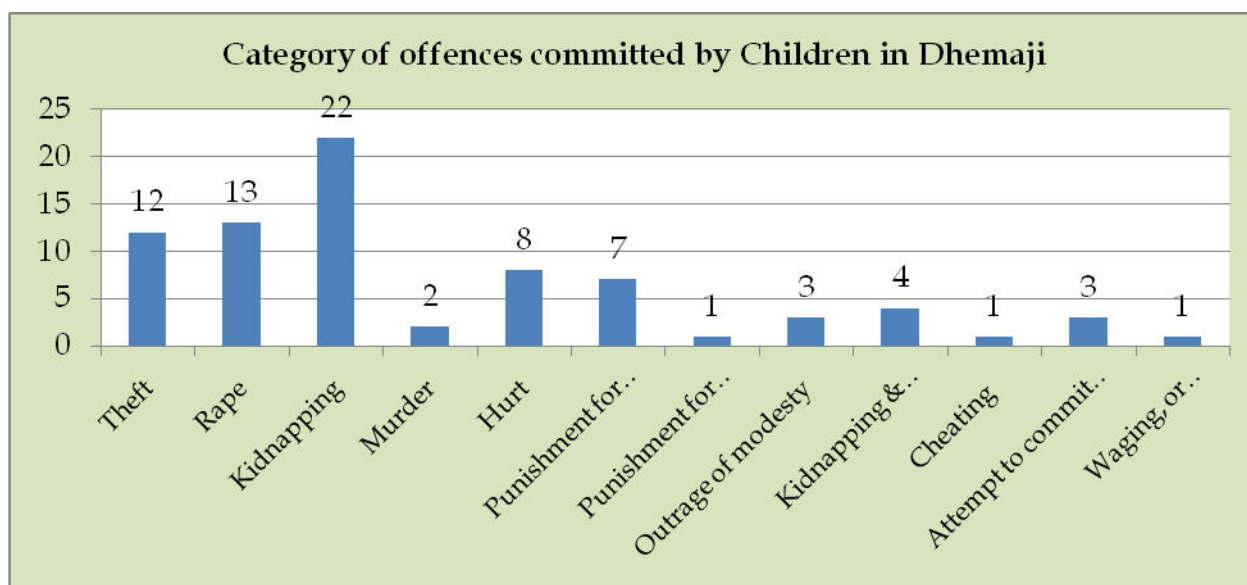
Sl. No.	Category of Offences	No. of cases
1	Theft	12
2	Rape	13
3	Kidnapping	22
4	Murder	2

5	Hurt	8
6	Punishment for wrongful restraint	7
7	Punishment for rioting armed with deadly weapon	1
8	Outrage of modesty	3
9	Kidnapping & Abduction	4
10	Cheating	1
11	Attempt to commit offence	3
12	Waging, or attempting to wage war, or abetting waging of war	1

Source: JJB, Dhemaji

Mr. Ahmed, principal magistrate pointed out 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. They have to sent to Jorhat or Guwahati Observation Home.
- 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, sitting place, lack of staffs, and lack of toilet facility. The Principal Magistrate suggested the following measures for effective functioning of the JJB:

- Observation Home should be set-up in every district.
- Recruitment of staff, specifically for JJB should be made immediately, at least 2 LDA.
- Sufficient fund should be provided on time and should be released on proper time.

- Repeated training is needed for each staff including JJB members & other allied systems on recent amendment of acts and schemes related to child protection.
- Awareness programme in different level should be conducted periodically under the supervision of JJB & CWC

#### **4.5. Inactive Special Juvenile Police Unit:**

Assam had taken a lead role to form the Special Juvenile Police Units in all the Police stations in well before of many other states. However, the units are mostly non functional as there had been no proper training / capacity building programme for the police personnel on Child Rights, Child Protection, Juvenile Justice Mechanism etc. Although the SJPU's have been notified in the district for every police stations and some CWOs are apprehending children as per guidelines of JJ Act, but in most of the cases 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 25<sup>th</sup> January, 2012 as Specialized Adoption Agency (SAA) for both the district of Dhemaji and Lakhimpur 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 recruited 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 Dhemaji, Assam**

