



From Chairperson's Desk

The COVID-19 pandemic has led us to an unanticipated effect of increased child marriages. Lockdown, no movement, no schools, no mid day meals, no work for adult migrant workers, and no events has led to an unprecedented hike in the number of children getting trapped in marriages. Families under economic distress are now keen to get their daughters married, who they consider as 'burden'. This has also led to increase in children being trafficked for the sake of marriage.

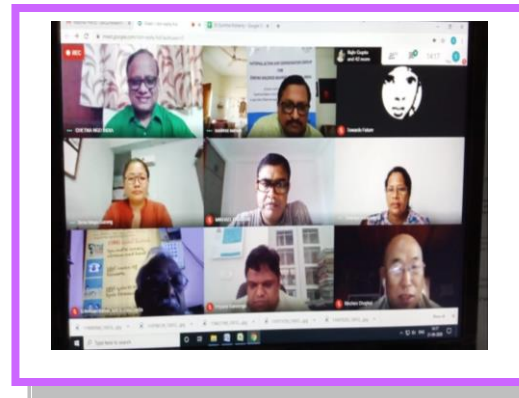
There has been a 17% increase in child marriages compared to 2019. Whereas our years of activities led to a 19% decline previously. This is alarming! COVID-19 pandemic has undone many efforts taken towards curbing this social menace. However, stopping child marriage should be our *Prima facie*.

We all need to rethink our strategies across our areas of work. We need to engage collectively to focus on our mission - to end child marriage and all forms of violence on children.

Ranjan Kumar Mohanty

**Editorial Board – Aditi P Kaur, D. Roshan Kumar
& Ranjan Kanti Panda**

Webinar: COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on violence against children with special focus on child marriage



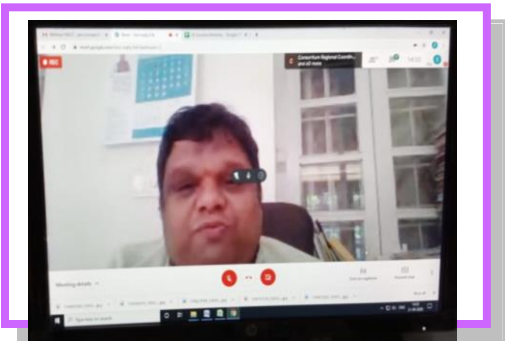
South Asia Regional Webinar on COVID-19 Pandemic and its impact on violence against children with special focus on child marriage was held on 21st September 2020 with the dignitaries and participants from SAARC countries including India, Sri Lanka, Afghanistan and Bangladesh, and Chairman and vice-chairman of different country level NACG EVAC to strengthen the regional cooperation and share on COVID pandemic and its impact on violence against children with special focus on child marriage.

Mr. Ranjan Kumar Mohanty, Chairperson, NACG EVAC, India gave the welcome address and shared the purpose of this webinar. He stated the current alarming situation of child marriage during the COVID19 situation and the necessity of taking preventive measures. This webinar is organised to bring this issue into the forefront and act in the best interest of the children. Mr. Sanjay Gupta, Vice Chair, NACG EVAC, India moderated the sessions.

Addressing the Webinar, **Dr. Rinchen Chopel, Director General, SAIEVAC**, says “The pandemic has created an impact which has put our children in crisis and has also put the whole future and destiny of humanity at risk because children and young people are affected at large.”

