



CHILD PROTECTION BULLETIN

STATE CHILD
PROTECTION
SOCIETY, ASSAM

MONTHLY BULLETIN OF ACTIVITIES CONCERNING CHILD PROTECTION IN ASSAM

EDITORIAL

On behalf of State Child Protection Society, Assam I would like to wish everyone a very Happy New Year 2015. We in SCPS look forward to the year with renewed hope and enthusiasm to ensure that all children in Assam have a safe, enriching and fruitful year ahead. Hope the New Year ushers a rapid and significant change in the lives of those children who are particularly at-risk, and all such children are brought within the protective environment to be ensured by their communities and through the child protection system of the State.

This New Year also marks a shift for all of us who are engaged with the Editorial Board in SCPS Assam. As you would have noted from the Title in the first page of this 'Bulletin', there is a change from 'Juvenile Justice Newsletter' to that of 'Child Protection Bulletin' from this first edition of 2015.

For those Readers who have observed the journey of 'Juvenile Justice Newsletter' in Assam, from 2010 onwards, the coverage of various issues through the Newsletter has moved from the specific ambit of Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2000 to a more board-based discourse on Child Protection, covering various other aspects, such as, preventive child protection, addressing social norms and behaviour change, issues with regard to protective environment in the context of schools, etc.

It was thought to be time that we bring about this change in the Title of this important monthly publication from Assam to ensure that it reaches out to a wider network of stakeholders (beyond the JJ System) whose involvement in child protection is a necessity.

This first issue of 'Child Protection Bulletin' is on our Girl Children. Government of India has launched the "Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao" (BBBP) programme on the occasion of National Girl Child Day, which was celebrated on 24 January. This edition aims to inform the Readers about this important initiative.

I on behalf of my team in SCPS Assam sincerely hope that we will receive the usual support and feedback from our Readers and will be able to reach out to more cohorts of stakeholders to widen and firm up the safety net for all children in Assam.

Happy Reading!

*Editorial Board,
State Child Protection Society, Assam*

Celebrating the Girl Child through Programmes and Policies

The birth of a new born child is an occasion to celebrate across all corners of the globe. Irrespective of gender, the tiny, little bundle is welcomed in every home with a spirit of great joy and hope and considered a precious gift from above. But it's not the case in every child's life. It is saddening that they are unwanted in the womb itself even before they see the world outside. The choice of a boy child instead of a girl begins right here making the womb a grave for the unborn girl child. This is the reality we face in many parts of our country. The 2011 Census of India reveals a declining trend in Child Sex Ratio of 914 of children between 0-6 years which indicates the sad state of affairs. It also portrays the existence of sex selective elimination of the female foetus despite legislations in place to address the issue. This journey of being discriminated commences from the womb to infancy, childhood and adulthood period in a girl's life. It is painful and distressful that this trend exists in many parts of our country wherein states like Haryana, Rajasthan, Punjab, Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu are well known for female foeticide and infanticide.

In the light of what is being highlighted, I recall an interaction with a well educated gentleman who was awaiting the birth of his first child. He chose the name of a boy for the unborn child and refused to even think of a girl's name. Preference for a boy was to carry on his family lineage which a girl would not be able to accomplish. He shared that it was a huge responsibility to bring up a girl who needs to be constantly safeguarded and protected from any harm. I thought to myself if this is the attitude and mindset of an educated person how would someone with little or no education respond. One can debate on the plausible reasons as to why a girl child is discriminated.... Why does this happen? Who is to be blamed? Where did it all start? Is it due to economic reasons that a girl child is not wanted? What is the root cause for this atrocity?...endless questions with no answers.

International communities and our country is aware of this evil practice which contributes to a vicious cycle of discrimination of girls and women and seeks to address it through various means some of which are discussed herein.

Observance of National Girl Child Day in India

Atrocities or discrimination of the girl child is a global challenge which necessitated the United Nations to declare October 11 as the International Day of the Girl Child in the year 2011. In a special way, it seeks to recognize the girl child's rights and the unique challenges faced by them all over the world. Even before this resolution by the UN, India had declared January 24 as the National Girl Child Day. Since 2008, the country has been celebrating and remembering the girl child with special focus on different issues relating to protecting and promoting their rights. National observance of this day by the Government of India is primarily to create awareness and offer support and opportunities for all the girls in the country.

The theme for the year 2015 is 'Adolescent Girls: Issues and Challenges'. Apart from creating awareness on the atrocities meted to the girl child and the need to protect and promote her rights, it is imperative that efforts are taken to ensure that every girl child who enters the world is warmly welcomed, loved, nurtured given equal opportunities to grow and develop to her maximum potential.

