



ANNUAL REPORT

2021 - 2022

UTSAH

**Universal Team for Social Action
and Help**

ASSAM | INDIA

ABOUT UTSAH

Founded in 2011, UTSAH is a leading Child Rights Organisation based in Guwahati, Assam, Northeast India.

Vision

Making Child Protection, a reality

Child Protection Rights remains imaginary till children have access to safety and justice. We envision a world where every child can experience and feel the real essence of being protected, supported, healed and gaining justice.

Mission

Implementing the law & Strengthening the System

Translation of letters of law into practice is critical for achieving Child Protection. Our mission is to implement child protection laws through direct intervention or through engagement with duty bearers within the child protection system.

Approach

Our work is driven by narratives of the widespread violence and abuse children face every day, and the urgency to act and secure the fundamental rights of children to protection. We believe that strong and responsive child protection systems are critical to ensuring that every child is protected from violence and abuse, and therefore, we focus on addressing the complex systemic challenges within the child protection system. In doing so, we often deploy innovative, and demonstrate new problem-solving approaches.

Deeply rooted in the philosophy that as much as systems have an impact on individuals, individuals too have an impact on systems; UTSAH's approach in systems-change work therefore, relies on an advocacy strategy that centers on fostering meaningful relationships and partnerships with duty bearers, including leaders, to bring in transformative shifts within the system, that can drive tangible results for children.

PROGRAMS

POCSO Centre

The POCSO Centre was started to address gaps in Support Person services in Assam. Support Person is a provision within India's Anti-Child Sexual Abuse law - known as the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act, 2012 (referred to as the 'POCSO Act'). Under this provision a district-level Child Welfare Committee can appoint any credible individual or organisation as a 'Support Person' to assist a victim child throughout the process of investigation and trial. Under this segment, we also undertake or partake in initiatives for prevention and response to Child Sexual Abuse.

Assam Police Sishu Mitra

Started in 2019, the Assam Police Sishu Mitra Programme (or 'Assam Police Child Friendly Police Programme' in English) is one of the largest child-friendly policing programs in India, focused on strengthening child-friendly policing practices in the State. We have been active partners with the Assam Police throughout the entire process, from conceptualization to execution, of the Sishu Mitra Programme. Currently, UTSAH is responsible for rolling out the various components of the programme.

Sashakti

Under this broad segment aimed at empowerment, we engage in several initiatives to (i) educate communities on various child protection issues and the mechanisms for child protection responses and services; (ii) train and orient stakeholders such as panchayats, media houses, zila parishads, teachers, child welfare committees, juvenile justice boards, district child protection units, and other relevant entities on child protection laws; and (iii) provide technical support to system stakeholders while advocating for legal reforms or enhanced implementation of existing laws.



Services and data trends:

Sl.	Service	No.	
1.	Number of cases referred to UTSAH during 2021-22	25	
2.	Number of cases carried over from previous years	70 (Statistics of carried over cases already given in the previous year's data above)	
3.	Total cases handled during 2021-22	95	
4.	Age and Sex profiles of victims	Male	Female
		Age: 1 to 5 years	
		0 (0%)	1 (4%)
		Age: 6 to 12 years	
		1 (4%)	11 (42.30%)
		Age: 12 to 18 years	
		1 (4%)	12 (48%)
5.	Accused Profile	Relationship with the Victim	%
		Neighbour	32.35 %
		Romantic partner	14.71 %
		Stranger	11.76 %
		Acquaintance	8.82 %
		Co-tenant	8.82 %
		Stranger	8.82 %
		Landlord	2.94 %
		Acquaintance from same village	2.94 %
		Uncle	2.94 %
		Co-tenant of tutor	2.94 %
		Step-father	2.94 %
		Vegetable vendor	2.94 %
		Relative & Neighbour	2.94 %
		Friend of Romantic Partner	2.94 %
		Employer	2.94 %

