

Annual Report -2023-24 Deshabandhu Club



Annual Report

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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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Dear Friends, Followers, and Patrons,

I am delighted to present the Integrated Annual Report for the year 2023-24, marking the **58th annual report** since our organization was established 58 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.

President's Desk

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. These collaborations have not only broadened our vision but have also helped us understand the needs and aspirations of the communities we serve. The synergy between all stakeholders has made our progress possible.

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. Sustainability, for us, is not only about environmental conservation but also about the long-term social and economic well-being of the communities we serve.

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. Engaging communities in every step of the process ensures that our projects are relevant, effective, and embraced by the people who benefit from them.

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. Their continued collaboration strengthens our resolve and enables us to make a tangible difference in the lives of those who need it most.

Thank you for your continued support and partnership. Together, we can continue to make progress and create a brighter future for all.

Sincerely,
Dr. Sanjib Sikidar

About Deshabandhu Club

Basic Information

Vision

To create a society where every citizen avails basic needs and services to lead a dignified life.

Mission Statement

Deshabandhu Club exists to promote the socio-economic development of citizens, with a special focus on women and children in Assam. The organization is committed to delivering cost-effective, sustainable, and people-friendly solutions in the areas of health, education, economic empowerment, and rural development.

Legal Status

Deshabandhu Club is a legally registered organization under the following acts:

- **Society Registration Act XXI of 1860**
- **Foreign Contribution Regulation Act, 1976**
- **Persons with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation) Act, 1995**
- **Section 12(A) and 80(G) of the Income Tax Act, 1961**
- **The National Trust Act for the Welfare of Persons with Autism, Cerebral Palsy, Mental Retardation, and Multiple Disabilities.**

Deshabandhu Club, founded in 1966, is one of the oldest and most respected non-governmental organizations in South Assam, with a distinguished legacy of over five decades in community development, social transformation, and humanitarian response. Since its inception, the organization has remained steadfast in its mission to promote participatory, transparent, and accountable governance, with a strong focus on improving the socio-economic conditions of marginalized and vulnerable communities. Headquartered in Silchar, the Club has expanded its reach across the Barak Valley and neighboring districts, addressing critical issues related to health, education, livelihood, child protection, disaster resilience, and social inclusion.

Rooted in the values of equity, justice, and sustainability, Deshabandhu Club envisions a society where all individuals, regardless of their background or circumstance, enjoy equal rights, access to opportunities, and a dignified standard of living. The organization works extensively with women, children, farmers, persons with disabilities, and disaster-affected populations to empower them through grassroots interventions and policy-level advocacy. It has been instrumental in designing and implementing innovative and inclusive programs that respond to the evolving needs of communities, particularly in disaster-prone and socio-economically backward areas.

Over the years, Deshabandhu Club has established itself as a trusted development partner of various government departments, national and international NGOs, UN agencies, academic institutions, and the private sector. It has served as a Mother NGO for the Reproductive and Child Health (RCH) programme, playing a pivotal role in strengthening maternal and child health services in underserved areas. In the field of public health, the organization has also been a pioneer in implementing HIV/AIDS prevention and awareness initiatives under the Assam State AIDS Control Society (ASACS), reaching high-risk and vulnerable groups through focused interventions.

Education and child protection form another core area of Deshabandhu Club's work. The organization had been executed the Childline 1098 service in Cachar district, ensuring timely rescue, counseling, and rehabilitation for children in distress. It has also worked closely with education authorities and local communities to identify and support out-of-school children, promote child rights, and prevent child labor and trafficking.

In the area of women empowerment, Deshabandhu Club has promoted the formation and capacity-building of self-help groups (SHGs), many of which have now evolved into vibrant women-led enterprises. For two consecutive years, the organization received the Best NGO Award from NABARD for

Aims and Objectives of Deshabandhu Club

- To promote the cause of national integration and communal harmony through all possible means.
- To develop scientific temperament among rural people through seminars, symposia, discussions, folk entertainment, and audio-visual aids.
- To raise awareness about population explosion and encourage the adoption of small family norms.
- To provide basic medical relief to families, particularly elderly women and children, living in remote and inaccessible areas.
- To support Government and Non-Governmental agencies in the implementation of socio-economic programs and refundable assistance at the grassroots level.
- To assist and rehabilitate persons with disabilities across all categories.
- To create health awareness among rural populations, with a focus on preventive healthcare measures.
- To uplift the socio-economic status of rural communities through skill development and training, either directly or in collaboration with external agencies.
- To promote awareness and practice of small savings among rural people.
- To encourage and promote sports and cultural activities in rural areas

its outstanding work in promoting rural livelihoods and financial inclusion. With the support of USHA International and other private partners, it has also conducted skill development programs to enhance the employability and self-reliance of women and adolescent girls.