Schemes to reiterate the value of the girl child

It is laudable that the Prime Minister of India, Shri Narendra Modi has launched two new schemes, 'Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao' (BBBP - Save Girl Child, educate the girl child) and 'Sukanya Samriddhi Account' (Girl Child Prosperity Scheme) to commemorate the girl child day in India. Incidentally, he chose Panipat in Haryana to launch the scheme because of the lowest CSR of 837 in the country. While flagging off the scheme he expressed great concern about the declining CSR predominantly due to female foeticide. He described it as a 'mental illness' prevalent among people and called for the need to end this evil practice or else the country is heading for a terrible crisis.



The main thrust of the BBBP scheme is to create awareness on the indispensable value and worth of the girl child and also initiate welfare schemes and services for women. The Account scheme is to promote the opening of savings account for girls under the age of ten with minimum deposit and provides high interest rates. The scheme shall address all the overarching rights enshrined in the Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), stressing more on survival, protection and education as key pillars for the growth and development of the girl child. A joint initiative of the Ministries of Women and Child Development, Human Resource Development and Health, focuses on core principles of respecting, protecting and fulfilling the rights of girls and women through a multi-sectoral approach. An ambitious plan is chalked out wherein emphasis is laid on mobilising the society through communication campaigns to change the existing societal norms and adopting a different mindset. The prime objective of the scheme is to prevent and eliminate the gender biased sex selection through strengthening the legal system and imposing stringent punishments for violation of the law. Further, to ensure that all girl children have access to good standards of nutrition, health, education and protection from all forms of violence and discrimination throughout her life is another purpose of the scheme. The Ministry of Women and Child Development had called for a Logo campaign offering cash award to specifically promote the scheme. Mass campaign using media and technology, sharing of messages on the value and importance of educating a girl child was undertaken for atleast a week to mark the occasion of National Girl Child Day this year.

Collaborate to change

The Government is to be appreciated for the efforts taken in addressing this crucial issue. It is hoped that it shall accomplish what is envisaged for the welfare of the girl child. But what is very disheartening is the status assigned to girls and women is so low and insignificant that we need legislations and special schemes to reinforce and cut across the message to save the girl child. Why do we need this? Can't it be a genuine and