Highlights		
i	Total Children supported to register Police Complaints	8
ii	Total cases in which family counselling services have been provided	24
iii	Total cases in which regular follow-ups have been made to Investigating Officers for timely completion of investigation	25
iv	Total cases in which investigation has been completed within 2 months as a result of regular follow-ups	6
v	Total cases in which mental health support has been provided	17
vi	Total cases in which children have been assisted to access Safe Shelter in a CCI	7
vii	Cases in which children have been supported to access Safe Medical Termination of Pregnancies	0
viii	Total cases in which follow-ups have been made with Special Public Prosecutor about case progress	23
ix	Total cases in which follow-ups have been made with Juvenile Justice Boards about case progress	2
x	Total cases in which children are being supported during appeals at the High Court	2
xii	Total cases in which children are being accompanied during bail rejection appeal	5
xiii	Total Special Relief applied in	10 cases
xiv	Total Special Relief secured	₹ 6,000/- in 3 cases to 3 victims
xv	Total Interim Compensation applied in	19 cases
xvi	Total Interim Compensation secured	₹ 6,25,000/- in 8 cases
xv	Total Convictions	0
xvi	Linkages with Skill Development agencies and subsequent placement (New)	2

2-Day Training for CSOs on Support Person Services

20 Dec – 21 Dec 2021 : For the first time in Northeast of India, we collaborated with UNICEF Assam to organise a 2-day residential workshop and training session for CSOs across Assam on the Support Person Services component of the POCSO Act. The aim of the workshop was to build the capacities of CSOs to work as Support Persons, and provide high quality case support to victims of Child Sexual Abuse, across the Districts of Assam. The sessions included the POCSO Act, POCSO Rules, Model Guidelines, Procedures and Case Management. Most Organisations that participated are also running Childline Services in their respective Districts. Representatives from the following organisations participated in the workshop - Save the Children (Guwahati), Action Aid (Guwahati), ACRD (Kamrup), NEDAN (Kokrajhar), NERSWN (Kokrajhar), ICCW(Guwahati), SATRA (Udalguri), Sadou Assam Gramya Puthibharal Santha(Hojai), Deshbandhu Club (Hailakandi), NESPYM (Tinsukia), Aide et Action (Guwahati), Surjudaya (Tinsukia), Prerona Pratibandhu Shishu Bikash Kendra (Jorhat), Bharatiya Cha Parishad (Dibrugarh), ABITA (Golaghat), ROSS (Udalguri), Farm2Food Foundation (Jorhat), Deshbandhu Club (Cachar), Fulkumari Bapuji Club (Dhubri). Representative from State Child Protection Society (SCPS) and UNICEF Assam also participated in the workshop.



East Mojo features our
work on CSA in Assam

25 April 2021

EastMojo

Menu

Light after dusk: How this Assam activist provides succour to abused children

Conscious and effective steps should be taken to ensure that children are taken out of environments that could cause harm to them in any way.

by **Pritisha Borthakur**

April 25, 2021



Child Rights Activist, Miguel Das Queah



On-Call Support to Investigating Officers:

Two Closed Unit Group (CUG) numbers have been provided to UTSAH, by Assam Police HQ, through which Investigating Officers are provided with technical support and regular follow-up on investigation is conducted

328

Cases referred to
the Helpline
Number

Districts disaggregates

Baksa	1	Dhubri	196	Kamrup	1
Biswanath	1	Dibrugarh	1	Kamrup Metro	5
Barpeta	22	Dhemaji	1	Kokrajhar	34
Bongaigaon	1				
Cachar	4	Goalpara	11	Majuli	6
Charaideo	1	Golaghat	1	Sivasagar	6
Chirang	33	Hojai	1	W. Karbi Anglong	2

GENDER DISAGGREGATES

Male	Female	Transgender
2	326	0

CASE DISAGGREGATES

SECTIONS OF POCSO ACT	Nos.
Section 4	168
Section 6	67
Section 8	52
Section 10	4
Section 12	17
Section 14 & 15	9
Section 14	2
Section 16	1

Types of on-Call Support to Investigating Officers:

Services	Nos.
Follow-up for Chargesheet Status	328 Cases
Provided information about the process of Information and Production to Child Welfare Committee	18 Cases
Provided contact details and linkage support with Child Welfare Committee	9 Cases
Provided information about the provision of Section 173-1A of the CrPC (60 days timeline for completion of investigation)	52 Cases
Provided feedback on application of correct Sections of the law	10 Cases
Others	22 Cases

Since the system of reporting child-related cases to the helpline numbers is new, cases are being reported late, due to which a large number of procedural errors could not be identified and rectified. The program aims to ensure that Investigating Officers would report Child-related cases as soon as a case related to children is reported to the Police Station.