A key highlight of Deshabandhu Club's recent work has been its leadership in disaster risk reduction (DRR) and humanitarian response. Recognizing the increasing frequency and intensity of climate-induced disasters in the Barak Valley, the organization has taken proactive steps to build community resilience through early warning systems, relief and rehabilitation efforts, and capacity-building of local institutions. In collaboration with UNICEF and other stakeholders, it has implemented several interventions to ensure safe drinking water, hygiene promotion, psychosocial support, and social protection access for flood-affected communities. The launch of Community Facilitation and Resource Centres (CFRCs) in the most vulnerable Gaon Panchayats has been a major step in decentralizing services and strengthening last-mile delivery. These CFRCs act as crucial nodes for information dissemination, grievance redressal, enrollment in welfare schemes, and disaster preparedness planning, especially for persons with disabilities and other at-risk groups.

Deshabandhu Club has also played an active role in building networks and coalitions for collective action. It is a key member of the Barak Valley Inter Agency Group (IAG), regularly convening platforms for dialogue, training, and coordination among civil society organizations, government officials, and community leaders. Through its strong cadre of trained volunteers, community resource persons, and dedicated staff, the organization continues to carry out its mission with unwavering commitment and integrity.

CFRCs act as crucial nodes for information dissemination, grievance redressal, enrolment in welfare schemes, and disaster preparedness planning, especially for persons with disabilities .and other at-risk groups

Today, as it enters its 58th year of service, Deshabandhu Club stands as a inspiration of hope, resilience, and innovation in the development sector. Its journey reflects not just the story of an institution, but the collective strength and aspirations of the countless lives it has touched. With a renewed sense of purpose and partnership, the organization remains committed to building a more just, inclusive, and resilient society in the years to come.



Samarth Respite Care for Mentally Challenged Children

A Detailed Overview

The **Samarth Centre**, a key disability-focused initiative of **Deshabandhu Club**, is a specialized facility providing **respite and residential care** for mentally challenged children under the **Samarth Scheme of the National Trust**. Established in **2019**, this centre represents a **joint effort between Deshabandhu Club and the Disha Parents Association for Mentally Challenged Children of South Assam**. The Disha Parents Association, formed in **2003**, was itself a significant initiative supported by Deshabandhu

Club, aimed at strengthening the rights and support systems for children with mental disabilities in the region.

The Samarth Centre specifically caters to children affected by one or more of the four disabilities recognized under the **National Trust Act**—**Autism, Cerebral Palsy, Mental Retardation, and Multiple Disabilities**. It particularly supports children who are **orphaned, abandoned, or belong to Below Poverty Line (BPL) or Low-Income Group (LIG) families**, ensuring they receive care in a safe, structured, and inclusive environment.

Key Features of the Samarth Centre:

1. Group Home:

The Samarth Centre operates a **well-maintained group home** with the capacity to accommodate **up to 30 residents**. The facility ensures a **safe, structured, and nurturing environment** for children and young adults with special needs. Residents receive **basic healthcare services** through regular visits from qualified medical professionals, ensuring close monitoring of their physical and mental well-being.

2. Vocational Activities:

To promote **self-reliance and life skills**, the centre offers **age- and ability-specific vocational and pre-vocational training**. These activities include **crafts, basic functional education, household**

+**management**, and **creative skills training**, which help the children enhance their functional abilities and develop confidence in carrying out daily tasks.

3. Personalized Assessments:

The centre employs **trained special educators** who carry out **regular assessments** of each resident using **developmental charts and behavioral observation tools**. These assessments help design **individualized educational and therapeutic interventions** that cater to the unique needs of each child, ensuring that they are given the best possible support for their cognitive and emotional growth.