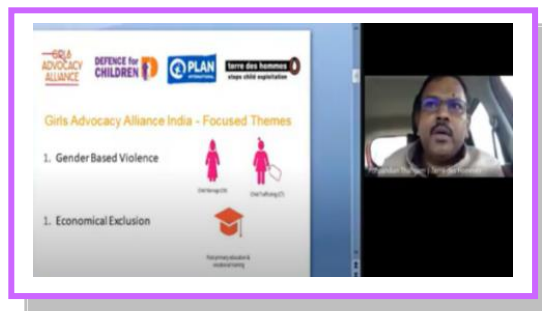


Expressing his gratitude to NACG EVAC, **Mr. Priyank Kanungo, Chairman, NCPDR, Govt. of India, New Delhi** announced that on the very date on 21st Sept. 2020, the NCPDR started a dedicated telecom counselling platform for addressing the issues of the children in distress during COVID19. He also shared the toll free number as **18001212830**, which he requested for publicising the number in the interest of the children. He also states mass awareness and orientation of the local stakeholders is essential to stop this crime. And he puts emphasis on reporting of the cases. The more the cases will be reported and registered, immediate action can be taken by the Govt. to redress the issues, says Mr. Kanungo.



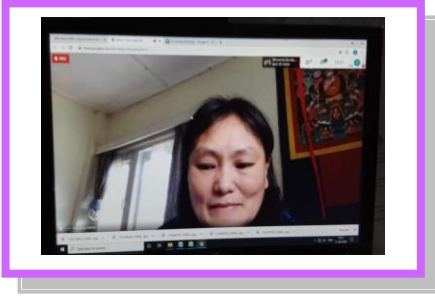
Mr. Thangaperumal Ponpandi, Country Manager, India, TdH NL threw light on the Girls' Advocacy Alliance that works for the rights of the girls and children. He stated the main objective of the program that was to ensure equal rights and opportunities for girls. He says, “this initiative has reached 10 different countries in Asia & Africa region and it provides a platform for raising the issue of child marriage”. Its major focus areas were also highlighted by Mr. Thangaperumal:

- 1) Gender based violence
- 2) Economical exclusion; mostly in young women



Mr. Bikram Srivatsava, Campaign Coordinator of Campaign against child marriage talked about a child marriage case of UP, in the district of Bahri, where the superintendent of police very purposefully activated the grassroots state machinery. So that the police and panchayat at the grassroots level specifically issue order that there should be no child marriage during Akhyaya Tiritiya function.

Ms. Kunzang Lhamo, Bhutan, SAIEVAC Governing Board Member and immediate Past Chair of SAIEVAC Governing Board, said that joint and continuous efforts by all will definitely combat the child marriage menace. Child marriage is rampant in the south Asian region and it is largely affecting the life of the girl children.



Mr. AKM Masud Ali, NACG EVAC Chair, Bangladesh, expressed that in Bangladesh they have adopted the child marriage under the CSAET (child sexual abuse & exploitation) theme. They are in a process of developing a national strategy on CSAET in close coordination with SAIEVAC. They are trying to address the child marriage issue from the perspective of gender-based violence and SRHR of children largely due to social and cultural practices.

Mr. Krushna Chandra Acharya, Chair, NACG Nepal, informed that NACG Nepal in partnership with SAIEVAC and govt. of Nepal will be organising a webinar on “online safety” in near future.

Mr. Benu Maya Gurung, Vice Chairman, NACG Nepal, mentioned that as per data of central bureau of status, 26.3% of children from age of 10-18 yrs are married, and the number is 75.6% within the age group of 17-18 yrs. It shows that even though in Nepal the child marriage is decreasing, but the decrease is among the minors; however, it is high for the teenagers.

Ms. Champa Gunusekera, NACG Chair, Sri Lanka, stated that in pre-COVID situation Sri Lanka’s rate of child marriage was lower than several other south Asian countries. Since Sri Lanka is an island, so the cross-border trafficking for child marriages are minimal.

Mr. Ziyarmal Khan, Chair, NACG Afghanistan, stated that 13-14% population get married before 18 and in the context of Afghanistan, and girls are more vulnerable to child marriage. This is due to the gap in education,

understanding of gender, and gender role which increases the risk of child marriage. It is mainly due to low level of marriage registrations. In a survey, it was reported that 91% marriage goes unregistered. Only 8% marriages have been registered with Afghanistan system.

