

## PRESS RELEASE

### CSR

## *Protecting Children from the Dark Side of Internet*



***Villages: Kuruchikulam, Kalakudi, Chintalayapalle and Kotri***

***Date: 07<sup>th</sup> February 2023***

***By INDIA CSR Correspondent***

A kitchen knife that can be used to chop vegetables for cooking can also be misused to stab somebody. Use or misuse completely remains at the discretion of the user. This analogy can be likened to what's currently happening with the World Wide Web, which is popularly known as the Internet.

When the Pandemic struck in early 2020 and schools had to be shut indefinitely, something that came to the aid of the children was this Internet. Overnight the entire education ecosystem was transposed online. Much seamless was it for the Private Schools while the Government Schools across the country took a little longer to acclimatize with the new normal. Smartphones that parents had kept out of their children's reach all these years suddenly became inevitably cardinal in the hands of children. If you thought that strained eyes and mental fatigue due to higher screen time is the only concern that should perturb you, here's a reality check. According to the UK based Internet Watch Foundation, 2021 has been the worst year on record when self-generated child sexual abuse content rose by 168%.

Yes you read that right!

While the Internet to some extent maintained education continuum, it beyond doubt became a bane for several children's online safety. Paedophilic cyber criminals were at large all through the pandemic.

Under the garb of anonymity and with much ease they reached out to vulnerable children through chats and social media accounts, groomed and manipulated them into recording their own sexually explicit pictures and videos of abuse over web or phone cameras, and then sharing the footage on the open Internet. Both girls and boys have been at equal risk of Online Child Sexual Abuse.

Thus starts the conundrum of coercion, blackmail and online child sex trafficking. Some gullible children fall prey to these criminals oblivious of the fact that it is an out and out trap. This leads to children entering the whirlpool of distress and depression which can even lead to their taking dire steps of ending their life. On the other hand, online predators rake in the moolah by selling child pornography video clips through various mediums over Dark Net in exchange of cryptocurrency maintaining opacity and absolute anonymity beyond the reach of Law Enforcement Agencies.

According to a not so old report published by a leading Civil Society Organization in India working on the issue of Child Safety, the user base for Child Sex Abuse Material (CSAM) in the country has been more than 90% male, 1% female and the rest '*unidentified*'. Most online predators have been surfing the Internet for generic CSAM such as 'school sex videos' and 'teen sex'. Many offenders used Virtual Private Networks (VPNs) to conceal their IP addresses, locations, circumvented stringent government regulations and platform security.

Viviid Emissions Reductions Universal Private Limited, one of India's oldest and largest credible carbon management firms while curating Co-Benefits/ Social Interventions in the vicinity of its Clients who happen to be the owners of Clean Energy Projects, Energy Efficiency Projects and Nature Based Solutions particularly factored in special modules for sensitizing children about the modus operandi of online paedophiles. These workshops periodically held at the intervention sites in Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh and Rajasthan are carefully designed to rope in Child Psychologists, Cyber Crime Subject Matter Research Experts, Police Officials from the Cyber Crime Department, Practicing Lawyers, Officials from District Child Protection Units, and Civil Society Organizations working towards Safe Internet for Children. Children are sensitized about Safe Internet Practices and how to protect themselves and all private information related to them, their siblings and parents.

The Outreach workers at all the Social Intervention Sites of Viviid Emissions Reductions Universal Private Limited keep a close watch on the behaviour of children and are forever alert to counsel them if they look irritable, anxious and annoyed. Thus the outreach workers become the First Line of Support for the Children. Upon probing little deeper if the child confides about any such deception that s/he may have faced on the Internet, the outreach workers take appropriate steps for referring them to Child Psychologists. The outreach workers have also been vested with the responsibility to ensure that such crimes are reported with the Law Enforcement Agencies and at [www.cybercrime.gov.in](http://www.cybercrime.gov.in) so that appropriate steps could be taken to bring the predators to book and also comb the Children Sex Abuse Material out from the Internet. Simultaneously Parents are also trained and sensitized about how to compassionately take their children into confidence and report if they have ever been victimised by online predators. Children are especially encouraged to remember National Police Helpline number 112; National Women Helpline Number 181 and Cyber Crime Helpline 1930 for emergency.