4. Legal Guardianship Support:

Deshabandhu Club is a registered **member of the Local Level Committee (LLC)** under the National Trust in both **Cachar and Hailakandi districts**. It plays a pivotal role in helping families secure **legal guardianship certificates**, enabling parents or guardians to make informed decisions on behalf of their wards. So far, the centre has successfully facilitated the issuance of **five legal guardianship certificates**, contributing to a more secure and rights-based care system.

5. Holistic Development Activities:

The Centre recognizes that holistic development is key to the well-being of children with mental challenges. Hence, it offers a range of **supplementary programs** that include:

- **Music therapy and training** to aid sensory and emotional development.
- **Dance sessions** for physical coordination and self-expression.
- **Drama and role-play** for building confidence and improving social interaction.
- **Art and craft workshops** to enhance creativity and fine motor skills.
- **Physical exercise and sports** to improve stamina, motor coordination, and teamwork.





These activities are designed to be inclusive and responsive to each child's interests and capabilities, ensuring a **joyful and participatory learning environment**.

Impact and Vision

The **Samarth Respite Care Program** run by Deshabandhu Club stands as a **model of compassionate, community-driven care** for children with mental disabilities in South Assam. By offering a **blend of caregiving, skill development, legal support, and emotional**

enrichment, the Samarth Centre not only **relieves families and caregivers** but also **empowers children to live dignified, meaningful, and fulfilling lives**

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 a key player in the fight against HIV/AIDS in the Barak Valley region of Assam. Operating under the aegis of the Assam State AIDS Control Society (ASACS) and the National AIDS Control Organization (NACO), the Club has been implementing a robust and community-driven **Targeted Intervention (TI) project**. This initiative specifically addresses the urgent need to prevent new HIV and sexually transmitted infection (STI) cases among **Female Sex Workers (FSWs), Men who have Sex with Men (MSMs), and Injecting Drug Users (IDUs)**—three groups that are most vulnerable to HIV transmission due to the nature of their risk exposures.

A Community-Centered Approach to Prevention

The primary objective of Deshabandhu Club's TI project is to contain and reduce the transmission of new HIV and STI infections among these high-risk populations. Recognizing that traditional health interventions may not adequately reach these marginalized groups, the project adopts a peer-led, rights-based, and health-focused approach that promotes **behavioural change, community empowerment, and access to essential health services**.



One of the foundational pillars of the project is the **promotion of consistent and correct condom use**. Through regular sensitization sessions, demonstrations, and outreach programs, beneficiaries are educated on the importance of condom usage not only as a method of contraception but also as a key defense against HIV and other STIs. The project also strongly emphasizes **community ownership**, ensuring that members of FSW, MSM, and IDU communities are not merely recipients of services but active participants in designing and leading interventions. This involvement fosters greater trust, sustainability, and long-term impact.

