

Child Sexual Abuse

The sexual abuse of children is a fundamental violation of their rights. It is a universal and complex problem. It includes a range of abusers, different forms of abuse, and varies in the type and degree of impact on the victim. Since the First World Congress against the Sexual Exploitation of Children, in 1996, which served to focus attention on the issue, there has been a substantial increase in activities designed to counter a potential increase in the incidence of abuse, and its negative impact on children. Interventions have increased through specific targeted projects, and most significantly through an increased recognition that sexually abused and exploited children are frequently the same children who are facing a range of difficulties. They are the school going children, displaced and refugee children, street children, children in hazardous labour etc.

In light of the staggering statistics and the devastating effects of child sexual abuse, Sahyog care for you is taking the next step to address this issue. We are partnering with 100 MCD schools in New Delhi to train at least 50% of their students over the next years to prevent, recognize and react responsibly in cases of child sexual abuse.

Sahyog care for you found that though 53 per cent of Indian children experience sexual abuse, the reporting is extremely low since information about the possibility of abuse isn't imparted to children.

The CSA Awareness Program of Sahyog reaches out to children between the age group of 7-14 years i.e. 2nd -8th standard. Sahyog Care for You creating changes the way to protect children by educating them and their teachers/parents on how to recognize and prevent child sexual abuse. The program focuses on educating students on how to prevent, recognize, and react responsibly to child sexual abuse.

Objective of Program:

Program aims to break the communication barrier about the issue between parents and children and encourages children to break the silence about “Child Sexual Abuse” and openly communicate on the subject with a trusted adult.

Specifically, we are:

- Sensitize the school community on CSA, what it is, the effects, and what should be done.
- Provide training in counselling skills.
- Set up efficient counselling services
- Employ child protection team in every school, train them and
- Set up a group of senior student in every school as master trainer to train each and every students of school about CSA.

Another aim of the programmes to counsel of children who have experienced abuse, need to recognize both the impact of the event or experiences, on the individual, together with his or her strengths and the resources within any existing support networks. This dual focus is one that is consistent with a number of the proposed standards for service delivery. It would promote a range of rights, looking at the child holistically, and employing a range of expertise to meet different needs.

Like many other social problems, child sexual abuse cases are not getting better. This is because the reasons why they happen are a bit complex, and not easy to deal with. Child sexual abuse is a very secret crime, and unless the victim is bold to tell someone about it, it can be hidden for a lifetime. Children are often scared to tell anyone about the abuse. Many cases of abuse are not reported.



Abusers:

Many abusers are people that their victims trust. 'In 90% of child sexual abuse case, the child knows and trusts the person who sexually abuses them'.

Some abusers have mental problems and see themselves as kids too. They tend to have a strong desire for sexual things with kids. Sexual abusers are usually men, who abuse kids they know. This makes it even sadder because the kids usually have a lot of respect and trust for them.

Victims:

Sexually abused kids are often vulnerable children. Many abused kids do not tell anyone because they think;

- It was nobody else's business
- It was serious or wrong
- It would be serious for parents to find out, especially if the abuser is known to the family
- Didn't want their friends to know the offender will kill or hurt them, especially if they were threatened
- None would trust their story

Poverty and needy kids can also fall victim to adult abusers, who pretend to help them, but take advantage of them. This is truer with teenagers from poor or broken homes.

The symptoms of sexual abuse is very harmful for children, they are similar to those of desperation or severe anxiety and nervousness. Mostly children face health trouble, as well as they don't want to participate in any physical activities victim is always hiding and avoiding a specific person for no reason. They withdraw themselves from normal and regular activities. This will be the reason poor performance in school and class participation.

It seems that many victims indulge in alcoholism and drug abuse or engaging in high risk behaviours.



Strategy:

Focus on Children's Rights.

Sahyog care for you proposed workshops on Child Sexual Abuse with 100 Government schools those promoting children's rights, it will enhance student's ability to prevent or avoid sexual abuse and exploitation. Disseminating information and promoting a respect for children and their rights are regarded as central to human development and integral to any civilized society. It is assumed that this approach will also promote an understanding of what constitutes a violation of those rights.

In addition, respect for these participation rights may be an important factor in protecting children. This results from the development of increased confidence, enhanced co-operation and respect by school students for themselves and others, better motivation, the development of new skills, and, for some, the experience of leadership.

Children need stability and security of emotional attachments, and that in most instances these will be assured through supporting parents in caring for their own children. However, in the context of sexual abuse, responses to disclosures of abuse need to balance the child's right to protection with their need for stability. This might be delivered through removal of the alleged perpetrator, rather than the child. Children, who cannot be cared for safely at home, need alternative care which supports healthy attachments, provides safety and offers emotional support.

Multi-disciplinary and integrated prevention programmes

There has been an expansion of activity, particularly cross agency and multi-disciplinary work aimed at those considered to be particularly vulnerable or at risk of abuse through sexual exploitation. There are positive examples of increased recognition of the need to tackle the issue explicitly within a range of programmes, including those targeting street children, children in refugee camps (particularly separated children), children and young people in institutions, and those in difficult working environments.

The aim of Sahyog care for you at ensuring that all those working directly with vulnerable students, are fully aware of a range of critical issues, including sexual abuse and exploitation, and are equipped to promote both prevention and response actions as part of their overall range of interventions.

The program strategy of Sahyog care for you:

Target the (victim) child.

