

Annual Report

2022 -2023

Deshabandhu Club

Core Values of Deshabandhu Club

Respect

We believe in and appreciate the dignity and potential of all human beings.

Integrity

We maintain social, ethical, and organizational norms, adhering strictly to our code of conduct.

Commitment

We fulfil our organizational goals with unwavering dedication to our duties and responsibilities.

Excellence

We set high performance standards, holding ourselves accountable and responsible for our work.

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Message from President

Dear Friends, Followers, and Patrons,

I am delighted to present the Integrated Annual Report for the year 2022-23, marking the 57th annual report since our organization was established 57 years ago. This significant milestone reflects a mammoth journey filled with accomplishments, and I feel immense gratification to have been part of this endeavour, working closely with the community on various impactful activities.

Throughout our journey, we have engaged with a diverse array of individuals, including intellectuals, bureaucrats, activists, community leaders, and local residents. Each interaction has enriched our experience and contributed to our growth.

Our commitment to realizing projects in harmony with the customs, religions, and ideas of local populations is paramount. We prioritize sustainability, not just as a fashionable term but as a concrete principle that guides our actions. True sustainable development is possible only when systems implement pro-people policies, and we work together with shared goals in mind.

To address the basic needs of the local population, we tackle pressing issues such as water management during floods and aiding farmers to increase their crop yields. Our approach motivates local populations to actively participate in designing our projects, particularly in the Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) program, aiming to create a future that ensures long-term happiness and stability for all.

This work is supported by national and international NGOs and the government, and it continues to inspire us to carry out our activities with renewed spirit and dedication.

Thank you for your continued support and partnership.

Sincerely,

Dr Sanjib Sikidar

About Deshabandhu Club: A Pillar of Community Development in South Assam

Established in 1966, Deshabandhu Club has emerged as a premier organization in South Assam, committed to fostering participatory, transparent, and accountable governance. The organization's core mandate revolves around empowering marginalized communities by addressing their needs through capacity building, project implementation, and research.

Deshabandhu Club focuses on enhancing the capabilities of marginalized groups by organizing workshops, seminars, and implementing various social projects. This engagement has equipped the organization with profound insights into community dynamics and needs.

As a Mother NGO (MNGO), Deshabandhu Club has collaborated with 18 Field NGOs (FNGOs) to implement the Reproductive & Child Health (RCH) program across four districts in Assam, achieving significant milestones in the field. The organization's exemplary work in promoting Self-Help Groups (SHGs) earned it the Best NGO Award in Assam from the National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) for two consecutive years (2000-01 & 2001-02).

Partnering with the Assam Rural Infrastructure and Agricultural Services Project (ARIASP), Deshabandhu Club has managed, coordinated, and implemented World Bank-aided projects. It has also monitored the performance of related line departments across three districts in the Barak Valley.

Deshabandhu Club leads pioneering efforts in Assam's fight against HIV/AIDS. The organization runs targeted intervention projects for female sex workers and MSM (men who have sex with men), alongside a Care and Support Centre (CSC) for people living with HIV/AIDS since 2008.

Through ChildLine 1098, the organization rescues and protects vulnerable children in two districts, achieving significant outcomes in child welfare. Focusing on women's empowerment, Deshabandhu Club executes livelihood projects in collaboration with USHA International, aimed at reducing women's financial dependence and improving their quality of life through sustainable livelihoods.

Operating a special school named Disha for mentally challenged children since 2003. Community-Based Rehabilitation (CBR) Initiated in 2008 with support from the CBR Forum, focusing on integrating disabled individuals into the community. The organization also manages SAMARTH, a respite home for persons with disabilities (PWDs), and a Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) program supported by UNICEF.

Deshabandhu Club's extensive experience and initiatives have significantly contributed to the socio-economic development of South Assam. Its multi-faceted approach towards community empowerment, health, child protection, and disability support highlights its crucial role in fostering inclusive growth and sustainable development in the region.

Basic information

Vision

To create a society where every citizen avails basic needs and services so as to have a life.

Mission Statement

Deshabandhu club exists to bring the socio economic development of the citizens particularly to women & children of Assam and would like to provide cost effective, sustainable, peoples' friendly health, education, economic empowerment and rural.