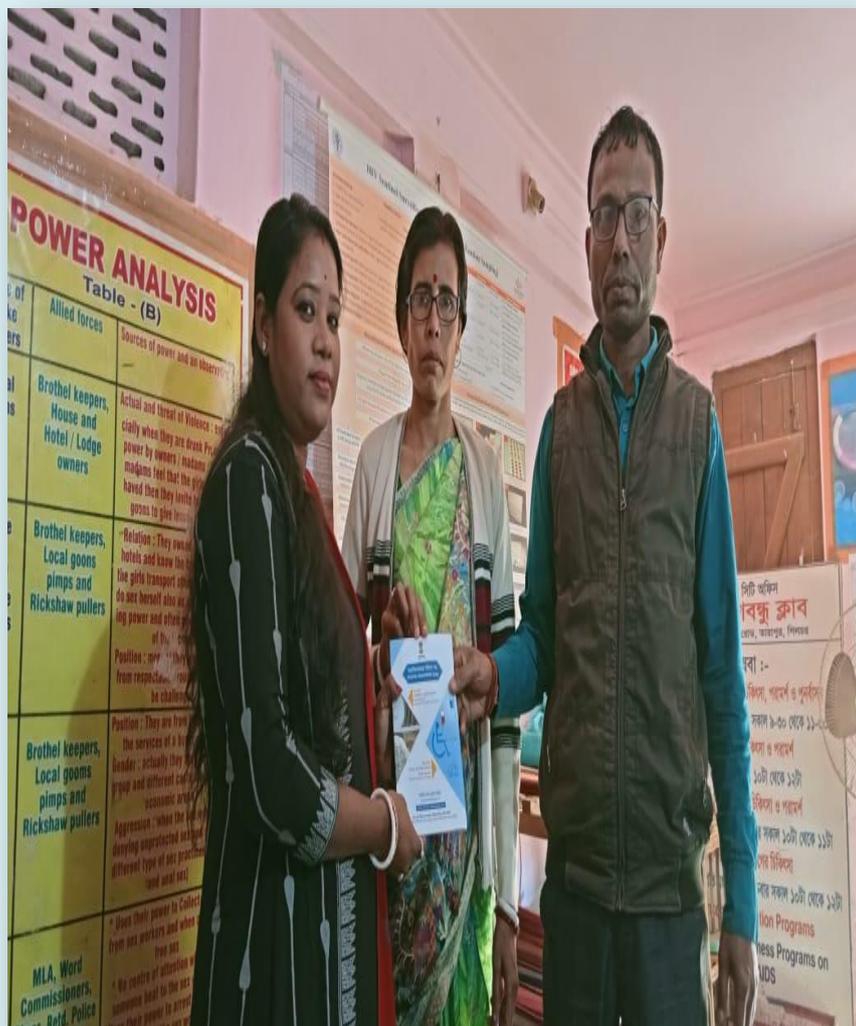
Another major goal of the intervention is to **reduce vulnerability to STIs**. Regular health check-ups, access to diagnostic facilities, and timely treatment help manage infections at an early stage, thereby significantly decreasing the risk of complications and onward transmission. Deshabandhu Club also works diligently to **create an enabling environment**—one that is free from stigma, discrimination, and violence—so that beneficiaries feel safe accessing services and asserting their health rights.

Scale and Reach

Currently, Deshabandhu Club engages with approximately **780 communities of FSWs and MSMs in Cachar District** and about **420 communities of FSWs and IDUs in Karimganj District**. These populations are systematically mapped and reached through a network of **peer educators, outreach workers, and community mobilizers** who provide direct services and follow-up support. The project ensures that these high-risk individuals receive tailored services based on their unique needs and vulnerabilities.

Range of Services Offered

The project delivers a comprehensive package of services aimed at holistic care and prevention. A major component is **Behaviour Change Communication (BCC)**, which includes one-on-one and group sessions focusing on safe sexual practices, STI/HIV knowledge, and harm reduction strategies for IDUs.



These communications are contextual, culturally sensitive, and designed to resonate with community experiences.

Equally critical is the **provision of STI treatment and counselling services.**

Through collaboration with government and private health facilities, individuals exhibiting symptoms or at risk of STIs are linked to diagnostic and treatment services. Counselling is provided not only to manage infections but also to address issues like sexual health, partner communication, and mental well-being.

To support harm reduction, the project regularly distributes **condoms, lubricants**, and in the case of IDUs, **clean needles and syringes**. These commodities are provided free of cost through outreach programs and drop-in centres to minimize barriers to access.

The project also works intensively on **capacity building** of peer educators and core group members. These individuals, drawn from within the FSW, MSM, and IDU communities, are trained in communication skills, health education, and risk mitigation. Empowered with knowledge and leadership skills, they become changemakers within their communities, encouraging safer practices and stronger solidarity.

Deshabandhu Club has also focused on **linking beneficiaries with care and support services**, especially for those who test positive for HIV. Through this, People Living with HIV/AIDS (PLHAs) are connected to antiretroviral therapy (ART) centres, nutritional support schemes, mental health counselling, and other government welfare programs.

In addition to direct services, the organization plays a critical advocacy role in **mobilizing community leaders, local authorities, and civil society actors** to build a more supportive and inclusive environment. Awareness campaigns, street plays, health camps, and interface meetings are regularly conducted to address stigma and discrimination that often alienate FSWs, MSMs, and IDUs from mainstream services.