The offender looks for vulnerable children. These may be kids from broken, poor or needy homes, children with low self-esteem, children with emotional needs, etc. Offenders can tell by looking at your behaviour, or by what you post on your social media pages.

Gain the child's trust.

The offender, carefully studies your needs often offers solutions to them. They will offer 'great advice' and behave like they really care about you. This way, the victim sees the offender as a trusted friend.

Fill in the needs of the victim.

The sex offender gives gifts, care, attention and other things that the child needs. The child therefore begins to see the offender as a concerned person. He becomes a very important person in the child's life.

Isolation.

At the time, the offender uses the special relationship to get the child into isolated places. This can be his office, home, park and quiet places where they can share some time together, all in the plan of getting the child to feel very comfortable and cared for. At this stage, even some parents see nothing wrong, because the offender has showed the child (and sometimes parents) so much care, and cannot see that there is danger looming.

Abused!

The sex offender at this stage knows the child very well, and knows what the child's sexual weakness and interests are. The offender easily gets the victim into a situation where they are sexually connected. The offender abuses the child at this time; because the child's natural curiosity is destroyed.

Control.

This is the hardest part for the child. After the abuse, the offender may use threats or blame to silence the child and keep the child in continued abuse. The offender may also use more gifts and favours to keep the relationship going. Most Sexually abused children see the mess they are in, but are too afraid, confused and hurt to make any intelligent decision. They are usually in complete captivity to the offender.



Promoting awareness through mobilization in related communities

In this segment Sahyog care for you strengthening school resources, including mobilising other students within their own communities, are a strategy for prevention of abuse. An example where this is being concretely and positively developed as a strategy is in the programme “By ensuring that communities are engaged in the process of identifying needs, planning and decision making, their sense of ownership should help to ensure sustainability” The programme includes materials that both develop and promote the concept, and offer strategies and guidance for stimulating positive change. At times, this highlights the need to avoid destroying or undermining existing strengths. It is an approach that has a broad potential application, beyond refugee communities.

Community Connections

Community workshops and events can be used for educational and awareness purposes for community people mostly younger ones. For example: live performances such as plays or theatre, puppet shows, Rallies to illustrate parenting skills or reporting sexual abuse. The traditional education process was to learn what to do by watching; engage local youths to get involved through art exhibits, painting, drawing contests etc., the purpose of the activities to aware about the CSA cause and precautions about the same.

Building networks

The program needs networks to protect children, who have experienced abuse, are particularly important when children have been faced sexual abuse continues. Links between organizations and service providers at either end of the CSA are essential if children are to be successfully reintegrated without additional trauma. This would involve ensuring both sides of the chain had good information on the child, their experiences and their home environment.

Programmes aimed at supporting the recovery of children who have experienced abuse, need to recognize both the impact of the event or experiences, on the individual, together with his or her strengths and the resources within any existing support networks. This dual focus is one that is consistent with a number of the proposed standards for service delivery. It would promote a range of rights, looking at the child holistically, and employing a range of expertise to meet different needs.

Public awareness and advocacy

Public awareness of sexual abuse is not immediately part of a recovery strategy; it is though linked in terms of support networks, public awareness and a child’s self-esteem. The information needs to promote an approach that recognizes children as victims of abuse, who need help and support rather than stigma and criminalization. It needs to reflect childhood as a stage during which all young people below the age of 18 merit consideration and protection.

Outcomes of the programme:

Awareness sessions will conduct with students and teachers with an aim to create sensitivity and awareness about the issue of Child Sexual Abuse (CSA) to enable them to protect themselves children from potential abuse.

- Increase the ability to ask for help within and outside the session increased.
- Skills to deal with unpleasant emotions and expressing them safely.
- Skills to share their difficulties without hesitation and find safe ways to deal with their everyday challenges.
- Decrease in mutual blaming and increased in mutual support and being sensitive to each other's need in institutional setups.
- Reduction of self-harming behaviour
- Enhancing relationship and helping to sustain it
- Sahyog has conducted 2 days ToT with senior students to undertake the child sexual abuse programme implementation at their school level. The trained students will empower all other students and sensitize them time to time.
- Sahyog stepped out to implement the Personal Safety Education program and awareness sessions in Delhi MCD Schools where we reached out to over 80,404 children
- Sahyog trained more than 7,255 teachers, social workers, NGO professionals, counsellors for mainstreaming Sahyog's modules of prevention and intervention.
- Sahyog trained more than 11,500 parents and 25,560 community members till now.
- The program is strengthening school teachers to work on one platform to end the cause and as a professional they can recognize and counsel the victim in their schools.
- After workshop/events, Community people raise their voice against child sexual abuse.
- Local events help to spread awareness into the communities to prepare and respond themselves about the CSA.





SAHYOG IN RESCUE MODE

During these Sessions & events we came across many children undergoing the traumatic situations. Few of the parents were not aware about their children's suffering, and those who were knew of it, were in a dilemma that how to deal with it.

With personal counselling of those children, now they are able to lead happy life. The spark in their innocence eyes and glam of happiness on their faces towards their life gave ecstasy of contentment to us. After individual counselling sessions with parents and their children, which worked as a bridge, now they were living their life fullest. After these sessions few of the teachers come forward with these cases, after breaking many barriers & were sorted out. Sahyog wants to SALUATE these teachers for their remarkable performance.

In spite of this Sahyog did rescue operations also and saved girls from the sexual