Legal status

Registered under Society registration Act XXI of 1860, foreign contribution regulation act, 1976, PWD Act 1995, section 12(A) & 80(G) of IT Act, 1961 and National Trust Act.

Aims and Objectives

1. To promote the cause of national integration and communal harmony in a best possible means.
2. To develop scientific temperament among the rural people through seminar, symposium, discussion, folk entertainment and audio visual aid.
3. To make the people aware about population explosion and encourage them to accept small family norms.
4. To provide basic medical relief to families particularly old women and children residing in the remote & inaccessible areas.
5. To help the relevant Governments & Non-Governments agencies in the implementation of various socio-economic and refundable assistance at the grassroots level.
6. To help & rehabilitate all types of disable persons.
7. To create health awareness among the rural people for preventive measures.
8. To uplift the socio economic status of rural masses, the organization may Provide training self from any outside agency as per objectives of the Program of that agency and the organization.
9. To conscious to the rural people on small savings.
- 10.To promote sports & culture in the rural area

Programs

1. Samarth Respite Care for mentally Challenged Children

The Samarth Centre has been established with the mission of providing both respite and residential care for specific categories of Persons with Disabilities (PwD). This facility is a part of the Samarth scheme, which seeks to support PwDs who are orphans, abandoned, from families in crisis, or from Below Poverty Line (BPL) and Low Income Group (LIG) families, including destitute individuals. The focus is on those with at least one of the four disabilities covered under the National Trust Act. The scheme also aims to offer relief to family members, giving them the opportunity to attend to other responsibilities while their loved ones are well cared for.

Facilities at Samarth Centre

Group Home

The group home facility at Samarth Centre is designed to accommodate individuals of all age groups, providing a safe and nurturing environment. Each Centre has the capacity to house 30 individuals, including those who are not from LIG or BPL families. Basic medical care is available, with professional doctors attending to the medical needs of the residents, ensuring that their health is closely monitored and managed.

Vocational Activities

The Centre offers a range of age-specific vocational activities aimed at enhancing the skills and employability of the residents. These activities are tailored to meet the needs of individuals and include pre-vocational training, schooling assistance, and other educational support on a case-by-case basis. This approach ensures that each resident receives the necessary training and support to develop their abilities and achieve greater independence.

Assessment and Evaluation= A key component of the Centre's services is the regular assessment and evaluation of children by Special Educators. These professionals conduct thorough evaluations to understand each child's unique needs and track their progress through development charts. This continuous monitoring helps in tailoring educational and therapeutic interventions to better support the growth and development of each PwD.

Local Level Committee for Legal Guardianship

The organization managing the Samarth Centre is registered under the National Trust and is an active member of the Local Level Committee (LLC) in Cachar and Hailakanadi. The Centre has established effective coordination with the district administration, resulting in the issuance of five legal guardianship certificates to the parents of PwDs. This legal framework ensures that the rights and needs of the PwDs are legally protected and that they receive appropriate care and support.

Supplementary Activities

In addition to the primary services, the Samarth Centre offers a variety of supplementary programs designed to enhance the overall well-being and development of the residents. These programs include: Engaging in physical activities and sports to promote physical health and teamwork. Providing musical training and activities to foster creativity and emotional expression. Offering dance sessions to improve physical coordination and self-expression. Encouraging participation in drama to build confidence and communication skills. Conducting art and craft workshops to enhance fine motor skills and creativity. These supplementary activities are tailored to match the skills and abilities of the residents, ensuring that each individual can participate and benefit from them according to their capacity.

2. CHILDLINE 1098: A Partnership for Child Welfare

Deshabandhu Club has established itself as a major organization dedicated to the welfare of children by building robust networks and working closely with various stakeholders. The club's efforts in collaborating with children, their families, local communities, schools, social services, and law enforcement agencies have resulted in creating a supportive and comprehensive network aimed at addressing and resolving the issues faced by children. Through these efforts, Deshabandhu Club ensures that the needs and rights of children are met with a concerted and collaborative approach.