South Asia Regional EVAC Webinar Series for Strengthening Regional Cooperation & Sharing in solidarity with the Children of SAARC was planned in collaboration with SAIEVAC. The 1st Regional Webinar on “**The COVID Pandemic and its Impact on Children with Focus on Violence against Children**” was organized on virtual platform on 25th August 2020 by SAIEVAC Secretariat and National Action Coordination Group Nepal, in collaboration with NCPA and DUCOM in the support of Swatantrata Abhiyan. The objective of the program is to undertake a regional dialogue bringing together representatives of the NACGs, the civil society platform of SAIEVAC and senior officials of the Governments on the impact of the COVID19 pandemic on violence against children in the regions. There were 49 representatives from five countries of SAARC region. The program was facilitated by Ms. Benu Gurung, Co-chair of NACG Nepal.

The Opening Session was chaired by Mr. Krishna Chandra Acharya, Chair of the NACG Nepal. H.E Parbat Gurung, Hon’ble Minister, Ministry of Women, Children & Senior Citizens was the Chief Guest and H.E Ifham Hussain, Hon’ble State Minister, Ministry of Gender, Family and Social Services of the Maldives, and Board Member of SAIEVAC Governing Board, was the Guest of Honour. Dr. Rinchen Chopel, Director General, SAIEVAC provided the Welcome Remarks.

Dr. Rinchen Chopel highlighted that there is not only risk of economic and social but also risk of human crisis and children are more vulnerable in the pandemic. For addressing this situation, SAIEVAC has been involved in series of webinar and digital conference since last three months with different stakeholders and governments.

Mr. Ranjan Ku Mohanty, Chairperson, NACG India, shared the impact of COVID-19 in India. Mr. Mohanty informed that 447 million school going children have been affected during the pandemic. Mr. Mohanty also raised about online access to children that online safety is emerging in COVID-19 because online teaching is ongoing and children have access on online therefore it is crucial to address the online safety.



Webinar on “National Education Policy: Impact on School Education in Odisha”



Central Government must make more budget allocation for implementation of National Education Policy 2020 said **Samir Ranjan Dash, Minister, School & Mass Education, Odisha** on Sunday. Addressing as Chief Guest in a Webinar on “National Education Policy: Impact on School Education in Odisha”, the Minister emphasized that the ratio of allocation should be 80:20 percent by centre and state respectively for budgeted expenditure.

The webinar was organized by Odisha Alliance for Child Rights (OACR), National Action and Coordination Group for Ending Violence Against Children, India, Odisha chapter, People’s Cultural Centre (PECUC) & AEIN. More than 300 participants attended the webinar. Presiding over this webinar Ranjan Kumar Mohanty, Secretary, PECUC, Chairperson, NACG EVAC India & Chairman, OACR, told that the main purpose of this webinar is to discuss various features of the policy, its impact on school education in Odisha and how best we can utilize the policy for improving the school education in Odisha.

Anuradha Mohanty, Executive Director of PECUC gave the welcome address and **Mr. Prakash Rath, OLS**, Vice Chair of OACR, Convener of NACG Odisha moved the vote of thanks in this webinar.

Joining this webinar as guest and panelist, **Gangadhar Sahoo, Director, SCERT** said that this education policy has focused on 8 key sectors of the education including early childhood care & education, foundation learning, governance model, curriculum reform, teachers education, vocational education etc.

Dr.(Prof) Sitakanta Mishra, Associate Professor, Pandit Dindayal Petroleum University said implementation and restructuring of the education is a big responsibility as the education system aims to create better and responsive citizenry.

Dr.(Prof) Ajit Mohanty, Former Professor in Psychology, JNU said implementing the

education in the mother tongue and other regional language is a welcome step and an opportunity for Odisha as the state has an pre defined model in it. Odisha should focus mother tongue as medium of instruction till 8th standard.