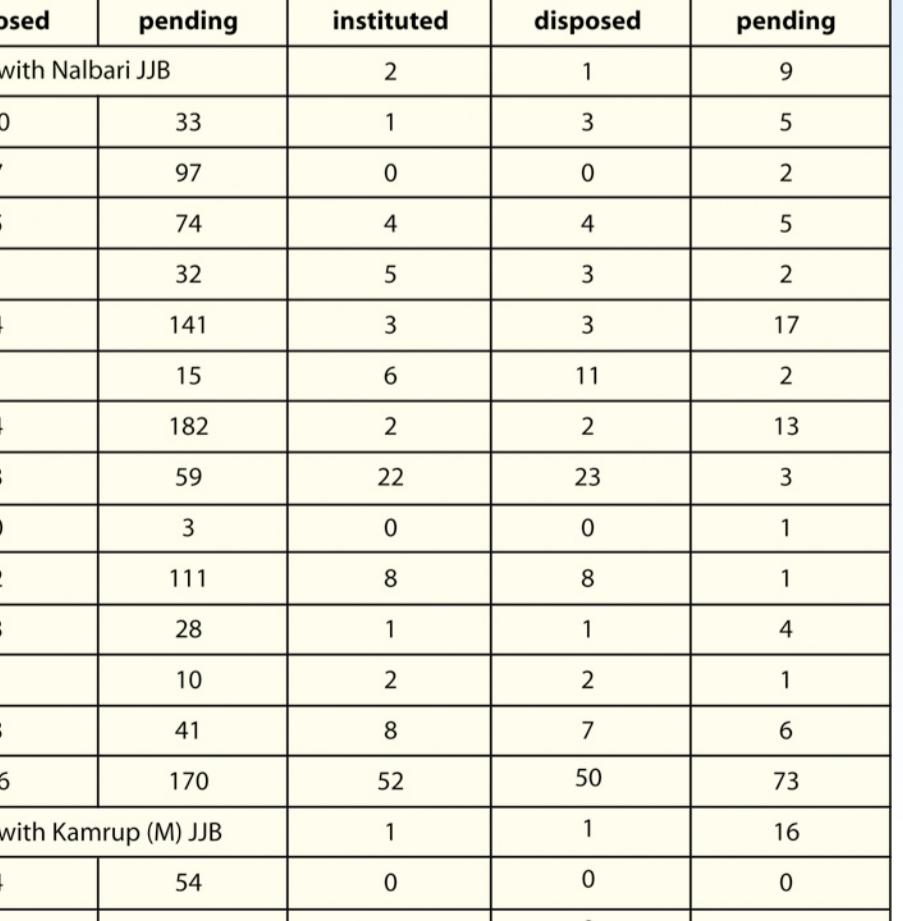
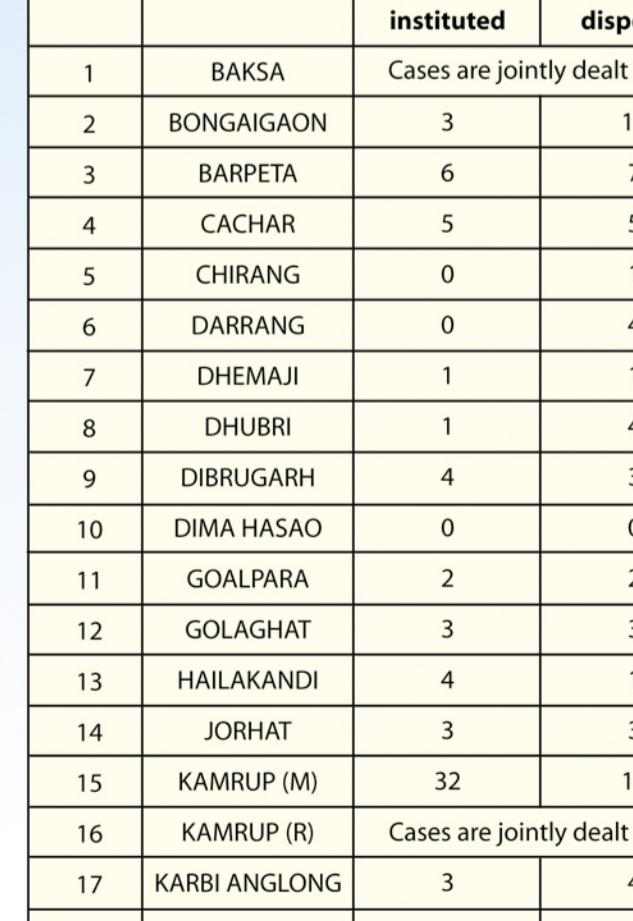
spontaneous response from all citizens, irrespective of gender, age, educational status, domicile and religion to render equality to both boys and girls and nurture them with equal rights and opportunities? Do girls and women need to plead and fight for their right to survive and develop? Can it not be a natural phenomenon? I strongly believe that an individual needs to be identified only by name and nationality rather than their gender. Implementation of laws and schemes alone will not suffice in changing the stereotype mindset of our people. It is strongly rooted in the socio-cultural factors that bind people. What we need now is a total change in the attitude that governs our thoughts and behaviour.

Whose responsibility is it to bring about this change? It is everyone's responsibility beginning right from home. We should stop this blame game of pointing fingers at each other. Rather take it as moral responsibility beginning with parents to educate both boys and girls and sensitize them about valuing and respecting human beings irrespective of gender. A lot needs to be done by women themselves as they can become the negative elements opposing their own counterparts from being empowered and liberated. Traditional beliefs should be set aside and humanity should be able to embrace the value of loving and respecting one another.

Sustained efforts to sensitize on the importance of gender equality and providing equal opportunities for both boys and girls should be undertaken throughout rather than centred only on important days and celebrations. It is indeed a great challenge laying onus equally on all stakeholders - family, schools, community and the Government at large to ensure that the girl child enjoys all her rights outlined in international and national conventions and legislations for children. Let it not be a wishful thinking confined only to paper but a reality to see every girl child being welcomed in this world with love and empowered with education, given freedom to express her views and participate in all matters related to her growth and development.

Rachel Kabi

Ex. Assistant Professor, Don Bosco University



SCPS staff visited Batasipur Relief Camp in Sonitpur district on 30th December, 2014 where 6 were reported gunned down by NDFB (S) outfits. In the relief camp it was noticed that children outnumbered the adults and most of the infants and the children were malnourished.