UTSAH Team at the One-roomed Sishu Mitra Resource Centre allotted near the Assam Police HQ

On-Site Support to Districts to address case pendency :

Upon request of the Director General of Police, a team from UTSAH, visited five districts that had recorded high case-pendency in POCSO Act cases: The districts were Kokrajhar, Chirang, Barpeta, Goalpara and Dhubri.

The Objectives of the field-visits:

1. Analyze the reasons for pendency
2. Discuss case pendency issues with the District Superintendent of Police
3. Conduct case-by-case review of pending cases and provide inputs to Investigating Officers

KOKRAJHAR



3 Sep 2021: Discussion with Prateek Thube, IPS, Superintendent of Police, Kokrajhar regarding case pendency In POCSO cases
Venue: SPs Chamber



4 Sep 2021: Day-long, case-by-case discussion on 34 Nos pending POCSO cases with Investigating Officers
Venue: SP Office, Conference Room



5 Sep 2021: Discussion with Moneswar Bey, Officer In Charge, Kokrajhar Police Station (in Kokrajhar town) regarding challenges while dealing with POCSO cases



5 Sep 2021: Discussion with Amar Jyoti Bailung, Officer In Charge, Gossaigaon Police Station (42 Kms from Kokrajhar town), regarding challenges while dealing with POCSO cases

CHIRANG



5 Sep 2021: Discussion with Pranjit Bora, APS, Superintendent of Police, Chirang regarding case pendency In POCSO cases
Venue: Hotel Himalaya



6 Sep 2021: Day-long, case-by-case discussion on 33 Nos pending POCSO cases with Investigating Officers
Venue: SP Office, Conference Room



7 Sep 2021: Discussion with Laba Deka, DSP, Chirang and Paban Gayan, Officer In Charge, Dhaligaon Police Station regarding challenges while dealing with POCSO cases



7 Sep 2021: Discussion with Shekhar Jyoti Roy, APS, SDPO, Bijni and Ranjit Rajkhowa, Officer In Charge, Bijni Police Station, regarding challenges while dealing with POCSO cases



7 Sep 2021

The SP of Chirang requested the team to visit a village near Runikhata, an area from where more than 40 children were recently trafficked to Sikkim to work as domestic child labour. In July 2021, the children were rescued through a massive operation by the Chirang Police. The team visited the No. 2 Aipuwali forest village, under the jurisdiction of the Runikhata Police Station, and interacted with the community leaders, women and children.

The team was accompanied by Laba Kumar Deka, DSP(HQ), Rajkumar Barman, OC, Runikhata, Ram Charan Rabha, SI, Runikhata and Pranab Kumar Deka, IC, Shantipur Police Station.

BARPETA



7 Sep 2021: Discussion with Amitava Sinha, APS, Superintendent of Police, Barpeta regarding case pendency In POCSO cases
Venue: SP Office, Barpeta



8 Sep 2021: Day-long, case-by-case discussion on 22 Nos pending POCSO cases with Investigating Officers
Venue: SP Office, Conference Room



9 Sep 2021: Discussion with Samirdaftar Barua, DSP, Barpeta and Ranjan Doley, Officer In Charge, Dhaligaon Police Station regarding challenges while dealing with POCSO cases

GOALPARA



9 Sep 2021: Discussion with VV Rakesh Reddy, IPS, Superintendent of Police, Goalpara regarding case pendency In POCSO cases
Venue: SP Office



10 Sep 2021: Day-long, case-by-case discussion on 11 Nos pending POCSO cases with Investigating Officers
Venue: SP Office, Conference Room

DHUBRI



12 Sep 2021: Discussion with Rosy Rani Sharma, APS, Addl. Superintendent of Police, Dhubri regarding case pendency In POCSO cases
Venue: Circuit House, Dhubri



13 & 14 Sep 2021: Two Day-long, case-by-case discussion on 196 Nos pending POCSO cases with Investigating Officers
Venue: SP Office, Conference Room