CHILDLINE 1098: An Ideal of Hope

CHILDLINE 1098 is a critical lifeline for children across India, providing a 24/7, year-round free emergency phone service for children in need. This service not only addresses immediate emergencies but also connects children to necessary long-term care and rehabilitation services. For many children, CHILDLINE 1098 represents hope and a pathway to safety and support.

Deshabandhu Club's Role in CHILDLINE 1098 Service

Since May 2012 in Silchar and April 2018 in Hailakandi, Deshabandhu Club has been a partner organization in executing the CHILDLINE 1098 service. This collaboration with the Childline Foundation has enabled Deshabandhu Club to extend its reach and impact, providing essential services to children in distress.

Key Services Provided by CHILDLINE 1098

Call 1098

CHILDLINE 1098 operates round-the-clock, allowing any child or concerned adult to seek help. The helpline ensures that assistance is always available, providing a critical first point of contact for those in need.

Connected to CHILDLINE Centre:

Once a call is received, the CHILDLINE centre gathers detailed information about the situation. This data collection is crucial for understanding the nature of the distress and planning an appropriate response.

Rescue in 60 Minutes:

CHILDLINE prioritizes rapid response, aiming to reach children in distress within 60 minutes of receiving enough information. This swift action is vital for the safety and well-being of the children.

Intervention: CHILDLINE's intervention process involves collaboration with multiple stakeholders, including police authorities, child protection boards, social workers, and counselors. The consent and participation of the child are central to the intervention, ensuring that their voices are heard and respected throughout the process.

Rehabilitation and Follow-Up

Post-intervention, CHILDLINE focuses on long-term rehabilitation for the child, which may involve family visits or placement in shelters. Continuous follow-up is conducted to ensure the child's ongoing safety and well-being, demonstrating a commitment to sustained support.

Through its partnership with CHILDLINE 1098, Deshabandhu Club has significantly contributed to the safety and welfare of children in distress. By working closely with various stakeholders and maintaining a strong network of support, the club ensures that children receive immediate help and long-term care. The collaboration between Deshabandhu Club and CHILDLINE 1098 exemplifies a model of effective child protection and advocacy, bringing hope and tangible aid to vulnerable children

3. Prevention of New STI & HIV Infections among FSW, MSM, and IDUs: The Role of Deshabandhu Club in Barak Valley

Since 2007, Deshabandhu Club has been at the forefront of HIV/AIDS prevention efforts in the Barak Valley region of Assam. With support from the Assam State AIDS Control Society (ASACS) and the National AIDS Control Organization (NACO), Deshabandhu Club has implemented a comprehensive Targeted Intervention (TI) project focusing on preventing new STI and HIV infections among Female Sex Workers (FSW), Men who have Sex with Men (MSM), and Injecting Drug Users (IDUs) in the Cachar and Karimganj districts. This initiative

is crucial in combating the spread of HIV/AIDS in high-risk populations and fostering a supportive environment for affected individuals.

Objectives of the TI Project

- **Promotion and Sustained Use of Condoms:** By educating and mobilizing the community, the project seeks to ensure consistent and correct condom use among FSWs, MSMs, and IDUs. This effort helps reduce the risk of STI/HIV transmission.
- **Community Mobilization and Participation:** Encouraging active participation from the community to develop a sense of ownership and responsibility towards HIV/AIDS prevention.
- **Reduction of STI/STD Vulnerability:** Implementing strategies to decrease the incidence of sexually transmitted infections among high-risk groups, thereby reducing their susceptibility to HIV.
- **Creation of an Enabling Environment:** Establishing a supportive and stigma-free environment that mitigates the impact of HIV/AIDS on the targeted populations.

Target Population -Deshabandhu Club engages with approximately 780 communities of FSWs and MSMs in Cachar District and 420 communities of FSWs and IDUs in Karimganj District. These groups are provided with essential services and support to reduce their risk of STI and HIV infections.

Services Provided to the Community

The TI project offers a range of services designed to address the specific needs of FSWs, MSMs, and IDUs.