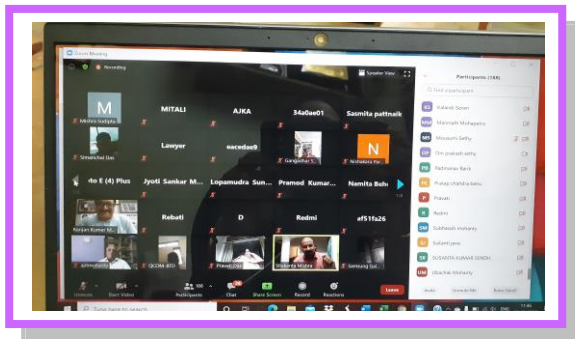
Dr.(Prof) Prithish Chandra Acharya, Regional Institute Of Education, Odisha focusing on curriculum said that both curricular and extracurricular are given importance in the NEP 2020 and which will help to retain children in school.

Dr. Amiya Mohanty, President, FISE & National Convenor, Joint Forum for Movement on Education said there is a need to develop adequate infrastructure and at least 10% of GDP should be spent for education in the budget. Dr. Mohanty also spoke for strengthening early childhood care & education, Aanganwadi Centres.

Prof. Dr. Kumarbar Dash, Former Vice Chancellor of FM University emphasized on inclusiveness and quality teacher.

Kasturi Mohapatra, Former Chairman of OSCPCR, former Chairperson of State Disability Commission, Odisha said about disability issues in the NEP 2020 and said that adequate infrastructure and trained teachers are required to address the issues of children with disability.

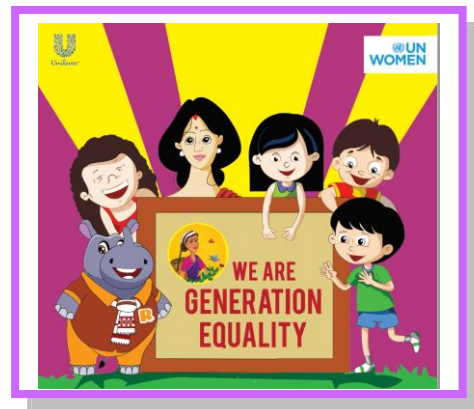
Prakash Mohanty, General Secretary, OSSTA, while welcoming the policy for inclusion of early childhood education with school discussed on curriculum restructuring and teachers' training.



Digital campaign on #GenerationEquality: Contact Base (www.banglanatak.com)

Due to COVID-19 crisis, women and children's vulnerability to violence increased in the time of lockdown as they were bound to confined spaces with their potential perpetrators for undefined periods of time during stress and uncertainty. To raise awareness on COVID and the differential impact on women and children, posters and audio stories highlighting certain incidences of violence and how women can seek help and protect themselves were used to build awareness.

Fun and engaging activity books, animations and films for children were used to promote and encourage learning of life skills, healthy habits and positive values in them. To strengthen the efforts of the initiative, in June 2020, the women and adolescents are celebrating #GenerationEquality through a digital campaign.



This is a rights-based campaign that seeks to empower women and children and facilitate fulfilment of their rights such as equal pay and opportunities and end to all forms of violence against them. They are making pledges and sending in their posters, write-ups, stories and sharing efforts that they will undertake to ensure the goals of the campaign.

COVID 19 Response by CASP, Delhi

CASP, Delhi Unit has been working on improving the educational level of the children and women in the villages & urban slums of **Sec-50, Sadarpur, Sarfabad & Barola (Noida)** and a resettlement colony, **Madanpur Khadar (New Delhi)**. The people with whom they work are basically migrants who work as construction laborers, maids, shopkeepers, daily wage laborers, roadside vendors, etc whose life & income has been greatly affected by the ongoing COVID pandemic. As a precautionary measure, CASP had started awareness generation programme ever since the cases began surfacing in other parts of India.

They ensured that the community people had adequate knowledge about the virus and were following the government safety guidelines. Classes and program activities that usually involve a large number of people were discontinued and the beneficiaries were advised to stay at home. Keeping social distancing in mind and with proper precautions, the educators and staff members conducted home-visits to disseminate information about the virus and also enquire about their knowhow. A big concern was to know about those who had left prior to or during the lockdown.