Impact and Way Forward

Deshabandhu Club's TI project stands as a testament to the power of community-driven health interventions. Over the years, it has significantly contributed to reducing the prevalence of new HIV and STI infections in the Barak Valley. It has also helped shift societal perceptions, build confidence among marginalized communities, and create avenues for dialogue and collaboration between the state and civil society.

With continued technical and financial support from ASACS and NACO, the project is poised to expand its reach and effectiveness. As the HIV/AIDS landscape evolves, Deshabandhu Club remains committed to innovation, inclusivity, and evidence-based programming, ensuring that the most vulnerable are not left behind in the fight against this epidemic

Vihaan – A Beacon of Hope for PLHIV

Vihaan, meaning “dawn’s first light” in Sanskrit, symbolizes a new beginning for People Living with HIV (PLHIV) across India. As a national initiative under the **National AIDS Control Programme IV (NACP IV)**, Vihaan aims to improve the quality of life and survival rates of PLHIV by providing a comprehensive **Care and Support Centre (CSC)** framework across the country. The programme, implemented by **India HIV/AIDS Alliance** in collaboration with the **Department of AIDS Control** and supported by the **Global Fund**, has established over **300 CSCs** to deliver crucial care and support services.

Vihaan in Barak Valley: Role of Deshabandhu Club



In the Barak Valley region of Assam, the **Deshabandhu Club**, a highly respected NGO with a legacy of impactful community development, has been entrusted with the responsibility of managing the CSC in **Cachar and Hailakandi districts** since **2013**. Through this initiative, Deshabandhu Club's CSC has emerged as a vital institution in the lives of PLHIV by extending support services aligned with the core objectives of Vihaan.

Core Goal of the Care and Support Centre (CSC)

To improve the survival and quality of life of People Living with HIV (PLHIV).

Key Objectives

1. **Increase treatment adherence** among PLHIV.
2. **Reduce stigma and discrimination** associated with HIV.
3. **Prevent new Lost to Follow-Up (LFU)** cases.

4. **Enhance the quality of life** of PLHIV through holistic care and social integration.

Key Indicators & Achievements (As of Latest Reporting)

Sl. No	Indicator	Achievement
1	Number of clients registered at CSC	4,325
2	Number of clients currently active in CSC	3,654
3	PLHIV receiving peer counselling on thematic areas	3,498
4	PLHIV Lost to Follow-Up & MIS with definite outcomes	4,279
5	PLHIV linked with at least one social protection scheme	360
6	Number of Discordant Couples under active care	421

Demographic Profile of PLHIV Covered

District	Male	Female	TG	Male Child	Female Child
Cachar	1727	964	3	86	83
Hailakandi	194	101	0	13	8
Karimganj	605	378	0	45	31
Dima Hasao	23	19	0	1	0
Others	23	16	0	2	3

Challenges and Strategies to Overcome Them

1. Funding Constraints

- The reduction in external donor support has made access to domestic budget crucial but slow.
- Implementation of ambitious strategies like “**Test and Treat**” becomes challenging due to financial constraints.

Strategy: Continued advocacy for sustained government funding and exploring partnerships with local stakeholders for resource mobilization.

2. Locating & Tracking New or LFU Clients

- Difficulty arises when addresses are incomplete, inaccurate, or when clients reside in remote, interior areas.

Strategy: Strengthening the peer navigator network and using community informants and mobile outreach to locate and support defaulters.

Outcomes and Impact

Enhanced Treatment Adherence

- Significant increase in the number of clients who have returned to treatment and are maintaining regular ART schedules.

Expansion of Support Services

- Addressing broader concerns such as **nutrition, mental health, and socio-economic support.**

Linkage to Social Protection Schemes

- Eligible clients are enrolled in schemes like:
 - **Ayushman Bharat & Atal Amrit Abhiyan** – providing up to ₹2 lakh in medical coverage including medicines, hospitalization, and diagnostics.
 - **Widow Pension Scheme** – PLHIV widows receive a one-time financial benefit of ₹1 lakh through CSC facilitation.

Child Support and Development

- **CLHIV (Children Living with HIV)** who are orphans are rehabilitated via **Kasturi Child Care Home** in Guwahati with support from **Child Welfare Committee (CWC).**

Support Group Meetings (SGM)

- Regular SGMs offer psychosocial support, platform for sharing experiences, learning about treatment adherence, nutrition, and rights awareness.