- **Behaviour Change Communication (BCC):** Delivering targeted BCC services to promote safer sexual practices among FSWs, MSMs, and IDUs. This includes education on the importance of condom use, harm reduction practices, and awareness of STI/HIV risks.
- **STI Treatment and Counselling:** Providing access to high-quality STI treatment and counselling services to ensure that individuals receive appropriate medical care and support.
- **Distribution of Condoms, Lubricants, and Needles/Syringes:** Ensuring the availability of condoms and lubricants for FSWs and MSMs, and clean needles and syringes for IDUs to prevent the transmission of HIV and other infections.
- **Creating an Enabling Environment:** Working with all stakeholders to foster an environment that supports the goals of the TI project, reduces stigma, and promotes the health and well-being of the target populations.
- **Capacity Building of Peer Educators and Core Groups:** Training peer educators and core group members to address risk behaviours within their communities. This empowers community members to take an active role in HIV prevention efforts.

- **Establishing Linkages with Care and Support Services:** Connecting PLHA (People Living with HIV/AIDS) and members of the TI core groups with necessary care and support services, including medical, psychological, and social support.
- **Community Mobilization for Ownership Development:** Engaging the core group community to develop a sense of ownership over the intervention strategies and outcomes, ensuring sustainability and effectiveness of the project.

Deshabandhu Club's targeted intervention project in the Barak Valley represents a significant effort in preventing the spread of HIV and STIs among high-risk populations. By providing comprehensive services, fostering community participation, and creating an enabling environment, the project not only aims to reduce the incidence of new infections but also to improve the overall health and well-being of FSWs, MSMs, and IDUs in the Cachar and Karimganj districts. With continued support from ASACS and NACO, Deshabandhu Club remains a pioneer in the fight against HIV/AIDS in this region

4. Enhancing Hope and Life: Deshabandhu Club's Tireless Efforts for PLHIV through the Vihaan Project

Vihaan Project: A Comprehensive Approach to PLHIV Care

Since 2012, the Deshabandhu Club has been a hope for People Living with HIV (PLHIV), working tirelessly to enhance their lives and provide them with the support they need. Central to these efforts is the Vihaan Project, an initiative supported by Alliance India HIV/AIDS, aimed at scaling up care, support, and treatment services for PLHIV.

The Vihaan Project is an integral part of the national initiative to offer holistic care and support services to PLHIV. Through its Care and Support Centre (CSC), the project seeks to expand access to essential services, support treatment adherence, reduce stigma and discrimination, and ultimately improve the quality of life for those living with HIV/AIDS.

Goals and Objectives

The primary goal of the Vihaan Project is to enhance the survival rates and quality of life of PLHIV. To achieve this, the project has outlined several key objectives:

Early Linkages to Care, Support, and Treatment Services: Ensuring that PLHIV are connected to the necessary medical and support services as soon as possible.

Improving Treatment Adherence and Education: Educating PLHIV about the importance of adhering to their treatment regimens and providing continuous support to maintain this adherence.

Expanded Positive Prevention Activities: Promoting activities that prevent the spread of HIV and encourage positive health practices among PLHIV.

Improved Social Protection and Well-being: Enhancing the social support systems available to PLHIV to ensure their overall well-being. **Strengthened Community Systems and Reduced Stigma and Discrimination:** Building stronger community support systems and actively working to reduce the stigma and discrimination faced by PLHIV.

Operation Areas

The Deshabandhu Club's efforts through the Vihaan Project are concentrated in South Assam, specifically in the districts of Cachar, Hailakandi, Karimganj, and Dima Hasao. These areas have been identified based on the need for intensive support and care services for PLHIV.

Key Activities and Support Mechanisms

ART Medicine Dispensing

One of the critical services provided by the CSC is the dispensing of Antiretroviral Therapy (ART) medicines. Ensuring that PLHIV have consistent and reliable access to ART is essential for maintaining their health and preventing the progression of HIV.

Support Group Meetings (SGM)

Support Group Meetings are a cornerstone of the program, offering PLHIV a platform to share their experiences, gain knowledge on HIV-related issues, and learn coping strategies. These meetings foster a sense of community and mutual support, which is vital for the psychological well-being of PLHIV.

Convergence Meetings

To further the program's reach and effectiveness, convergence meetings are organized. These meetings bring together various stakeholders, including healthcare providers,

community leaders, and government officials, to coordinate efforts, share insights, and develop strategies to better support PLHIV.

