



National Action and Coordination Group for Ending Violence against Children NACG EVAC, India

Volume -1, Issue -3

NEWSLETTER NOVEMBER, 2019

From Chairperson's Desk

Child Rights are specialised human rights that apply to all human beings below the age of 18. A historic promise was made in 1989 by the world leaders when they decided to adopt the United Nations Convention on Rights of the Child (UNCRC). 30 years on, CRC recognises rights of every child, and their right to special care and protection. This has brought about a wave of change; not only adults but children have started to stand up for their rights.

We, as NACG-EVAC India team, re-commit to put children first and continue our actions for ending violence against children. It is time to take stock of the progress till now, and work towards further strengthening of child rights based on the changing global, regional and national context.

On the occasion of CRC@30, I am deeply thankful to congratulate to all our members & partners for their tireless efforts in ensuring rights of the children. We have to go miles away to ensure that every child gets every right and protected from all forms of violence, abuse and exploitation.

Ranjan Kumar Mohanty
Chairperson, NACG EVAC India

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

India takes up Chairmanship of SAIEVAC Governing Board



The 8th Governing Board Meeting (GBM) of South Asian Initiative to End Violence against children (SAIEVAC), an apex body of SAARC, held in Maldives from 17th to 19th October 2019 being organized by the SAIEVAC Regional Secretariat, in collaboration with the Ministry of Gender, Family and Social Services, Government of Maldives and Key Partners. The progress of actions taken or being taken for achieving the desired outcomes were assessed, since the 7th GBM held in Bhutan in May 2018. The 8th GBM has fore played its role when the SRS is now under significant pressure to reassess the journey of SAIEVAC, given the enormous challenges of resources to keep the movement running. The objective of the GBM was to review the progress and challenges of the SAIEVAC movement and brainstorm on how the movement could be better focused and accelerated; to review follow up actions taken on the recommendations of the 7th GBM; and to discuss the scope and venue for the 9th GBM and the 5th SAIEVAC Ministerial Meeting.

The Inaugural Ceremony of the 8th GBM on the 17th of October was presided over by H.E Shidhatha Shareef, Hon'ble Minister, Ministry of Gender, Family and Social Services as the Chief Guest along with other senior dignitaries from the Government of Maldives, President of NHRC, UNICEF and NACG Members being few names among them.

Handing over the Chair of Governing Board from Bhutan to India



The inaugural session of the 8th GBM was held in an open Forum & witnessed the handing over ceremony of the Chair, Governing Board, SAIEVAC from Bhutan to India. Ms. Astha Saxena Khatwani, IAS, Joint Secretary to Govt. of India, Ministry of Women and Child Development was felicitated on this occasion and took over the Chairmanship for India. Mr. Ravindra Pratap Singh, IAS, Deputy Secretary to Govt. of India, Ministry of WCD and SAIEVAC Coordinator of India and Mr. Ranjan Kumar Mohanty, Chairperson NACG EVAC, India were also present on the occasion.



The 8th GBM in consultation with the Government of Maldives scheduled a one day 'Open Forum' for the GB Members and other stake holders to have a free, frank and critical discourse on the SAIEVAC Movement while taking stock of the journey till date. The participants to the Open Forum consisted of all the Governing Board Members, NACG Members, NHRC Representatives and collaborating partners.

The Open Forum considered the following core areas: Objectives and Expected Outcome of the Open Forum, Relevance and Suitability of the SAIEVAC Platform, Current Thematic Focus Areas and approach to address VaC, Emerging Challenges/Issues – Organizational, Thematic and Regional Dynamics.

The participants strongly felt the need for all to contribute in strengthening the institutional capacity of SAIEVAC (technical and financial) so that it can provide greater support to move the EVAC agenda, both at national and regional level. The participants also recommended the following areas for prioritisation in the strategic approach of SAIEVAC movement: Investing efforts in increasing visibility of SAIEVAC at local, national, regional and global platforms; Focusing on implementation/mainstreaming of regional plans into national plans using experience gathered so far; Focusing efforts on promoting cross border and bilateral cooperation among member states on the issues of trafficking and child labour; More concerted efforts to address the emerging challenges/wider dimensions of digital/online platforms; Prioritising cross learning and sharing due to common issues; Strengthening programmatic and policy components on child participation and working with young people; and Continuing to explore and expand partnerships with wider stakeholders such as Parliamentarians, Inter-faith Organizations, Judicial/Legal Fraternities, Private Sectors, Youth Networks, etc.