15 Sep 2021: Discussion with Gaurav Abhijit Dilip, IPS, Superintendent of Police, Dhubri regarding case pendency In POCSO cases
Venue: SP Office, Dhubri

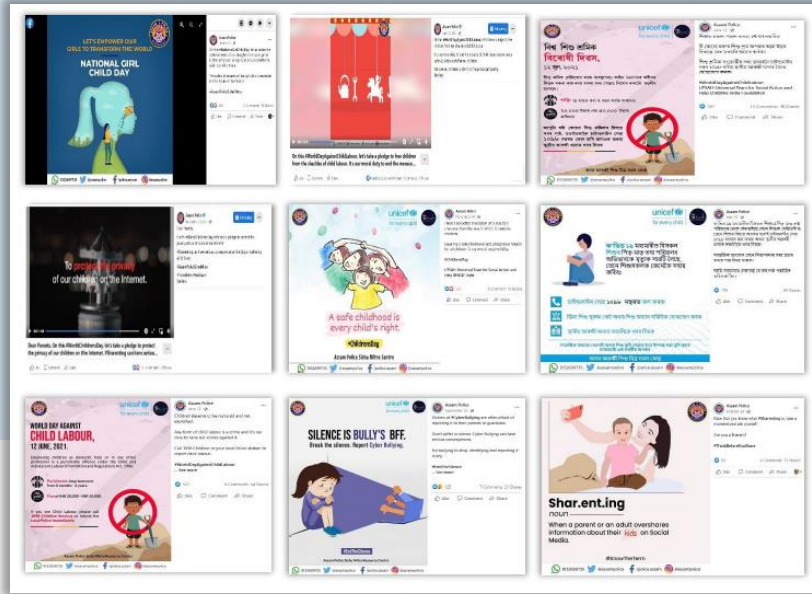
OUTCOMES OF THE VISIT

Sl.	Outputs/Outcomes
1.	Regular on-call follow-up leading to decline in case pendency in Kokrajhar (from 34 cases to 15 cases)
2.	Regular on-call follow-up leading to decline in case pendency in Chirang (from 33 cases to 5 cases)
3.	Regular on-call follow-up leading to decline in case pendency in Barpeta (from 22 cases to 1 cases)
4.	Regular on-call follow-up leading to decline in case pendency in Goalpara (from 11 cases to 3 cases)
5.	Regular on-call follow-up leading to decline in case pendency in Dhubri (from 196 cases to 154 cases)
6.	Creation of two Child-friendly corners in Kokrajhar
7.	"Analysis on reasons for case pendency in POCSO Cases" submitted to DGP, Assam
8.	Note on "Vulnerabilities of Children in Runikhata Village" submitted to Principal Secretary, Bodoland Territorial Council

Assam Police Sishu Mitra Program

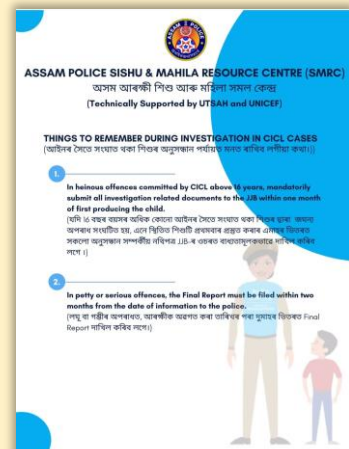
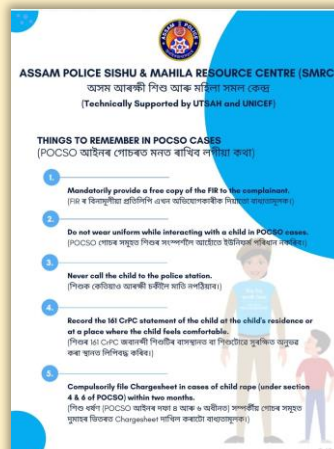
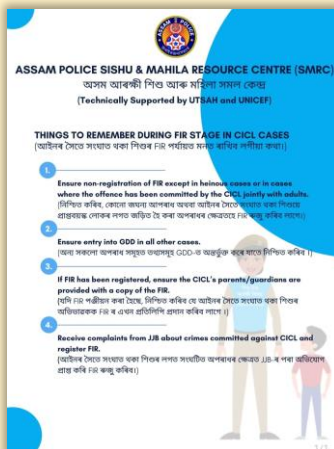
We developed content for **8 social media posters**, which published on the Assam Police Social media pages covering – National Girl Child Day wishes, Anti-child trafficking, Support during COVID, Child Labour, Online Safety, and World Children's Day wishes.

