



ANNUAL REPORT

2023 - 2024

UTSAH

**Universal Team for Social Action
and Help**

ASSAM | INDIA

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.

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, along with a team of Police Officers designated vide Government notification.

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	29	
2.	Number of cases carried over from previous years	99 (Statistics of carried over cases already given in the previous year's data above)	
3.	Total cases handled during 2023 - 24	128	
4.	Age and Sex profiles of victims	Male	Female
		Age: 1 to 5 years	
		1 (3%)	3 (9%)
		Age: 6 to 12 years	
		0 (0%)	9 (28%)
		Age: 12 to 18 years	
		0 (0%)	19 (59%)
5.	Accused Profile	Relationship with the Victim	%
		Romantic partner	19.51 %
		Foster Mother	2.44 %
		Foster Father	2.44 %
		Caretaker	2.44 %
		Domestic Help	2.44 %
		Cousin	2.44 %
		Employer	7.32 %
		Stranger	12.20 %
		Acquaintance	4.88 %
		Father	7.32 %
		Neighbour	12.20 %
		Piano tutor	2.44 %
		Landlord	2.44 %
		Co-tenant	2.44 %
		Maternal Grandmother	2.44 %

Highlights		
i.	Total Children supported to register Police Complaints	1
ii.	Total cases in which family counselling services have been provided	All cases
iii.	Total cases in which regular follow-ups have been made to Investigating Officers for timely completion of investigation	All Cases
iv.	Total cases in which investigation has been completed within 2 months as a result of regular follow-ups	15
v.	Total cases in which mental health support has been provided	20
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	2
viii.	Total cases in which follow-ups have been made with Special Public Prosecutor about case progress	18
ix.	Total cases in which children are being supported during appeals at the High Court	3
x.	Total cases in which children are being accompanied during evidence	1
xi.	Total cases in which children are being accompanied during bail rejection appeal	5
xii.	Total Special Relief applied in	12 cases
xiii.	Total Special Relief secured	₹ 43,000/- in 8 cases by 9 victims
xiv.	Total Interim Compensation applied in	17 cases
xv.	Total Interim Compensation secured	0
xvi.	Total Convictions	24
xvii.	Linkages with Skill Development agencies and subsequent placement (New)	0

On recommendation of the Government, Child Welfare Committee appoints us as POCSO Support Person to one the biggest cases of Child Sexual Abuse in Assam



SERVICES PROVIDED IN THE CASE

- Assistance in drafting FIR along with legal provisions
- Rescue of the two children and their placement at the Specialized Adoption Agency
- Linkage for counselling with NIMHANS & Guwahati Medical College Hospital
- Accompaniment during recording of statement before Police (161 CrPC statement)
- Accompaniment during recording of statement in front of Magistrate (164 CrPC statement)
- Arranging for education support at the Specialized Adoption Agency

Timely Investigation

Our constant follow-up with the Police, resulted in submission of Chargesheet within the stipulated legal timeline as per S. 173-1A of the Code of Criminal Procedure, India



Spoke about the violations of Child Rights in the Doctor Couple Child Sexual Abuse case, on UNTOLD – By Aboyob Bhuyan, a popular PODCAST from Assam

POCSO Centre

At the request of the Gauhati High Court, we authored an article detailing our collaboration with the court concerning advocacy efforts related to the POCSO Act. This article was published in the Assam Tribune during the 75th Anniversary celebrations of the Gauhati High Court.

8 April 2023



Conducted training of Chairpersons and Child Welfare Committee Members of all districts of Jammu & Kashmir - on the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act, 2012 (POCSO Act). Organised by J & K Government in colab with UNICEF J&K

10 May 2023



Understanding the challenges regarding the implementation of the POCSO Act, with Chairpersons and Members of Child Welfare Committee

From left: Chairperson, CWC, Nalbari; Member, CWC, Kamrup Metro; Member, CWC, Sonitpur and Chairperson, CWC, Kamrup

11 Nov 2023



Conducted an orientation on "Role of Support Person under the POCSO Act" to Para Legal Volunteers and Staff of Child Care Institutions; in a programme organised by the District Child Protection Unit of Nagaon along with District Judiciary, & chaired by District & Sessions Judge, Nagaon

16 Nov 2023



POCSO Centre

Conducted a session on Child Sexual Abuse & the POCSO Act, at a community-based programme at Nizdola village in Udalguri, Assam; organised by NEN (North East Network), a leading Women Rights organisation based in Guwahati

15 Feb 2024



Conducted a training session on POCSO Act & Rules, for Child Welfare Committees from North Eastern States; organised by NIPCCD Regional Centre, Assam (National Institute of Public Cooperation and Child Development)

16 March 2023



Took a session on POCSO Act & Procedures, at a programme organised by Govt. of Bodoland Territorial Region, in colab with NEDAN & UNICEF, in Kokrajhar.