Speaking with INDIA CSR Correspondent, Mr. Puneet Katyal, Chief Executive Officer at Viviid Emissions Reductions Universal Private Limited said, "As a parent, I am forever on guard to protect my child from the perils of Internet. Undoubtedly Internet is a great source of knowledge and information, but when it comes to the virtual world you absolutely cannot trust who's sitting on the other side. You may be completely chasing in the dark. The World has survived COVID 19 with immense grit. We have to

demonstrate the same grit when it comes to protecting our Children who are particularly vulnerable to falling through the cracks.

Considering the precarious times that we find ourselves in, I had specifically instructed my team to devise various touchpoints in the Wholesome Social Programmatic Interventions on Women and Child Empowerment that are underway in select villages of Tirunelveli, Nandyal and Jaisalmer Districts. We certainly owe this at the very least to the Children of the Rural Communities in the vicinity of Clean Energy Projects / Nature Based Solutions belonging to our esteemed Clients.

**Several Sensitization Workshops customised for Children and separately for their Parents and Teachers were convened at the Social Intervention Sites of VIVID Emissions Reductions Universal Private Limited in select Villages of Tirunelveli, Nandyal and Jaisalmer Districts on the Occasion of Safer Internet Day on Tuesday, 07<sup>th</sup> February 2023.**



***Safer Internet Day Workshops in the Villages of Tirunelveli District of Tamil Nadu***

Government of India is doing all that it can to keep our children safe online with a Zero Tolerance towards Child Abuse. A few years ago the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act (POCSO) was amended to define child pornography and provisions were added in the law for much more stringent punishment for its possession and distribution. These are some of the much needed Preventive Steps that our Government is taking to check the menace of Online Child Sex Abuse.

While Government is doing its bit, other stakeholders must not remain mere passive spectators in this journey to make Internet Safe for Women and Children. We are contributing in our own capacity to protect children from the dark side of Internet. We are working on a both Preventive and Curative Models as applicable. We sensitize children about how not to fall prey to Cyber Criminals while also facilitating for psychological support and appropriate remedy under law if the child has been violated. Simultaneously the women are also sensitized about how to effectively protect themselves from online money frauds.

Today on the Occasion of Safer Internet Day, I call upon all Parents and Teachers to be watchful of any visible signs of physical and mental discomfort that a child may be showing either at home or in school/ tuition centres and provide them the much needed emotional support that can help restoring normalcy for them. If our Children are safe, only then can we Progress and Prosper as a society---- as a Nation.



***Safer Internet Day Workshop in Nandyal District of Andhra Pradesh***

In our Mission of taking People and Planet together for effective Climate Change Mitigation let us handhold our children whenever and wherever they need our guidance and support. After all they are all our children!"

Tags: CSR, Corporate Social Responsibility, Child Safety, Darknet, Online Child Sex Abuse, Safer Internet Day, Women Empowerment, Child Pornography, Education, Child Sex Abuse Material, Social Security Schemes, Welfare Schemes, Child Rights, Child Friendly Village, Climate Change Mitigation, Empowerment, Carbon Credits, Carbon Neutral, Environment, People, Planet, Earth, Net Zero, Gender Justice

**For more information please feel free to get in touch with:**

**Rohit Sharma**

**AGM – Communications, Corporate Social Responsibility, Policy Advocacy & Global Buyer**

**Acquisition Viiid Emissions Reductions Universal Private Limited**

**Corporate Office: 7th Floor, # 707, Sri Krishna Complex,**

**New Link Road, Opp. Laxmi Industrial Estate, Andheri (West)**

**Mumbai - 400053**

**India**

**EPABX Numbers: +91-22-46075913 and**

**+91-22-68280703; Extension: 318**

**Hand Phone: +91-9910300187**

**Email Address: [rohit.sharma@viviidgreen.com](mailto:rohit.sharma@viviidgreen.com)**

**Website: [www.viviidgreen.com](http://www.viviidgreen.com)**