Cumulatively, these posters had a **social media viewership of over 2 Lakh people.**



We developed and designed **12 short resource materials on Legal provisions** (Do's and Don'ts) of the POCSO and the JJ Act and shared it with the SPs across the Districts.

36 SPs were provided with the Resource Materials





26 , 27 & 28 Jul 2021

Pre – Service Training of Police Officers

A batch of **579 newly recruited Sub-Inspectors of Assam Police** who were undergoing their pre-service training at the North-Eastern Police Academy on various offenses against children, situational analysis of crimes against children in the context of Assam, global perspective on child rights, the UNCRC and its connect with national laws, the JJ Act and the role of police under the act, the POCSO Act and the role of police under the act, etc.

Strengthening Special Juvenile Police Units

Special Juvenile Police Unit (SJPU), established under Section 107 of the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children), Act 2015, is a district-level Police unit that has the responsibility of dealing with all child-related cases in the district. **Child Welfare Police Officers (CWPOs)**, again defined in the same Section of the aforementioned law, are, on the other hand, Police officers who are designated as such, in every Police station to deal with the child related cases that are reported to the Police station.

Though SPJUs have been notified, and CWPOs have been designated across Assam. However, the order by the Police department could not be located nor is there a clarity on the roles and responsibilities of an SJPU, of CWPOs.

We apprised the Director General of Police, Assam, about the gap in SJPU activation and about the need for re-notification.

Upon request of the Director General of Police we:

- 1) **Prepared a draft for the SJPU notification which needs to be sent to the Department of Home and Political, Government of Assam for official notification.**
- 2) **Prepared plan for training of Five Police Districts and assist the District Superintendents of Police to train all Investigating Officers in the role of Special Juvenile Police Units**

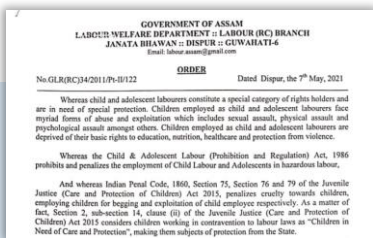


GO BLUE – ON WORLD CHILDREN'S DAY

November 20th is celebrated as World Children's Day globally, every year. The 'Go Blue' campaign was started by UNICEF, the UN Agency that deals with Child Rights globally. Iconic landmarks across the world are illuminated in the colour Blue, expressing solidarity with the preservation of the rights of children across the world.

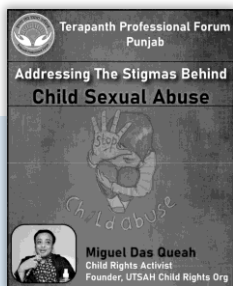
We advocated with the Director General of Police Assam and the Commissioner of Police for Guwahati city, to give visibility to the Assam Polices' commitment to Child Rights, by illuminating crucial Police structures with blue lighting.

Subsequently, the Assam Police Headquarter, the CID Headquarter, the Guwahati Police Commissioner's Office, along with 4 Police Stations, Azara, Basistha, Pan Bazar & Jalukbari (New) have turned Blue on World Children's Day.

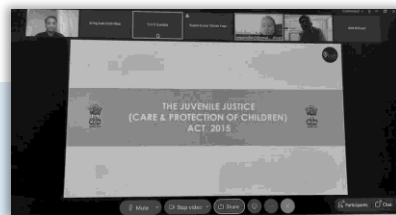


District Child Labour Task Force

Realizing that there was no procedures, we drafted the SoP for the District Level Task Force on Child Labour, that was later notified by the Government of Assam on **7 May 2021**.