Indicators of Success

The success of the Vihaan Project is measured through various indicators, which include:

- The number of PLHIV linked to care, support, and treatment services.
- Improvement in treatment adherence rates.
- Increased participation in positive prevention activities.
- Enhanced social protection measures for PLHIV.
- Reduced instances of stigma and discrimination within the community.

The Deshabandhu Club, through the Vihaan Project, has made significant strides in supporting PLHIV in South Assam and Dima Hasao. By focusing on early linkages to care, improving treatment adherence, and fostering community support, the project has helped improve the lives of many PLHIV. The ongoing efforts to reduce stigma and enhance social protection further contribute to creating a more inclusive and supportive environment for all individuals living with HIV/AIDS.

5. Empowering Women through Sustainability: Deshabandhu Club and USHA International

Deshabandhu Club, with a steadfast commitment to the empowerment and sustainability of rural and marginalized women, has embarked on a transformative journey in collaboration with USHA International. The initiative, known as "USHA Salai Schools," aims to equip women with vital skills in sewing and stitching, fostering both economic independence and social inclusion. This program is particularly impactful in the North Eastern region of India, covering areas such as Barak Valley, Manipur, Mizoram, and Tripura.

USHA Salai Schools are specialized institutions designed to teach girls and women in villages the art of sewing. These schools are not merely training centers but hubs of entrepreneurship, operated and maintained by women using USHA sewing machines. The primary objectives of the Salai School program include:

Creating Livelihood Opportunities: By learning sewing and stitching, women can generate income, thus achieving financial independence. **Reviving Sewing as a Hobby:** Beyond economic benefits, the program aims to rekindle the traditional craft of sewing, making it a cherished and sustainable hobby.

Training and Curriculum : In a typical Salai School, learners are imparted comprehensive training in various aspects of sewing, embroidery, and even the servicing of sewing machines. Upon completion of the course, learners receive certificates from USHA International, which serve as a testament to their newly acquired skills and enhance their credibility as trained professionals.

Geographic Focus and Impact : Since its inception in 2014, the USHA Salai Schools program has made significant strides in the North Eastern region of India. The program is active in: Barak Valley, Manipur, Mizoram and Tripura

By focusing on these areas, the program addresses the specific needs of communities that have traditionally been underserved, ensuring that the benefits of economic empowerment and sustainability reach those who need them the most.

Deshabandhu Club's collaboration with USHA International through the USHA Salai Schools program exemplifies a holistic approach to women's empowerment. By combining empathy, empowerment, inclusion, and sustainability, the initiative not only enhances the economic prospects of rural and marginalized women but also fosters a sense of community and cultural revival. Through these efforts, Deshabandhu Club and USHA International are paving the way for a brighter, more equitable future for women in the North Eastern region of India

6. Deshabandhu Club's Capacity Building Initiative in Collaboration with UNICEF, DDMA, and P&RD in Cachar District

The Deshabandhu Club, a prominent community organization dedicated to grassroots development and empowerment, has initiated a comprehensive capacity-building program in Cachar district, Assam. This initiative, with the robust support of UNICEF and in collaboration with the District Disaster Management Authority (DDMA) and the Panchayat & Rural Development (P&RD) department, aims to enhance the capabilities of Panchayati Raj Institution (PRI) members and Self-Help Group (SHG) members. The program focuses on several critical areas including Bhal Sabha & Mahila Sabha, Risk-Informed Gram Panchayat Development Plan (GPDP), disaster risk reduction, and social protection entitlements.

The primary objectives of this capacity-building initiative are multifaceted:

Empower Local Governance Structures:

Strengthen the role of PRI members in local governance through enhanced understanding and effective execution of Bhal Sabha (Good Governance Meetings) and Mahila Sabha (Women's Meetings).

Disaster Preparedness and Risk Reduction: Equip local leaders and community groups with the knowledge and tools to incorporate disaster risk reduction strategies into the GPDP.

Enhance Social Protection Awareness: Increase awareness about social protection entitlements and ensure effective access and utilization by community members.