After the announcement of lockdown, telephonic interaction continued with the beneficiaries regularly enquiring about their health, education, employment status, etc. WhatsApp groups were formed and information including awareness video, home work, & learning materials were regularly shared with them by the educators to support them in their studies. Regular follow-ups of the assigned work were done by the teachers and oral assessments were also done towards the end of the month. Through these groups, videos and COVID related guidelines were shared to keep the beneficiaries updated about the pandemic and other developments happening in Delhi & their own native state. In the process, the beneficiaries also learned how to make their

own masks with the available resources at home.



The beneficiaries have also been sharing their issues over the phone which is mostly concerning with ration, protective gears like masks, and educational materials. The volunteers living in Madanpur Khadar & Noida made sure that the needy received what they required at this critical time. The outcome of all the awareness and precautions taken early on by CASP Delhi is that no cases of COVID have been reported from any of the families that were followed up by CASP.

Webinar: Safety and protection of children from online sexual exploitation during the present covid-19 situation

The webinar was organised by District Child Protection Unit and Butterflies on 28th August 2020. A total of 100 people participated in this webinar.

Mr. Arunendra Narayan, District Child Protection Officer South; Ms. Rita Singh, former Member of DCPCR; Mr. Varun Pathak, Legal Consultant WCD; Mr. Dattatrey Rai, Rehabilitation Therapist; Mr. Mohd. Salam Khan; Ms. Seema, Inspector CWA Cell; Mr. J.B. Oli, Head Programme, Butterflies; Ms. Anita Singh, District Child Protection Officer Southeast were joined as panellist in this webinar.

Discussion was held on the exposure of children to internet when they are taking their online classes in this pandemic situation. Any pop-up advertisement can be opened by children, which could hamper their safety.

Everyone focused on the necessity of monitoring children's activity on internet which can only be done by parent/guardian. Initiative is needed to empower and aware parents about the same. The role of District Child protection Unit, Childline, Child Welfare Committee, Commission in this situation was discussed. Childline shared the cases related to online exploitation.

CINI's Response Programme in West Bengal and Jharkhand- COVID19, Cyclone Amphan & Assam Flood

From April till the end of August 2020, CINI was successful in reaching out directly to 90,978 families in the 3 states (West Bengal, Jharkhand and Assam—right from remote tea-garden worker communities in North Bengal and Assam, to remote tribal districts of Jharkhand, up to the riverine blocks of Sundarbans) with its relief measures.



In Odisha, UNICEF and CINI worked together with the district authorities for continuation of basic health care services in the community along with counseling for COVID sensitive household level behavior and improving child nutrition with support of frontline workers. The CINI project team collected relevant programmatic information about the health and nutrition services delivery in the community and developed mitigation plans for four aspirational districts of southern and northern parts of Odisha in coordination with district

authorities. In the month of June and July 2020, all staff members of CINI from all four states and all state/district/field units and headquarter donated around Rs. 15.00 Lakhs to the fundraising initiative of CINI for COVID-19 crisis.

Under CINI Jharkhand's Adolescent Empowerment programme a campaign called 'Creative Lockdown' was organized for involving children during the nationwide lockdown period. The unexpected lockdown affected the children the most as they were detached from studies, friends, play time and daily chores which have a psychosocial impact. During the lockdown, when schools are closed, CINI Jharkhand made efforts to engage the children stuck in various government homes in a constructive manner. In this direction, children in Gumla, Latehar, Garhwa and Balrampur districts, were provided with a child engagement kit containing papers, pens, crayons, water colors, etc.

Webinar: Prevention of Child Trafficking

Awareness amongst Parents and Conscious efforts by Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), government functionaries, child protection workforce and all stakeholders is essential to prevent child trafficking, says **Director General of Prisons Santosh Kumar Upadhyay** in a webinar of Child Protection Stakeholders on Prevention of Child Trafficking organized by People's Cultural Centre (PECUC), Odisha in collaboration with Girls Advocacy Alliance, RAIDS, Terre Des Hommes, NL on 30th Sept 2020.