27 June 2021: Session on "Addressing the Stigma behind Child Sexual Abuse" organised by Terapanth Professional Forum. Over 200 Terapanthis from across India participated in this Virtual Program



20 Aug 2021: Online Training of 250 Police Officers from across India, on International instruments on administration of Juvenile Justice, Overview of the Juvenile Justice Act and Principles of the Juvenile Justice Act. Organized by North East Police Academy(NEPA).



24 Sep 2021: Online Training all stakeholders (including Magistrates, Police, CWC, NGOs etc.) of Dibrugarh District organized by District Administration and DLSA Dibrugarh with support from UNICEF. Topic: POCSO and Victim Compensation



3 Oct 2021 : Our Associate Sampurnaa Bharadwaj presented a talk on "Child Rights and Mental Health", in an event organized by Ashwas Mental Health, a mental health organisation based in Guwahati, Assam



26 Oct 2021: Session on "Communication or development in the Child Protection Sector" organised by Royal School of Communications and Media, Royal Global University, Guwahati, Assam.



10 Nov 2021: Training of CWC members, JJB Members and Child Welfare Police Officers from across Districts of Meghalaya, in Juvenile Justice & POCSO Act; organised by Social Welfare Department, Government of Meghalaya.



14 Nov 2021: Celebration of National Children's Day by "Talking about Protection, with Assamese Singer Shankuraj Konwar & Maitrayee Patar at Hafiznagar No 2 community, in East Guwahati



8 Dec 2021: Taking a session on the POCSO Act, at the State Level Capacity building for functionaries of One Stop Centres, Directorate of Social Welfare, Govt. of Assam



11 Jan 2022: Speech on "Child Protection during emergencies" at the 5th North East Public Relations Conclave on the theme 'PR in Action during Disaster times', organised by the Public Relations Society of India (PRSI), Guwahati



21 Feb 2022: Taking a session for District Child Protection Officers from across the State on "Role of Stakeholders in rescue & rehab of Street Children" organized by Administrative Staff College & State Child Protection Society, Government of Assam.



2 March 2022: 2-day training on Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act - for Police Officers from across 11 States of India, organised by North East Police Academy . Meghalaya



4 March 2022: Taking a session on Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act, 2012, at the Special Gram Sabha for Women and Children, organised by Social Welfare Department, Assam.



21 Mar 2022: Taking a session on "Understanding the State of Child Protection laws in Assam; organised by Civic Data Lab, at Assam Administrative Staff College.

Our Interview on Assam Bani, an Assamese Daily, on Addressing the issue of Child Trafficking in Assam ;
20 Aug 2021.



Other Highlights

Online Internship on Child Rights

11 July – 24 July : A three-week-long immersive Online Summer Internship, was curated to provide comprehensive understanding of child rights & child protection. To address the interns on each of the themes covered in the program, we brought together a panel of experts - Nicole Rangel Menezes, Co-Founder, Leher, New Delhi; Enakshi Ganguly, Founder, HAQ Centre for Child Rights; Harmeet Singh, IPS, Commissioner of Police, Guwahati City ; Shantanu Gotmare, IAS, Principal Secretary, BTR; doodle artist Santanu Hazarika; Nikita Hazarika, Clinical Psychologist; & musician Rahul Rajkhowa. **255 interns from 54 institutions across the country, participated the online internship programme.**