A CASE STUDY

Riya (name changed), a 16 years old girl was a victim of all kinds of abuse including sexual harassment by her biological father. Riya's father Ajit (name changed) was always searching to have his way with his pretty and young daughter. Ajit was an alcoholic person. In various parts of India, a wife is still dominated by the head of the family and it can also be said that a wife is often submissive to her husband's wishes. It held true in this case too. Ajit's wife was aware of all these things but she was silent and did not take any step to make safe her daughter only because she was also simultaneously a victim of physical abuse by her husband. It was the everyday's common scenario in Riya's house that the drunken father comes at night and starts torturing her along with her younger brother and mother. Ajit used to lock her wife inside the room and throw Riya and her younger brother to the balcony to sleep at night. Riya had the great support of her younger brother. He always tried to save his sister from the evil intention of his father. Finally, Ajit had the chance to have his way with his daughter Riya when her younger brother was outside home for his special scout and guide class. Like other days, Riya's mother was forcefully locked inside a room. After that Ajit made his daughter Riya sleep on the floor in another room. Riya cried and struggled to free herself from the clutches of her father and finally she succeeded. Riya, finding no help from her mother, sought the help of a lady in the locality whom she used to call her aunt. Riya told her all the grief she was going through in the hands of her father. The lady so called aunt supported her and informed the matter to the local Mahila Committee.

CHILDLINE with the help of Police rescued the girl. Riya was sent for a medical examination after which she was taken to one of the Shelter Homes in Guwahati with the help of the CWC, Kamrup (M). An FIR has been lodged against the father of the child who has been absconding since the lodging of the FIR

| Status Report on the functioning of the Juvenile Justice Boards and Child Welfare Committees in Assam for the month of December 2014 | | | | | | | |
|--|---------------|---|-----------------------|---------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------|
| Sl. No. | Districts | Juvenile Justice Boards | | | Child Welfare Committees | | |
| | | No. of cases instituted | No. of cases disposed | Total cases pending | No. of cases instituted | No. of cases disposed | Total cases pending |
| 1 | BAKSA | Cases are jointly dealt with Nalbari JJB | | | 2 | 1 | 9 |
| 2 | BONGAIGAON | 3 | 10 | 33 | 1 | 3 | 5 |
| 3 | BARPETA | 6 | 7 | 97 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| 4 | CACHAR | 5 | 5 | 74 | 4 | 4 | 5 |
| 5 | CHIRANG | 0 | 1 | 32 | 5 | 3 | 2 |
| 6 | DARRANG | 0 | 4 | 141 | 3 | 3 | 17 |
| 7 | DHEMAJI | 1 | 1 | 15 | 6 | 11 | 2 |
| 8 | DHUBRI | 1 | 4 | 182 | 2 | 2 | 13 |
| 9 | DIBRUGARH | 4 | 3 | 59 | 22 | 23 | 3 |
| 10 | DIMA HASAO | 0 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| 11 | GOALPARA | 2 | 2 | 111 | 8 | 8 | 1 |
| 12 | GOLAGHAT | 3 | 3 | 28 | 1 | 1 | 4 |
| 13 | HAILAKANDI | 4 | 1 | 10 | 2 | 2 | 1 |
| 14 | JORHAT | 3 | 3 | 41 | 8 | 7 | 6 |
| 15 | KAMRUP (M) | 32 | 16 | 170 | 52 | 50 | 73 |
| 16 | KAMRUP (R) | Cases are jointly dealt with Kamrup (M) JJB | | | 1 | 1 | 16 |
| 17 | KARBI ANGLONG | 3 | 4 | 54 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 18 | KARIMGANJ | 8 | 4 | 54 | 0 | 0 | 9 |
| 19 | KOKRAJHAR | 0 | 4 | 163 | 0 | 1 | 8 |
| 20 | LAKHIMPUR | 5 | 2 | 31 | 2 | 1 | 35 |
| 21 | MORIGAON | 1 | 1 | 10 | 1 | 0 | 24 |
| 22 | NAGAON | 4 | 5 | 268 | 23 | 24 | 9 |
| 23 | NALBARI | 2 | 3 | 38 | 2 | 0 | 21 |
| 24 | SONITPUR | 9 | 6 | 134 | 0 | 5 | 37 |
| 25 | SIBSAGAR | 1 | 1 | 63 | 5 | 2 | 40 |
| 26 | TINSUKIA | 6 | 3 | 60 | 4 | 0 | 8 |
| 27 | UDALGURI | 1 | 2 | 19 | 7 | 7 | 18 |
| Total | | 103 | 95 | 1890 | 161 | 159 | 369 |

Source: MIS Cell, SCPS, Assam

For any feedback, write to :

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State Child Protection Society, Assam

46, Survey Bus Stop, Beltoha, Guwahati-781028, Phone: 0361-2229275, Email: scpsassam@gmail.com, Website: assam-scps.com/termsofuse.php



DSW, Government of Assam

Lokonya Press, Guwahati-1

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| 6 | DARRANG | 0 | 4 | 141 | 3 | 3 | 17 |
| 7 | DHEMAJI | 1 | 1 | 15 | 6 | 11</td | |