Mr. Upadhyay further stated that allurements are the major cause of these types of crime and Covid-19 pandemic has aggravated the situation due to increasing involvement of children in social media. He emphasized that online safety of the children and awareness is essential to prevent the crime. The webinar was attended by 100 participants from different districts of Odisha.

Ranjan Kumar Mohanty, Secretary, PECUC gave the welcome address and also shared the purpose of this webinar. He stated that in the current pandemic scenario the vulnerability of the children has increased everywhere and it is necessary that we all should do what is in the best interest of the child. **Dr. Minakhi Panda, Board Member, PECUC** moderated the session. **Anuradha Mohanty, Executive Director of PECUC** gave the vote of thanks.

Subrat Kumar Panda, TDH, NL informed that we all need to work to provide equal opportunity to young girls and now in different states they have formed alliance in national and state level to implement the programme and bring down child marriage which is a form of child trafficking.

A Panel Discussion was held on **“Covid 19 Pandemic: Preventing Child Trafficking in Odisha context”**. Madhumita Das, Consultant, WCD, Government of Odisha, Bisweswari Mohanty, Advocate, Banishree Pattnaik, DCPO, Khordha, Manabendranath Mandal, SLARTC/ATSEC, & Thematic Head, Child trafficking, NACG EVAC India joined as the panelists and discussed on the various aspects of child trafficking. They discussed on various legislative provisions, schemes and programmes of Government and various actions by different stakeholders. Panelists and speakers in the open house emphasized on community level child protection mechanism & institutions, stringent legislation and law enforcement, a state action plan for prevention of child trafficking, constitution and strengthening of village level child protection committees. They also suggested for psychosocial counseling to

parents & children, strengthening families, their income level, online safety measures, proper implementation of law, proper rehabilitation & integration, proper registration of FIR, reporting of the cases, vigilant of the stakeholders at the grass root level, proper cooperation, coordination and linkage with different departments of the government is essential to bring down the crime. A vigilant community can prevent child trafficking was what all panelists agreed upon.

Training with children on Child Protection to end child sexual abuse and exploitation

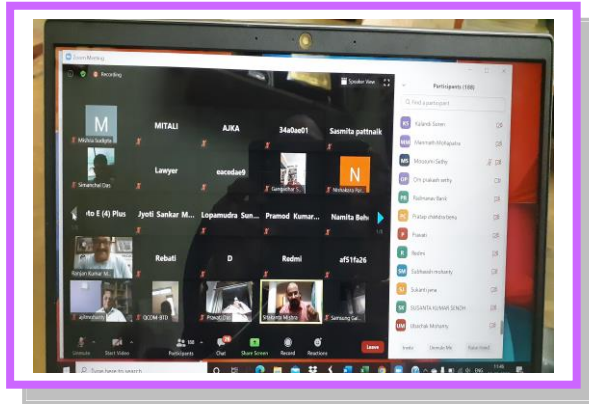
Training with adolescent boys was organised by NACG EVAC India on 26th September, 2020. The training was organised by Peoples' Cultural Centre (PECUC), Odisha and facilitated by Asha Deep Foundation, Delhi, and in collaboration with World Vision, India, WVG and BMZ.

42 children participated and were educated about their rights & various protection mechanisms including POCSO Act. All the safety guidelines like social distancing, sanitization, mask usage, health check, etc., were followed.



CWC member of North East Sister Fini Jose talked about the issues like substance abuse, sexual abuse, illiteracy, dropout, and use of children for exchanging substance/drugs. Ms. Zeba Khan from NACG EVAC India gave a brief introduction about NACG EVAC India and shared the purpose of this training. Training on Life skill education was given by Mr. Anil Paul,

RP. Mr. Shashank Shekhar, RP took session on Sexual abuse and POCSO Act. Similarly training with adolescent girls was organised on 28th Sept 2020. 45 girls participated in this training programme.