A Final Draft Regional Action Plan (RAP) on Child Sexual Abuse, Exploitation including Online Exploitation (CSAE &OE) was presented on the 2nd day of the meeting. RAP was a product of extensive joint efforts by all Member States and collaborating partners who unanimously endorsed the RAP. The directives of the RAP will be for the period 2019-2023 with a review to be undertaken in 2021. The GBM also noted with encouragement that different Member States are in varying stages of finalising Child Rights Acts and policies that mainstream the CSAE & OE issues and that South Asia can expect a concerted drive in addressing the issue as we move forward. In this meeting, the SRS also scheduled a Pre-tech session on Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights (SHR) using Child Marriage as an entry point. The Regional Action Plan to End Child Marriage in South Asia, 2018-2023 was formally accepted as implementation years.

The Chairperson in her closing remarks highlighted those significant areas that were covered during the 8th GBM which will drive the SAIEVAC movement forward.

Pre Technical Session on Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights

The SAIEVAC Regional Secretariat (SRS) as part of its ongoing efforts to creating capacity building opportunities and reinforcing certain priority/emerging issues that affect the thematic areas of SAIEVAC, scheduled a Pretech session on Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights (SRHR) using Child Marriage as an entry point. GBM endorsed the following points to move the discussions forward considering the submission of DG on the discussions of Pretech:

- Given the wide range of issues around SRHR that impacts on our work around VaC, the Pre-tech recommends for a dedicated Regional Workshop on SRHR that can identify key challenges and areas of focus within the SAIEVAC thematic focus areas; and
- Taking forward the decision of the 4th SAIEVAC Ministerial Meeting on POCSO Seminar and the decision of the 8th GBM Open Forum on the development of a 'Compendium of Laws' before the

Children's Participatory Audit of Rights & Realities of Childhood in India using Score-Card: 2019

(A joint Programme by World Vision India, NACG EVAC India and India Alliance for Child Rights (IACR))

The year 2019 being the 30th Anniversary year of UNCRC, the whole world is gearing up to observe in special ways to draw attentions of the duty bearers and general public as how far countries have progressed in realisation of Child Rights.

To commemorate this event in a significant way, World Vision India (WV India) in partnership with

Pre Technical Session on Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights



NACG EVAC, India and the We Can Women Coalition Trust through their project India Alliance for Child Rights (IACR) have agreed to conduct a national level Child Rights Assessment by using a score-card tool. The scorecard will be used to collate views, perception, opinions and recommendations of children, parents/care givers and service providers on realisation of child rights in India. The consolidated information will be further published as a national level Child Rights report in Dec'2019. This review assessment would aim to reflect national commitments and accepted obligations to honour and apply the UNCRC for the benefit of children in India.

Objectives of this score card assessment are to collect child rights data from children, parents, care-givers, and service providers by using a score card tool/instrument through focus group discussion in 70 districts. The data will be used to prepare a Child Rights Status Report by an expert team; by using an ancillary score-card tool/instrument. The report will be released in a national event on 10th Dec 2019 in New Delhi. There will be six regional launches organized in different parts of the country following the national launch event.

The future prospective of this assessment are to promote and develop a Civil Society Network/Alliance at the national and state levels to strengthen child rights and advocate to end all forms of violence against children, to develop and promote an assessment mechanism to regularly review CRC related commitments, implementation of CRC commitments such as, the National Policy for Children (NPC) and National Plan of Action for Children (NPAC) including laws, programme and budget for children at all levels, to promote and engage CSO collective reporting on India UNCRC reporting, to develop attention to SDGs accountability by promoting focus on impact on children, to undertake joint research and advocacy projects/assignments, to enhance accountability among stakeholders for child rights, and to end violence against children.

Innovation of Mandra for Education of Downtrodden

Mandra Lions Club started its journey for the betterment of the vulnerable sections of the society in the scattered hamlets of Ajodhya hills of Bagmundi Block in 1992-93. Most of the inhabitants of the area are tribals. They maintain their livelihood on forest products and work as daily labourers. Being illiterate most of them are ignorant about the importance of their children's education. Santali is their mother tongue. In Govt. school, absence of Santali language teacher was a major setback. The children were usually engaged in either tending cattle or looking after the youngest ones when their family was out in the forest or working as labourers. Children could not go to school for the scattered hamlets and geographical barrier. Some well-off families used to send their children to school, but as they could not follow the lesson from the non-tribal teacher they also became drop-outs.

This was the situation when Mandra Lion club intervened and prepared a list of children and opened a pre-primary centre in certain points of the hamlets for the age group of 2.5 to 5 years for inculcating school going habit and also preparing them to admit in the primary school. Through community meeting, the guardians were motivated about the importance of their children's education. Teachers from the local tribal community were recruited and trained to teach the kids through tribal language as per the recommendations of Kothari Commission about the medium of instruction through mother tongue. They developed TLM (work card, latter card, Number card etc.) on Alchiki script beside Bengali and a book to learn Santali through Bengali. As per the Government norms, there are justified number of primary schools, but children from scattered hamlets could not avail the opportunity. They also launched a **School in Bag Program** for the children within the age group of 5. Through this programme, a teacher with a bag of TLM moves to different points of the hamlet during leisure time of

children and teach them in Santali language as pre requisite for admission in schools. Their innovation and initiative brought desired result and they replicated the programme in Murshidabad district as well. They motivated the tribal community people to create pressure for appointment of Santali language teachers and to introduce teaching through Santali language in tribal dominated primary schools. Advocacy at Block and District level was also created to achieve this aim.