19 March 2023



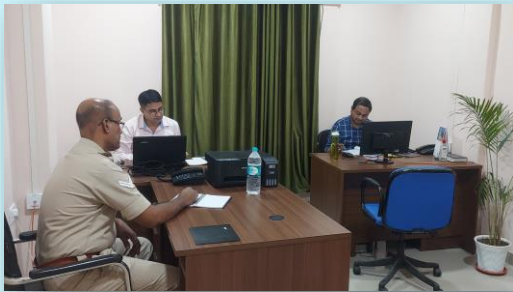
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10 May 2023



Assam Police Sishu Mitra Resource Centre (SMRC) has been allocated a permanent space

The Assam Police Sishu Mitra Resource Centre (SMRC) shifted from the one-room space to a 1200 sq. km space above the CPRO Office, opposite the Assam Police Headquarters.



A full team official appointed to run the Assam Police Sishu Mitra Programme and the Assam Police Sishu Mitra Resource Centre (SMRC):

The Assam Police Headquarter notified a full team to co-ordinate the activities under the Assam Police Sishu Mitra Programme and the Assam Police Sishu Mitra Resource Centre



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



24x7 | HELPLINE FOR POLICE

☐ 0361 2525097
☐ 0361 2525098
☐ 0361 2525099

☐ 60269-00638
☐ 60269-00637

sishu-mitra@assampolice.gov.in

262

Total Child-related cases reported

204

POCSO Act Cases reported

42

Kidnapping & Abduction Cases reported

16

Other Cases reported

A range of services were provided throughout the year through the On-call Support services

100%

FOLLOW-UP

Constant follow-up with IOs for completion of Investigation, and reminder on case deadlines

- Linkage with CWC for Medical Termination of Pregnancy (1 case)
- Linkage with Support Person (1 case)
- Process of DNA profiling (1 case)
- Age determination process (1 case)
- Accessing Sponsorship Support (1 case)
- Drafting Form 17 of the JJ Model Rules (1 case)
- Operating Missing Child Portal and drafting for M (1 case)
- Explanation on Child in Need of Care and Protection (1 case)



INPUT/SERVICE

CWC PRODUCTION
Provided feedback for production to Child Welfare Committee



FORM 17 & FORM B
Provided Form 17 of JJ Model Rules and Form B of the POCSO Rules



ACCURATE SECTION
Feed back to change previous Sections of law and replace it with new accurate Sections



SHELTER
Linkage with Child Welfare Committee for Shelter for victim children in Children's Homes

NUMBER OF CASES IN WHICH SERVICE HAS BEEN PROVIDED

112 cases (42%)

86 cases (33%)

52 cases (20%)

29 cases (8%)

OUTCOME/IMPACT

- Implementation of production of victims to Child Welfare Committee as per Proviso to S. 31(1), JJ Act
- Data gap between Police and CWC reduced

- Implementation of Proviso to Rule 18 (2), JJ Model Rules & Rule 14 (4), POCSO Rules

- Accurate data on crimes at the State Crime Records Bureau
- Appropriate punishment for the offender

- Victim children receiving safe Short-term Shelter
- Victims receiving Overnight Protective Stay as per Rule 69D(1) of the JJ Model Rules

OTHER SERVICES

- Form 17 of JJ Model Rules (15 cases)
- Contact of Child Welfare Committee (9 cases)
- Contact of District Child Protection Officer (6 cases)
- Detailed procedure in POCSO cases (5 cases)
- Relevant Sections to be inserted into FIR (5 cases)
- Form 1 of JJ Model Rules (Children In Conflict with Law (4 cases)
- Contact details of Juvenile Justice Board (4 cases)
- Missing Child Publication & Ratification process (4 cases)
- Contact of nearby Child Care Institution (3 cases)
- Linkage with Juvenile Justice Board for Overnight Shelter (3 cases)
- Only Form B of POCSO Rules (2 cases)
- Linkage with District Child Protection Unit for counselling (2 cases)
- Linkage with Childline for Shelter (2 cases)
- Drafting cover letter for Child Welfare Committee (2 cases)
- Sample of requisition letter for Medical authority (2 cases)
- Details on JJ Rule 92 Publication of missing child (2 cases)
- Rule of information to Child Welfare Committee (2 cases)
- Support in accessing Special Relief under POCSO (2 cases)

Case studies of Support Provided:

 **The Indian EXPRESS**
JOURNALISM OF COURAGE

‘Burns, cuts, broken teeth’: Army Major, wife arrested in Assam for ‘inhuman torture’ of minor domestic help

The couple, Major S K Yadav and Kimi Balun, were arrested in Halflong on September 25 after police received information about the treatment allegedly meted out to the girl – now 17 years old – on September 24.