Excerpt from Meetings

National Executive Committee Meeting

National Executive Committee meeting of NACG EVAC was held on 29th July 2020 on virtual platform. The discussion points of the meeting were:

- Annual Report – 2019-20, unaudited statement of accounts – 2019-20 approved.
- A brief presentation by Mr. Mikhael Pradhan, the thematic head CSA on activity report of the Project – “Child Protection Workforce Capacity Building to End Child Sexual Abuse in India” supported by (World Vision), its budget details and future plan of action.
- Future plan of action of NACG EVAC India
- National Board Meeting- If physical meeting cannot be possible by December, then meeting shall be held on virtual platform.

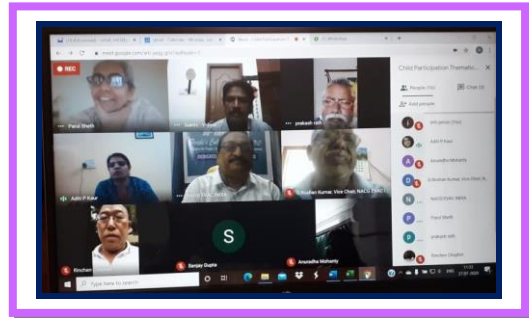
All EC Members, Mr. D. Roshan Kumar from SEEDS, Mr. Sanjay Gupta from CHETNA, Mr. Sanjay Mishra from BKS; Mr. Mikhael Pradhan from WVI, Mr. Ranjan Panda from CINI, Ms. Aditi Kaur from MCF, Mr. Prakash Rath from OLS, Mr. Joseph Victor Raj from Hope; Mr.

Chiranjeeb Kakoty from NESPYM; Mr. Manabendra Nath Mandal from SLART were presented and participated in the meeting. Ms. Aditi P. Kaur, Thematic Head, Child Participation gave a brief presentation; Mr. Ranjan Kumar Mohanty, Chairperson, NACG EVAC India facilitated the meeting and Dr. Rinchen Chopel, Director General, SAIEVAC also gave his valuable inputs.

Child Participation Strategy Building Meeting

The meeting was held on 27th July 2020 and following points were discussed on virtual platform:

- Possible strategy for engaging with children in COVID 19 situation
- Building National platform for Children.
- Child Participation Strategy for NACG India.



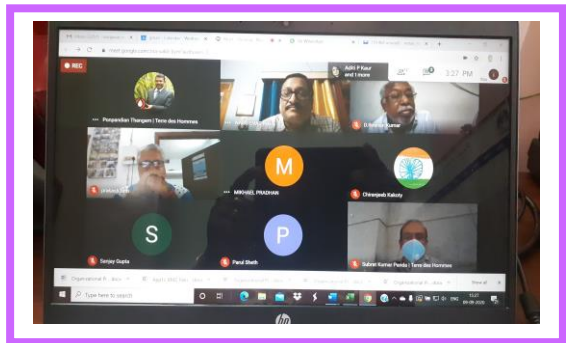
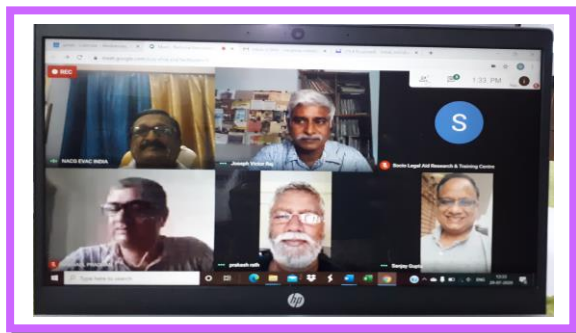
Dr. Rinchen Chopel, Director General, SAIEVAC; Mr Ranjan Kumar Mohanty, Chairperson, NACG EVAC India; Ms. Aditi P Kaur, MCF & Thematic Head Child Participation; D. Roshan Kumar, Vice Chair, NACG EVAC India; Mr. Mikhael Pradhan, WVI; Mr. Sanjay Gupta, CHETANA, Mr. Prakash Rath, OLS, Ms. Parul Sheth, SHAISAB; Mr. C. Jim Jesudoss, Sakthi Vidiyal; and Ms. Anuradha Mohanty, PECUC participated in this meeting.