Awareness and Advocacy Initiatives

- Organized **World AIDS Day** events and **HIV/AIDS awareness campaigns** in schools, colleges, and public spaces.
- Conducted **advocacy meetings** with departments such as Health, Social Welfare, and Education to promote inclusive policy implementation for PLHIV.

Conclusion

The **Vihaan Care & Support Centre** in **Cachar and Hailakandi**, managed by **Deshabandhu Club**, stands as a model of compassionate, community-driven health care. With over a decade of unwavering commitment, the CSC has transformed from a treatment facilitator to a comprehensive support ecosystem that nurtures dignity, health, and hope for PLHIV. Despite challenges, the programme's adaptive strategies, people-centric approach, and multi-stakeholder collaboration continue to illuminate new paths in the fight against HIV/AIDS in the Barak Valley.

Empowering Women through Sustainability: Deshabandhu Club and USHA International

Deshabandhu Club, in partnership with USHA International, has launched a powerful initiative aimed at empowering rural and marginalized women through skill-building and economic independence. The program, known as "**USHA Salai Schools**," focuses on teaching sewing and stitching skills, thereby fostering entrepreneurship, financial independence, and social inclusion. This initiative, particularly impactful in the North Eastern region of India, covers areas such as **Barak Valley, Manipur, Mizoram, and Tripura**, and has been a game-changer in empowering women. The key components of this initiative are detailed below:

- **Creating Livelihood Opportunities through Skill Development:**
 - The primary goal of the USHA Salai Schools program is to provide rural women with the skills needed to earn a living. By learning sewing, embroidery, and other related skills, women can generate income for themselves and their families, ensuring **financial independence** and improved livelihoods.
 - This economic independence is not just about surviving, but thriving, as the skills learned can be used in local communities or even established as home-based businesses, allowing women to become entrepreneurs in their own right.
- **Reviving and Sustaining Traditional Skills:**
 - Beyond economic empowerment, the program also seeks to **revive the traditional craft of sewing**, preserving cultural heritage while offering women a way to engage with a craft that has deep roots in Indian society.
 - Through the training, women are encouraged to view sewing not just as a skill for making money, but as a **hobby and artform**. This helps preserve the tradition of hand-made goods while providing a sustainable hobby that can be passed down through generations.
- **Comprehensive Training and Certification:**
 - The Salai Schools offer a **comprehensive training curriculum** that goes beyond basic sewing. Women learn various techniques of **embroidery, garment making, and sewing machine maintenance**. This holistic approach ensures that the learners are equipped with the skills needed to start their own businesses or contribute effectively in existing markets.
 - At the end of the training, each woman receives a **certificate from USHA International**, recognizing her newly acquired skills. This certification enhances her credibility as a professional, making it easier to access opportunities, jobs, and entrepreneurial ventures.
- **Geographic Focus and Social Impact:**
 - Since its inception in **2014**, the USHA Salai Schools program has had a **significant impact** in the **North Eastern region** of India. The program specifically targets **Barak Valley, Manipur, Mizoram, and Tripura**, areas that have historically been underserved and where economic opportunities for women are limited.
 - By focusing on these regions, the initiative addresses the **specific needs of rural and marginalized women**, ensuring that they can benefit from the economic empowerment and social inclusion that the program offers. This focus on underserved areas helps to reduce regional disparities and uplifts entire communities.
- **A Holistic Approach to Women's Empowerment and Social Inclusion:**
 - Deshabandhu Club's collaboration with **USHA International** represents a **holistic approach** to women's empowerment. The Salai Schools program integrates **empathy, empowerment, inclusion, and sustainability** into its framework, ensuring that women are not only trained but also supported in their journey toward economic independence.
 - The initiative fosters a **sense of community and cultural revival**, where women support one another, share their experiences, and help strengthen their local economies. This collaboration between Deshabandhu Club and USHA International is a shining example of how partnerships can lead to sustainable and lasting change.