DCPC has been formed in the district, but it is yet to be fully functional to implement ICPS in the district. The Meetings are infrequent. The poor functioning of the committee was due to delay in placement of staff and placement of fund, reported the members. The structure of DCPC is as under:

Sl. No.	Name / Designation	Status / Position
1	Deputy Commissioner	Chairperson
2	Additional Deputy Commissioner (Development)	Vice-Chairperson
3	District Child Protection Officer-cum-DSWO	Member Convener

Sl. No.	Name / Designation	Status / Position
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
10	Chairperson, CWC	Member
11	Principal Magistrate, JJB or his 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 (Sri Sri Sewa Ashram, Silapathar)	Member

*Source: DCPC / DCPO, Dhemaji*

Since inception of DCPC in Sept, 2009, altogether three meetings have been convened on 23.9.2009, 24.10. 2011 and 24.7.2012. The social workers have been appointed under ICPS and the district administration is awaiting formal approval from SCPS. The district administration has appointed two data entry operator (one male and one female) and one messenger for the CWC. One data entry operator has been appointed in JJB. From the minutes of the meeting convened on abovementioned dates, it is observed that issues like drug abuse, alcoholism, child labour, HIV/AIDS etc were discussed for prevention and control of these social problems. The Committee also felt the need for formation of Block and Village level committees for child protection.

#### **4.8. Ineffective probation system:**

The District Social Welfare Officers (DSWO) has been designated as District Child Protection Officer (DCPO) of the district and she has been assigned the responsibilities of DCPO of District Child Protection Unit on ad-hoc basis. The district has recruited two Social Workers and Data Entry Operators in the office of DCPO but there is a lack of proper mechanism for effective functioning of the probation system. Communication gap has been observed among the PO, Police and Local Government.

#### **4.9. Migration of Children:**

Migration in search of livelihoods has been a usual phenomenon in the district. Mostly they move from rural areas of the district to the neighbouring districts like Kamrup (Guwahati), Jorhat, Dibrugarh etc and even in Arunachal Pradesh. However, there are instances where children move to distant states like Delhi, Himachal Pradesh etc. Sometime the children are also migrated with their family from Arunachal Pradesh, in town areas of Dhemaji district.

#### 4.11. Major Gaps:

- No Observation Home and Children's Home for JCL and CNCP respectively under JJ Act;
- The SJPU is notified but grossly they are 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;
- Congested infrastructure of JJB & CWC;
- Increased Pending cases of JCLs in Observation Home;
- Non/delayed submission of SIR, non appearance of children and witness before JJB leads to delay in disposal of cases;
- Delay in age determination;
- The nearest observation home is Jorhat & Guwahati, which makes it difficult for the poor guardian, especially who live in remote area, to keep contact with their children.
- Incidence of child marriage is reported among Muslim, SC & ST Community.
- 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;
- Lack of communication with the statutory bodies under JJ System and the Social Welfare Department.
- 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, child labour, migrant and trafficked children;
- District Child Protection Committee under ICPS is yet to be properly functional;
- There is lack of protection programme for the street children, child labour, trafficked children, migrant children, CDWs etc;
- There are no specialized care facilities for children who are mentally challenged. Issues related to drug abuse, HIV/AIDS etc needs more attention;
- Incidence of substance abuse (Alcohol, Gutkha etc.) among children living in slum / jhupri areas of the district is a matter of concern.

