



# Standard Operating Procedure for protection and care of children in street situations launched

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A Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for Care and Protection of Children in Street Situations for their rehabilitation and safeguarding was released by Minister for Women & Child Development, Smt Maneka Sanjay Gandhi in New Delhi today. Earlier the SOP was launched at a function attended by Delhi High Court Judge, Hon'ble Justice Mukta Gupta; NCPCR Chairperson, Ms. Stuti Kacker; Noted Bollywood actor and Ambassador, Save the Children, Ms. Dia Mirza, Chairperson Save the Children in India, Mr. Harpal Singh and CEO, Save the Children International, Mr. Thomas Chandy were present during the launch. NCPCR collaborated with the Civil Society Organization (CSO), Save the Children to develop this much needed strategy for street children.

The NCPCR decided to outline a detailed intervention framework for care and protection of children living in street situation as the problems faced by these children are multi-dimensional and complex. The SOP aims at streamlining the interventions within the current legal and policy framework. The purpose of the SOP is to identify processes that should be set in motion once a child on the street has been identified as a child in need. These processes would be within the existing framework of rules and policies and would create a convergence of the various agencies. Besides it also provides a step-by-step guideline for all the stakeholders for care, protection and rehabilitation of these children.

Speaking about the release of the SOP, Smt. Maneka Gandhi said, "Our government is committed to the well-being of every child in India. This initiative will help the Government to ensure that health education and protection mechanisms are made available to children living on the streets."

The SOP was drafted after taking into consideration a detailed field research study with inputs received from regional consultations held at Patna, Lucknow, Hyderabad and Mumbai from 35 NGOs. Children who survived from the street were also consulted in Delhi at NCPCR before drafting of the SOP.

Children living in the streets are among the most vulnerable groups. Most of these children have little or no adult supervision and protection. They also do not have access to education and basic health care living a life of struggle for survival. The lack of basic care and protection exposes them to abuse, exploitation and neglect depriving them of the most basic human rights.

Cities in India are witnessing rapid urbanization. By 2030, 40% of India's population is expected to be living in urban areas which mean that child population in streets will continue to grow. Therefore, it is important to integrate the needs of children in street situations into urban policies and planning. A 2016 survey by Save the Children in Lucknow, Mughalsarai, Kolkata- Howrah, Patna and Hyderabad found 84,563 children living on the streets. An older study by the same organization in Delhi put their number at 50,000.

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