Through the USHA Salai Schools program, Deshabandhu Club and USHA International have created a **sustainable and empowering platform** for women in the North Eastern region of India. By providing essential skills, economic opportunities, and a renewed sense of dignity, the initiative is **paving the way for a brighter, more equitable future** for rural and marginalized women

Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) Activities by Deshabandhu Club in Cachar District

Deshabandhu Club has emerged as a leading civil society organization in South Assam, playing a critical role in strengthening community-based disaster preparedness and response mechanisms. In partnership with **UNICEF-Assam** and the **District Disaster Management Authority (DDMA), Cachar**, the organization has undertaken a wide range of Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) initiatives, focusing especially on **20 flood-prone Gaon Panchayats (GPs)** across **five Development Blocks** in Cachar district. These areas are highly vulnerable to recurring floods caused by the River Barak and its tributaries.

The Club's intervention, through the operationalization of **Community Facilitation and Resource Centres (CFRCs)**, aims to empower communities with timely access to social protection, early warning, and disaster resilience information, while ensuring inclusive and sustainable local development planning.

Key DRR Interventions by Deshabandhu Club

1. Vulnerability Assessment

A comprehensive vulnerability assessment was carried out in 20 highly flood-prone Gaon Panchayats, including Borkhola, Sonapur, Bororampur, Chesri, Bihara, Sewti, Kukuri, Khelma, Tarinpur, Fulbari, Harinagar, Leverputa, Dakshin Mohanpur, Natun Ramnagar, Rangirghat, Swadin Bazar, Chenkuri, Tapang, Digor Srikona–Alambag, and Barsangan.

- The assessment focused on the risks associated with recurring floods, socio-economic vulnerabilities, and gaps in access to government schemes.
- The findings informed the planning and prioritization of CFRC operations and engagement with local stakeholders.

2. Establishment of Community Facilitation and Resource Centres (CFRCs)

- Deshabandhu Club established **20 CFRCs**, one in each of the identified vulnerable Gaon Panchayats.
- These centers serve as **community hubs** for disseminating risk reduction information, facilitating access to entitlements, and providing assistance in scheme enrollment and disaster preparedness.
- The CFRCs are staffed by trained **Nodal Officers** and supported through regular field engagement by **Block Coordinators (BCs)**.

3. Community Mobilization and Stakeholder Engagement

- The initiative mobilized **Panchayati Raj Institution (PRI)** members, **Self Help Groups (SHGs)**, **Community-Based Organizations (CBOs)**, and community leaders.
- WhatsApp groups for each CFRC were created to ensure real-time communication and coordination.
- Block Coordinators continue to provide **handholding support** to nodal officers to strengthen the functionality of CFRCs.

4. Awareness and Outreach Campaigns

- Awareness drives were launched in each CFRC area to sensitize the population about disaster preparedness, early warning, and entitlements.

- Over **3,050 community members**, including **50 Persons with Disabilities (PWDs)**, were reached through door-to-door campaigns, meetings, and CFRC-based counseling sessions.
- BCs conducted **weekly monitoring visits** to CFRCs to ensure continuous outreach and accountability.

5. Inclusive Community Dialogues

Deshabandhu Club pioneered two new community dialogue platforms in Cachar:

- **Bhal Sabha (Children’s Assembly):**
 - Six sessions were conducted, engaging **636 participants**, including boys (208), girls (347), male adults (52), female adults (28), and one child with a disability.
 - Discussions focused on children’s needs, safety during disasters, and inclusion in GPDP planning.
- **Mohila Sabha (Women’s Assembly):**
 - Two sessions held, involving **150 participants** (128 women and 22 men).
 - These forums enabled women to express their needs and challenges, particularly concerning health, water, sanitation, and safety in flood situations.



Both forums served to strengthen community voices in DRR planning and ensure **gender- and child-sensitive programming**.

6. Capacity Building and Training

- Staff orientation sessions were organized with technical guidance from UNICEF to build understanding of child- and gender-focused DRR.
- Deshabandhu Club facilitated training programs for CFRC staff and IAG volunteers on **Joint Rapid Needs Assessment (JRNA)**, disaster reporting, and coordination.
- The training was jointly conducted with support from **DDMA, Cachar, and National Disaster Response Force (NDRF)**.

7. Strategic Planning and District-Level Consultations

- A **District-Level Multi-Stakeholder Strategic Planning and Inception Roundtable** was organized on **18th July 2023**, with 72 stakeholders, including government officials, CSOs, and PRI members.

