



Standard Operating Procedure for cases of Missing Children developed by WCD Ministry

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The Ministry of Women and Child Development has developed a Standard Operating Procedure for tracing of missing children as per the direction of the Hon'ble Supreme Court dated January 13, 2015 in the matter of Bachpan Bachao Andolan v. Union of India & Ors, Writ Petition (Civil) No. 75 of 2012. The Apex court had observed that there are many Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) developed by States to trace out missing children and therefore, had directed the Ministry of WCD, to take help of TISS to compile a model SOP which may be used by all States/UTs to deal with cases of missing children and to follow a uniform procedure throughout the country.

The SOP for tracing of missing children is finalized in consonance with the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Model Rules 2016. The SOP mainly deals with the tracking of missing children and their rehabilitation after recovery. It defines roles and responsibilities of various stake holders such as Police, Child Welfare Committees (CWCs), Juvenile Justice Boards (JJBs) etc.

Rule 92(1) of the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Model Rules 2016 defines a missing child as - a child whose whereabouts are not known to the parents, legal guardian or any other person or institution legally entrusted with the custody of the child, whatever may be the circumstances or causes of disappearance, and shall be considered missing and in need of care and protection until located or his safety and well-being established.

The objectives of the Standard Operating Procedure are to work in coordination with stakeholders and respond with urgency to issues of missing child; create awareness and basic understanding of key concepts pertaining to missing children, child vulnerability and child protection; provide a set of comprehensive standard operating procedure for key stakeholders involved in child tracing, family tracing, repatriation, rehabilitation social reintegration and preventive work; effectively work with all categories of missing/found/traced children and other group of vulnerable children at risk; ensure expeditious and effective law enforcement including prosecution; create mechanism and systems to prevent further victimization of missing children and ensure that appropriate and timely protection/care/attention is provided to victims/witnesses.

Tracking of missing children is the primary responsibility of Police. The SOP clearly defines role of an Investigating officer. There is also a checklist for Investigating Officer that provides a framework of actions, consideration and activities that may assist in performing competent, productive and thorough investigation in cases of missing children. The SOP has been shared with all the Director Generals of Police and Principal Secretaries of States/UTs for further dissemination and use.

Kindly click on the link given below for Manual on Standard Operating Procedure for cases of Missing Children:

<http://wcd.nic.in/sites/default/files/SOP%20for%20Tracing%20Missing%20Children-24.4.17.pdf>

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