## 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	Responsible Stakeholder
1.1	Completion of recruitment of staff	Negotiate with SCPS	SCPS
1.2	Organize capacity building of newly recruited staffs of DCPC;	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Training Needs Assessment</li> <li>▪ Prepare curriculum</li> <li>▪ Organise Master Trainers' training</li> <li>▪ Organise training at the district level</li> </ul>	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"> <li>• Recognize credible NGOs to run Children Homes, homes for the Special Need Children. Sri Sri Sewa Kendra at Silapathar has been already identified for such activities.</li> <li>• Identify Land / building for initiation of Observation Homes to be run by the Govt.</li> <li>• Identify NGOs in areas bordering with Arunachal Pradesh like Akajaan, Likabali, Liadhol to organize Child Protection Units with facilities for institutional care to arrest unsafe migration of children</li> </ul>	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 for initiating CHILDLINE in	CIF, SCPS, DCPC

		Dhemaji. The report of the Need Assessment and the Street Children Survey conducted by JPISC, may be considered as a baseline for initiating CHILDLINE in the district.	
1.7	Services for children with special needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mapping of all NGOs working in the field of disability.</li> <li>• Implementing Schemes for the disabled children with support from Ministry of Social Justice &amp; Empowerment, Govt. of India.</li> </ul>	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"> <li>• Negotiate with the Labour Department to conduct study immediately to identify the children engaged in various hazardous occupations and the migrant children to cover them under NCLP Programme.</li> <li>• Initiate AWWs, SSKs in vulnerable pockets like the Flood Affected Areas, interstate Border Areas to provide education and health care services to the children</li> </ul>	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 Dhemaji.	SCPS, DCPC
1.11	Establishment of District Drug Detoxification Centre for children.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implementation of Schemes under DDRC of Ministry of Social Justice &amp; Empowerment, Govt. of India through credible NGOs may be initiated.</li> <li>• Alcoholism is widespread in the slum areas. It is the women and children who are bearing the burnt of the alcoholism related</li> </ul>	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"> <li>• Contact with NIC to initiate a missing Children Portal to track all Missing Children and pour information with the DCPC &amp; Police.</li> <li>• Training of functionaries on the process of uploading information</li> </ul>	SCPS, DCPC, NIC
1.13	Strengthening the functioning of Statutory Bodies under JJ System.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 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.</li> <li>▪ Organize training programme for the members of CWC / JJB at the district level.</li> <li>▪ 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.</li> <li>▪ District officials to take responsibility to network with other service providers like Support NGOs, ICDS, Drug Counseling Centers, Police, ICDS, District Information Office, Health Department and other related offices/organizations for effective functioning of CWC and JJB.</li> <li>▪ Linkages need to be established with Sri Sri Sewa Ashram at Silapathar and NGO namely North-Eastern Regional Multi-purpose School &amp; Training</li> </ul>	SCPS, DCPC, NIPCCD, JPISC, UNICEF



		<p>Centre, SMILE, working with economically weaker children 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"> <li>POs should be allowed to concentrate more on JJS instead of engaging themselves in administrative activities.</li> <li>Strengthen Infrastructural support for CWC &amp; JJB.</li> </ul>	
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 and 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"> <li>Organize awareness / campaign in remote areas on the procedure for Adoption.</li> <li>Initiate drive against Illegal Adoption.</li> <li>Develop linkages with Health department to arrest sale of babies.</li> <li>Identify families who are in need of sponsorship support to continue education for their children.</li> <li>Identify families for Foster Care.</li> </ul>	DCPC, NGOs, Health Dept, SARA, CARA
<b>2</b>	<b>Dealing with Migrant Children</b>		
2.1	Mapping the gamut, nature & problems of migrant Children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>District authorities should survey families who have migrated in search of work or for any other reasons;</li> <li>District authorities should immediately issue cards / documents that entitle migrant</li> </ul>	DCPC, Recognized Research Institution.

		<p>/ potential migrant families to civil supplies.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Migrant families should be given priority to provide employment under Mahatma Gandhi NREGS;</li> <li>• Arrange Education through SSK / MSK for the migrant children.</li> <li>• Organize Sponsorship support for vulnerable families under ICPS to arrest migration of children.</li> <li>• Organize Crèche, AWW, SSK, programmes under NRHM in vulnerable pockets to arrest migration of children.</li> </ul>	
<b>3</b>	<b>Prevent children being separated from families</b>		
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• District authorities should initiate a birth registration drive, and ensure that children have some form of legal identity.</li> <li>• CWC should be assigned to cover areas where children affected by natural disaster;</li> <li>• CWCs and district authorities must pay particular attention to children who are separated from their families.</li> <li>• District administration must ensure that separated or unaccompanied children have access to the same emergency care and services as other children have.</li> <li>• District Authorities must pay special attention to the health, nutrition, education and psycho-social needs of children out of family care.</li> </ul>	DCPC, Labour Dept., NGOs, Police Dept.