- Another **District-Level Consultation on Access to Shock-Responsive Entitlements** was conducted on **14th October 2023**, attended by 50 participants.
- These consultations led to the finalization of an action plan to mainstream DRR into Gaon Panchayat Development Plans (GPDPs), with a specific focus on **children, women, and persons with disabilities**.

8. GO-NGO Coordination and Inter-Agency Collaboration

- Deshabandhu Club convened **Inter-Agency Coordination Meetings** and **GO-NGO platforms** across all three districts of Barak Valley.
- A total of **165 participants** attended these meetings (127 men and 38 women).
- These meetings helped in building synergies, avoiding duplication, and identifying gaps in the humanitarian and development response.

Impact and Way Forward

Deshabandhu Club's DRR interventions have helped:

- **Localize disaster preparedness** by embedding risk reduction into Gram Panchayat systems.
- **Enhance access to entitlements** through CFRCs for flood-affected and vulnerable groups.
- **Empower communities**—especially women, children, and persons with disabilities—by amplifying their voices in planning and decision-making processes.
- Strengthen the **collaborative ecosystem** among government, civil society, and communities in disaster response and resilience building.

Deshabandhu Vidyaniketan: An Overview

Deshabandhu Vidyaniketan is an educational institution operating under the aegis of Deshabandhu Club, a reputed socio-developmental organization in South Assam. Dedicated to nurturing the holistic development of students, the Vidyaniketan blends academic excellence with character-building, social responsibility, and cultural values. Rooted in the community's aspirations for quality education, the institution strives to create an inclusive and empowering learning environment for children across different socio-economic backgrounds.

The school not only focuses on academic achievement but also emphasizes moral education, extracurricular activities, and community engagement—aligning with Deshabandhu Club's larger mission of participatory and equitable development. Over the years, Deshabandhu Vidyaniketan has emerged as a beacon of learning in the region, fostering a generation of well-rounded, responsible citizens.

Deshabandhu Club's Legal Aid Cell: Combating Domestic Violence in Bihara Bazar and Surrounding Areas

Deshabandhu Club, a pioneering civil society organization in South Assam, has consistently worked towards promoting social justice, gender equality, and community well-being. As part of its sustained efforts to combat violence against women, the organization established a dedicated **Legal Aid Cell** in **1994** at its head office premises in Bihara Bazar, Cachar District.

This initiative provides **free legal services**, focusing on supporting women affected by **domestic violence**—a grave and deeply rooted social issue that transcends cultural and socio-economic boundaries.

Objectives of the Legal Aid Cell

- To **provide free legal counseling and services** to victims of domestic violence.
- To **support women and girls** experiencing physical, psychological, sexual, and economic abuse.
- To **raise awareness** in the community about women's legal rights and the provisions of the **Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005**.
- To **reduce social stigma** and promote community-based support systems for survivors.
- To **create a safer, more equitable environment** for women and children

Executive Body List of Deshabandhu Club

Sl. No.	Name of the Member	Designation	Gender	Profession
1	Dr. Sanjib Sikidar	President	Male	Medical Practitioner
2	Ashok Deb Roy	Vice-President	Male	Retired Employee
3	Ajit Roy Choudhury	Secretary	Male	Ex-serviceman
4	Kanailal Bhattacharjee	Organizing Secretary	Male	Service
5	Rabindra Narayan Acharjee	Joint Secretary	Male	Social Work
6	Jayanta Roy Choudhury	Joint Secretary	Male	Service
7	Bimal Chandra Dey	Joint Secretary	Male	Service
8	Abhijit Chakraborty	Joint Secretary	Male	Social Service
9	Sri Subir Das	Member	Male	Service
10	Sambit Sikidar	Member	Male	Business
11	Nibhas Das	Member	Male	Social Work
12	Manik Malakar	Member	Male	Social Work
13	Pradip Goswami	Member	Male	Service
14	Bijoy Bhusan Das	Member	Male	Service
15	Dr. Bijit Goswami	Member	Male	Service
16	Smt. Kamana Devi	Member	Female	Service
17	Miss Lilaboti Das	Member	Female	Service
18	Biplab Kar Choudhury	Member	Male	Service
19	Utpal Kanti Nath	Member	Male	