Ms. Aditi Kaur, MCF, Thematic head Child participation welcomed all participants. She highlighted the fact that 50% of the children do not have access to smart phones. She also stated how low internet connectivity has become an issue in the mountainous areas. It was decided to undertake the following actions:

- ✚ Mapping of organisations working for child participation

- ✚ online training/workshop/webinars for member organisations on child participation
- ✚ Online survey on children situation by capturing children’s voice & opinion.
- ✚ Initiate a process of developing a National platform for children
- ✚ The Members participating in this meeting shall form a team and take forward the agenda of child participation for NACG.

Virtual Meeting: Child Marriage



A virtual meeting was held on 9th Sept 2020 among the NACG-EVAC India Thematic lead persons and representatives of TdH, Netherland on to discuss on the upcoming regional webinars on child marriage to be held with the support of TdH, Netherland on Child Marriage. Mr. Ranjan Kumar Mohanty, Chairperson, NACG-EVAC India; Mr. Sanjay Gupta, Vice Chairperson, NACG-EVAC India; Mr. Mikhael Kumar Pradhan, Head, Advocacy, WVI; Mr. Thangaperumal Ponpandi, Country Manager, India, TdH NL; Mr. Subrat Kumar Panda, TdH NL; Ms. Parul Seth, Shaisav; Ms. Aditi Chauhan, MCF; Dr. Chiranjib kakoty; Mr. Prakash Rath,

OLS; D. Roshan Kumar, SEED, Vice Chair, NACG EVAC India; Mr. Manish, Maharashtra; Dr. Mitali Mohanty, MIS Coordinator, NACG India participated in this meeting.

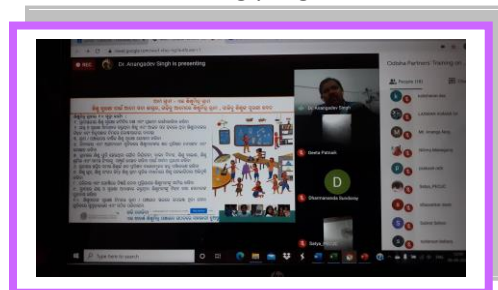
Mr. Ranjan Kumar Mohanty, Chairperson, NACG-EVAC India gave the welcome note and informed regarding TdH NL support to organize 5 regional workshops.

Following decisions were taken in the meeting:

- D. Roshan Kumar, SEED & Vice Chair took the responsibility.
- Mr. Sanjay Gupta, CHETNA & Vice Chair for North Region.
- For North East Region: Dr. Chiranjib Kakoty, NESPYM was given responsibility.
- For Eastern Region: Anjay Ku Mishra (BKS), Jharkhand shall take the responsibility.
- For Western Region it was decided that Mr. Mohanty and D. Roshan Kumar to coordinate & child rights collectives, Gujarat shall be requested to take responsibility.

Odisha Partner’s online training on CPC Formation

Online training on Child Protection Committee formation as part of implementation of project “Child Protection Workforce Capacity Building to End Child Sexual Abuse in India” was organized virtually with participation of partner organizations from 6 project district locations, namely; Khurda, Ganjam, Kandhamal, Koraput, Balasore and Sambalpur. Anuradha Mohanty, Executive Director, PECUC and Dr Anangdev Singh, World Vision and project team facilitated the training program.





In India, more than **13 million** girls under 19 years of age are married.

#StopChildMarriage




Education can be the prerequisite to end Child Labour.

#StopChildLabour





35% of children experienced some form of corporal punishment at least once per year.

#stopcorporalpunishment




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