ONLINE SUMMER INTERNSHIP ON CHILD RIGHTS

BY **UTSAH CHILD RIGHTS ORGANIZATION**,
SUPPORTED BY 

SESSION I:	SESSION II:
Child Rights with Nicole Speaker: Nicole Rangel Menezes Co-Founder, Leher, New Delhi Date: 11 th July Sun. Time: 6:00 – 7:00 p.m.	Conversations around Child Sexual Abuse with Enakshi Speaker: Enakshi Ganguly Co-founder, HAQ Centre for Child Rights, New Delhi Date: 18 th July Sun. Time: 6:00 – 7:00 p.m.
SESSION III: Rhythm for Change with Rahul Speaker: Rahul Rajkhowa Musician/Artist Date: 19 th July Mon. Time: 6:00 – 7:00 p.m.	SESSION IV: Being Cyber Safe with Harid Speaker: Harmeet Singh, IPS Addl. DOP, Assam Police Date: 18 th July Sun. Time: 6:00 – 7:00 p.m.
SESSION V: Colors for Social Change with Santanu Speaker: Santanu Hazarika Doodle/Creative Artist Date: 20 th July Tue. Time: 6:00 – 7:00 p.m.	SESSION VI: Living the IAS Dream with Ashutosh Speaker: Ashutosh Agnihotri, IAS Joint Secretary, Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India Date: 24 th July Sat. Time: 6:00 – 7:00 p.m.
SESSION VII: Keeping it Calm with Nikita Speaker: Nikita Hazarika Clinical Psychologist and Founder, Ashwina Mental Health Date: 28 th July Wed. Time: 6:00 – 7:00 p.m.	OTHER ACTIVITIES <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Open Mic Beats for Change Contest Caption Contest Poster Making

TAKEAWAYS

- Internship Certificate
- Become a Child Rights Ambassador
- LoRs


 Last date of registration: **8th July 2021**


 Registration link: <https://forms.gle/hG6bhiQWkydE58>
 UTSAH's website: www.utsahassam.org



The Sentinel

of this land, for its people

Governor releases video of poem *Okoni Okoni Boli*

■ ADVOCATES FOR STRONG DETERRENCE AGAINST CHILD TRAFFICKING

GUWAHATI, Aug 9, Assam Governor Prof. Jagdish Mukhi said that child trafficking was a social menace which threatened a nation's progress and therefore advocated for strong deterrence against child trafficking.

Releasing a video of a poem titled *Okoni Okoni Boli*, written by Partha Sarathi Mahanta, at a programme organised at Raj Bhawan here on Sunday, Governor Prof. Mukhi said that to address the problem of child trafficking, village-level child protection committees should be established and child protection mechanisms should be strengthened across the state, said a press release. He at the same time, advocated for a strong rehabilitation system along with strict law enforcement and police vigilance. Prof. Mukhi also said that prosecution of those accused of child trafficking should be prompt on a fast track basis to put a stop to the menace of child trafficking.

Prof. Mukhi also said, "Children constitute an extremely important segment of our nation. Therefore, it becomes pertinent to take special care for their protection."

Assam has 61 per cent of its population who are children and it is our prime responsibility to act responsibly and ensure an environment for their holistic development. In this context, he, however, bailed the timely intervention of Assam Police and AC Sarathi Mahanta, Secretary Home and Political Affairs, Guwahati, writer of the poem, Dr. Partha Sarathi Mahanta, along with a host of other dignitaries were present in the occasion.

The First Lady of Assam, Prem Mukhi, Commissioner of Police, Guwahati City, Harmeet Singh, Joint Vigilance and AC Sarathi Mahanta, Secretary Home and Political Affairs, Guwahati, writer of the poem, Dr. Partha Sarathi Mahanta, along with a host of other dignitaries were present in the occasion.

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8 August 2021: To raise awareness about child trafficking, we reached out to Partha Sarathi Mahanta, IPS, Joint Commissioner of Police, of Guwahati City, who is also well-known for his poetry and writings on various social issues. We requested him to articulate the pain and suffering of trafficked children through a poem, which can be published online to promote awareness. The poem "*Akani Akani Boli*" narrates the journey of a young girl trafficked around the world—abused and exploited—and her longing to return to the safety and comfort of her home. The Governor of Assam, Dr. Jagdish Mukhi, launched the poem at Raj Bhawan, amidst a host of senior dignitaries from the Government of Assam, Police, and the Civil Society.

Our Founder was presented with an award for his contribution to Child Rights and Child Protection in the Northeast of India; by DY365, a leading Assamese Satellite News Channel
22 Dec 2021.



UTSAH – Universal Team for Social Action and Help

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Partners:



Committees :

- Multidisciplinary State Level Project Approval Committee, Government of Assam
- IQAC, National Law University & Judicial Academy
- Child Protection Committee, Kamrup Metro
- Child Labour Task Force, Kamrup Metro
- Joint Task Force for Women and Children, Kamrup Metro
- Sponsorship and Foster Care Approval Committee
- Inspection Committee for Child Care Institutions
- Vigilance Committee on Bonded Labour, Kamrup Metro