HALFLONG CHILD ABUSE CASE

Officer and his wife recruited a minor girl from Dima Hasao to work as a domestic worker in their official residence in Palampur, Himachal Pradesh. Tragically, the minor was subjected to a range of atrocities, including physical violence, coerced alcohol consumption, mutilation of her tongue, forced nude photography, and even being made to ingest broken glass.

After the child's rescue, Dima Hasao Police sought assistance from SMRC. SMRC's support encompassed a wide array of services, including securing Special Relief from the Child Welfare Committee amounting to INR 50,000, providing feedback on the necessary penal sections to be included in the FIR, establishing connections with NIMHANS and MIND India for counseling services, offering logistical support throughout the child's medical treatment at Guwahati Medical College Hospital, aiding in the application process for Interim Compensation at the Special Court, and assisting in the submission of an application for Compensation under the SC/ST Act.

Case referred by DGP Assam

Chabua PS Case No 113/23, Dibrugarh

RULE 92 of the JJ MODEL RULES : PUBLICATION OF INFORMATION OF MISSING CHILDREN

Upon referral by the Assam DGP, SMRC was tasked with evaluating the legality of Dibrugarh Police's decision to publish a missing child's photograph on a news paper.

Following a review of the case, SMRC informed the Assam DGP on the intricacies of Rule 92(4)(vi) of the JJ Model Rules, which permits Police to disseminate information about missing children on social media and news platforms. It was underscored, however, that Police must subsequently inform the Child Welfare Committee of their actions for ratification.

Notably, exceptions were highlighted in cases involving the POCSO Act, where prior authorization from the Special Court is mandatory before any information regarding child sexual abuse victims can be shared publicly.

This information was passed on by the Assam DGP to the SP, Dibrugarh.

This case marked a significant milestone as the **first implementation of JJ Model Rule 92(4)(vi) in Assam.**

Annual Range Level Trainings:

We travelled across Assam to provide the Annual Range level Trainings on Child Rights Laws and procedures, to Investigating Officers across the Nine Police Ranges of Assam

Range-Level Annual Training on Child Rights Laws

94

Female
participants



449

Male
participants



9

RANGES :

- Central Western Range
- BTAD Range
- North Eastern Range
- Eastern Range
- Hills Range
- Central Range
- Guwahati
- Southern Range
- Northern Range

543

Police Officers
TRAINED



“There is no use of attending a training just for sake of attending a training. You must be able to make a change in the life of a child, after these trainings

JITMAL DOLEY, IPS
IGP, North Eastern Range



Pre-Service Training

We travelled to North East Police Academy (NEPA) in Meghalaya to provide training on Child Rights Laws and Procedures to the newly recruited Sub-Inspectors from Assam (who are undergoing pre-service training at NEPA)



HARMEET SINGH, IPS
Special DGP, AP (HQ)



Special Partner



SAMVAD
A Government of
India Initiative
with NIMHANS
Bangalore

331

Pre-Service
DSPs & Sub-
Inspectors
trained



5

Resource Persons:

- Harmeet Singh, IPS
- Sheila Ramaswamy – NIMHANS
- Laxminarayan Nanda - UNICEF
- Geetanjali Doley, APS
- Miguel Das Queah - UTSAH

6

Topics

- JJ Act
- POCSO Act
- PCMA
- CALPRA
- ITPA
- Forensic Interview

Pre-Promotional Trainings:

We conducted a special session on Child Rights laws and procedures for Police Officers undergoing **Pre-promotional Cadre Course (PPCC)** at the Lachit Barphukan Police Academy, Dergaon, Golaghat



161

Police Officers Trained

The 58th Pre-promotional Cadre Course was organised for Sub-Inspector level Police Officers who were being promoted to the rank of Inspector

10

Female participants

151

Male participants

Date: 11 August 2023

Venue: Lachit Barphukan Police Academy

Child Rights Week 2023:

We assisted the Assam Police to organise Child Rights Week, starting from 14 November 2023 (National Children's Day) to 20 November 2023 (World Children's Day)

Child Rights Week

14 November – 20 November | 2023

In sync with the National Campaign, Assam Police celebrated Child Rights Week, which starts on the **14 November (National Children's Day)** and culminates on the **20 November (World Children's Day)**

7-day long activities across the State

DAY 1

Essay competition on **Child Protection** announced on Assam Police Social Media handles; the results would be declared at the Assam Police Sishu Mitra Champion Awards

DAY 2



Awareness Programmes on Child Protection organised in communities and schools across the State by all SPs, OCs and SDPOs covering 1,00,000 children

DAY 3

The DGP interacts with 40 Children from 20 Children's Homes on various Child Protection issues, at the Assam Police Headquarter, following which the children were given a tour of the DGPs Office