4	Arresting harmful practices on children		
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 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;</li> <li>▪ Motivate youth organization for ensuring child protection rights;</li> <li>▪ Life skills training for adolescent girls &amp; boys;</li> <li>▪ Bridge Course Centres through SSA may be formed at GP level &amp; vulnerable pockets to bridge the gap for drop outs and make arrangements for their mainstreaming;</li> <li>▪ 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.</li> <li>▪ Dissemination of information about child marriage, child labour, child trafficking and other harmful practices through leaflets &amp; brochures, banners, Hoardings, Cinema/Cable TV slides in different forums / platforms on the issue.</li> <li>▪ Organise street corners and exhibition stalls in various fairs at the village level;</li> <li>▪ Formation of Child Protection Committee at the block, village/ward level;</li> <li>▪ Organize Self Help Groups with the village women to initiate</li> </ul>	Police, SSM, ICDS, NGOs, Panchayats Dept.

		<p>economic enterprises.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 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.</li> <li>▪ Form Anti Human Trafficking Unit (AHTU) and activate SJPU in each Police Station.</li> <li>▪ Inclusion of child protection issues in training for teacher, Panchayat Education Committee, Anganwadi Worker, ANM &amp; ASHA worker;</li> <li>▪ The Anganwadi centres should act like Child Protection Units to spread awareness on trafficking related issues among parents, adolescent girls and other vulnerable groups</li> <li>▪ School Sensitizations programmes need to be organized to address evils of trafficking and also to form children's group for their increased participation in anti-trafficking campaign</li> <li>▪ 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 marriage etc. These training and sensitization programmes could be organized in conjunction</li> </ul>	
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		with the Dept. of Home Affairs, Social Welfare, Labour etc.	
<b>5</b>	<b>Training, Capacity Building, Networking and Advocacy</b>		
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Capacity building program with PRI members</li> <li>• Capacity building of SAA on Alternative Care.</li> <li>• Orientation of Block level stakeholders – police, panchyat, judiciary welfare, Education, civil society on ICPS.</li> <li>• Special campaign on child marriage to be undertaken in minority belts and areas dominated by the tribes.</li> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• 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 most importantly the gender factors associated with trafficking.</li> <li>• Periodic training of all functionaries under JJ System, e.g. CWC, JJB, DCPU, SJPU members needs to be organized to develop their functional knowledge about child rights</li> </ul>	DCPC, SCPS, NGOs, Education Dept., Panchayats Dept.

		and legal procedures.	
<b>6</b>	<b>Managing Disaster Affected Children</b>		
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• District authorities must ensure emergency service provisions during natural disaster, mainly flood, to cover health, food and nutrition and education in areas namely, Bordoloni, Sissiborgaon, Jelem, Cigar, Jonai, Rajakhana, Somkang, Telem, Michamara etc;</li> <li>• Facilitate people to develop their own disaster preparedness plans and support them to develop their indigenous practices to respond to emergencies.</li> <li>• Mother and child care, ICDS services, the supply of baby food and milk to be provided on emergency basis,</li> <li>• During flood school children are the most affected and fall prey to child labour and child trafficking so the authorities be more sensitive on the issues related to children in Flood situation;</li> <li>• Standard sanitation, hygiene and clean drinking water for children, lactating and pregnant women need to be ensured by the local authorities.</li> <li>• An information outlet must be 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.</li> <li>• Preventive strategies need to be implemented to contain or</li> </ul>	DCPC, Disaster Management Dept., ICDS, Village Panchayat, Health Dept., Village Headman, NGOs

		<p>avoid child trafficking and migration during the emergency situation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bring about ownership of community in relief process; community can be involved in the actual conduct and planning of distribution and need assessments.</li> <li>• 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.</li> </ul>	
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