Promote Inclusive Participation: Foster greater involvement of women and marginalized groups in local governance and development processes.

Key Components of the Training Program

Bhal Sabha & Mahila Sabha

Bhal Sabha and Mahila Sabha are crucial forums within the Panchayati Raj system, promoting participatory governance and ensuring that community voices, especially those of women, are heard and considered in decision-making processes. The training sessions emphasize the significance of these Sabhas, procedural guidelines, and strategies to ensure meaningful participation and representation. Enhanced effectiveness and regularity of Bhal Sabha and Mahila Sabha, leading to more transparent and accountable local governance.

Risk-Informed Gram Panchayat Development Plan (GPDP)

Integrating risk-informed strategies into the GPDP is essential for sustainable and resilient community development. Participants are trained to identify local risks and vulnerabilities, incorporate disaster risk reduction measures, and ensure that development plans are sustainable and resilient to natural calamities. Development of GPDPs that are not only holistic and inclusive but also mitigate potential risks and enhance community resilience.

Disaster Risk Reduction

Given Assam's vulnerability to natural disasters, it is imperative for local leaders to be well-versed in disaster risk reduction. Comprehensive disaster management training, covering risk assessment, preparedness, response, and recovery. Emphasis is placed on practical skills and community-based disaster management strategies. A cadre of trained PRI and SHG members capable of leading disaster preparedness and response efforts at the community level.

Social Protection Entitlements

Awareness and access to social protection schemes are critical for the socio-economic development of rural communities. Detailed information on various social protection entitlements available to the community, eligibility criteria, and application procedures. Special focus on schemes for women, children, and marginalized groups Increased uptake of social protection entitlements, leading to improved livelihoods and socio-economic conditions of the beneficiaries.

Implementation Strategy

The program adopts a multi-faceted approach to ensure effective capacity building:

Workshops and Training Sessions: Conducted at the block and district levels, these sessions involve expert trainers and use a mix of lectures, interactive sessions, and practical exercises.

Resource Materials: Development and distribution of comprehensive training manuals, guides, and informational booklets tailored to the local context.

Follow-up and Support: Continuous support and follow-up sessions to address challenges faced by the participants and reinforce the training imparted.

Collaboration and Support

The success of this initiative is driven by the collaboration between Deshabandhu Club, UNICEF, DDMA, and P&RD:UNICEF provides technical support, expertise, and resources to ensure the training content is relevant and impactful. DDMA, Cachar offers insights into local disaster risks and ensures the integration of disaster risk reduction strategies into the training modules and P&RD, Cachar facilitates the involvement of PRI members and SHGs, ensuring that the training reaches the intended beneficiaries and aligns with local development policies.

Impact and Future Prospects

This capacity-building initiative is expected to create a significant impact in Cachar district by: Enhancing the governance capabilities of PRI members .Ensuring better preparedness and resilience against disasters. Promoting equitable access to social protection schemes. Empowering women and marginalized communities to actively participate in local governance. By fostering a culture of informed decision-making and inclusive participation, the initiative aims to build a more resilient and empowered community in Cachar district, setting a precedent for similar programs in other regions.

Name of Executive Body Members / Management Committee members

Sl no	Name	Designation
1	Dr. Sanjib Sikidar	President
2	Nibash Das	Vice-President
3	Ajit Roy Choudhry	Secretary
4	Kanailal Bhattacharjee	Organizing Secretary
5	Bimal Chandra Dey	It. Secretary
6	Rabindra NarayanAcharjee	Jt. Secretary
7	Jayanta Roy Choidhury	Jt. Secretary
8	Abhijit Chakroborty	Jt. Secretary
9	Kamona Devi	Jt. Secretary
10	Bijoy Bhushan Das	Member
11	Biplab kar Choudhury	Member
12	Prodip Goswami	Member
13	Sabyasachi Sikidar	Member
14	Marik Malakar	Member
15	Subir Kumar Das	Member
16	Utpal Kanti Nath	Member
17	Lila Bati Das	Member
18	Saidur RahmanBarbhuiya	Member
19	Ranendu Chakraborty	Member
20	Madhumita Bhattacharjee	Member
21	Tarun Saha	Member