DAY 4



Special DGP interacts with 200 children from Delhi Public School Guwahati on Child Rights & Child Protection issues, specially focusing on Online Safety

DAY 5

International Athele Hima Das interacts with 50 children from a community in Guwahati on Child Rights issues, with focus on Child Marriage



DAY 6



Special DGP, IGP (A), AIG (W) and ASP Sishu Mitra published **Informative Videos** throughout the day on Assam Police Social Media Handles (80,000 views)

DAY 7



345 Police Stations, 37 SP Offices, DGP Office & CID Office **"GO BLUE"** on **WORLD CHILDREN'S DAY**

KIDS TAKE OVER

Children from Children's Homes sit on the Official Chairs of the DGP and the Special DGP during their visit to the Assam Police HQ



Assam Police Sishu Mitra Program

Awareness through Social Media:

We developed content on various Child Protection themes, which were shared on the Assam Police Social Media handles to create large scale awareness, through the year.

30 POSTERS
Published

6000+ LIKES
On Social Media

2000+ SHARES
On Social Media



**International
American Social
Media Influencer**
(Mom_Uncharted)
made a vlog on
Assam Police'
SHARENTING
Campaign



Assam Police Sishu Mitra Program at the Supreme Court of India and the Gauhati High Court :

Director General of Police & Special Director General of Police were invited by the **Gauhati Court** to speak on Child Rights, and the Assam Police Sishu Mitra Programme, at the Juvenile Justice Consultation (Round 8), organised by the Juvenile Justice Committee, Gauhati High Court.

29 AUGUST 2023



HARMEET SINGH, IPS
Special DGP, AP (HQ)

GYANENDRA PRATAP SINGH, IPS
DGP, Assam

GAUHATI HIGH COURT

23 SEPTEMBER 2023



HARMEET SINGH, IPS
Special DGP, AP (HQ)

Special Director General of Police was invited to speak on Child Friendly Policing and the Assam Police Sishu Mitra Programme, at the National Juvenile Justice Consultation organised by the **Supreme Court of India**, in New Delhi

SUPREME COURT OF INDIA

Assam Police Sishu Mitra Program



22 Apr 2023: On special request of SP of Barpeta, we oriented the Women Police Officers of Barpeta District on Child Protection Laws and Procedures

30 May 2023: On special request of SP of Government Railway Police (GRP), we trained all GRP Officers from Assam on Child Rights Laws

23 Aug 2023: We drafted the Special Juvenile Police Unit Order, which was notified by the Govt. of Assam

11 Oct 2023: Two Women Officers lead a session on Girl Child Protection on International Day of the Girl Child in TC Girls School, Guwahati

Assam Police Sishu Mitra Programme in the Media:



14 June 2023: Orientation of Leading Journalists on Child Protection and Media at Guwahati, Assam



27 Aug 2023: Sonal Mansingh, Padma Vibhushan, and group performed in solidarity with UTSAHs Sashakti Program



24 Sep 2023: Spoke on Child Protection at a National Level Panel Discussion, hosted by Pratidin Time, a leading Assam based News Channel, in New Delhi



16 Nov 2023: TOPCEM cement collaborated with us to distribute school stationary to Children's Organisations across Guwahati.



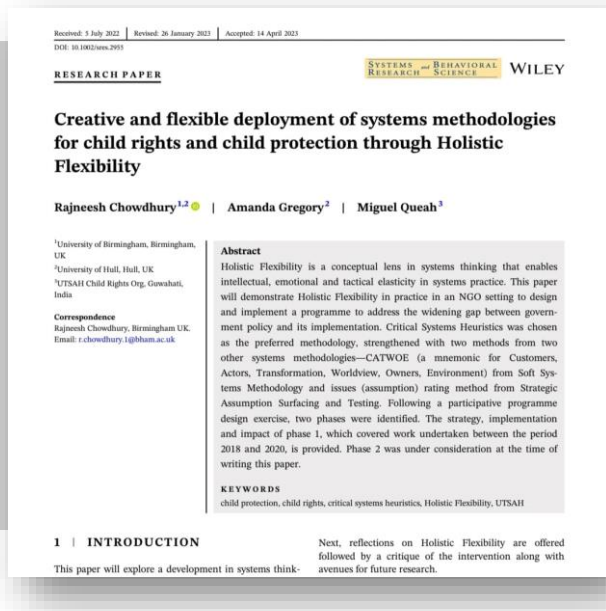
25 Feb 2023: Spoke on Child Protection at a conclave, organised by Integrated Network of Youth-Assam, at ADP College, Nagaon



HIGHLIGHT

Publication on WILEY:

Co-authored as article on “Creative and flexible deployment of systems methodologies for child rights and child protection through Holistic Flexibility”, with Rajneesh Chowdhury, University of Birmingham and Amanda Gregory, University of Hull, UK



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