After much efforts and discussion Government appointed at least one Santali language known Para teacher in the tribal dominated area schools and even published text book in Alchiki script. Currently, few tribal youths have been appointed as para teachers in some of the schools in the Ajodhya hill area.

News from States

CRC@30:

Child led Child Rights Situation Analysis & Campaign for Promoting Child Rights Culture by Odisha Alliance for Child Rights

This year we celebrate the **30th Anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)**, the most widely ratified human rights instrument in international law till date. CRC is a human rights treaty that specifically grants everyone under the age of 18 various civil, social, political, economic, and cultural rights, and sets minimum standards for the protection

of these rights. With the advent of the CRC, it is important to take stock and celebrate the progress of child protection.

Child-led research is a participatory programme that aims to engage with children and young people to conduct child rights situation analysis. Child-led research also provides children and young people with new avenues to influence decision-making by using their findings on issues relevant to them and thereby seeking commitments and actions of stakeholders and decision-makers. The methodology includes training on child-friendly research skills and other competencies such as creative writing, negotiation, and advocacy.

The success of the project also relies on a skilled adult facilitator who is knowledgeable and experienced in child participation, research methodologies and child-led advocacy work. Child-led research is an empowering approach to engage children and young people as active participants in campaigning, while recognizing them as competent social actors who can make decisions in their lives and can be active players of their own protection.

The proposed project will empower the children on research skill, enhance their knowledge base on child rights, negotiation and advocacy skill, create platform for children from village to state level, so that they can share their perception, need and choice on which the adult duty bearers can build their commitments & actions for realization of children's rights. **11,953 children participated in the whole process.**

Odisha Alliance for Child Rights (OACR), an alliance of 62 member organizations and 212 associate partner organisations, having presence in 30 districts of Odisha and coordinated by its Secretariat- People's Cultural Centre (PECUC) shall implement the project. The target areas are **30 districts, 32 blocks & 91 Gram Panchayat, 273 villages & 5 urban local bodies (19 wards)** of Bhubaneswar, Cuttack, Balesore, Berhampur and Sambalpur, within 3

months. The objectives are to undertake child led child rights situation analysis in Odisha on the occasion of CRC@30, to facilitate strategic & critical reflections through interface of children with duty bearers at Gram Panchayat, District & State level and to undertake social media & IEC campaigns. The process & outcome of this project shall have greater impact to create awareness & educate children & other key stakeholders on child rights. Actions shall be undertaken by targeted GPCP, DCPC & Panchayat functionaries, District administration & line depts., Government, civil society organisations, business houses based on the present situation, need & choice of children for realisation of children's rights with focus on water & sanitation, nutrition, education & protection.

UNCRC@30 Celebrated in Bhubaneswar



Focus Group Discussion by Children

Children interface with Minister(s) and Key Stakeholders

The 30th Anniversary of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) was celebrated at IDCOL Auditorium. The august occasion was organised by OACR, UNICEF, Odisha State Commission for Protection of Child Rights and PECUC. The interim report of a study, i.e. *Child-led Child Rights Situation Analysis in Odisha*, was shared by the children which focused on their needs, aspirations and recommendations to break out of the barriers in the way to their overall development. Child researchers from different districts participated in the event and presented their views and research findings to the esteemed guests chairing the occasion, Mr. Naba Kishore Dash, Health Minister, Mr. Samir Ranjan Dash, Education Minister, Ms. Tukuni Sahoo, Minister of Woman and Child Development, Ms. Sandhyabati Pradhan, Chairperson, OSCPCR, Subas Singh, Chairman, OBOCWB, Ms. Monica Nelson, Chief of Field Office, UNICEF Odisha, Mr. Pradeep Biswal, IAS, Addl. Secretary (Finance), and Mr. Ranjan Kumar Mohanty, Chairman, OACR. 217 child researchers reached out to 11776 children throughout the state during the survey and the final report will come out soon.

Mr. Ranjan Kumar Mohanty welcomed all stating that in the present time, there is a need to create a culture where all need to listen to children. He also said that it is the largest ever survey done by children and for children in India. Mr. Naba Kishore Dash, Minister of Health said that if children are sensitised and made aware of their roles and responsibilities, then they will carry forward the monitoring work. Mr. Samir Ranjan Dash, Minister of Education said that children of present days are fortunate as they are getting a platform to share their issues which was not the case few years back. In order to respond to the questions of the children, he shared the activities taken over by Govt. of Odisha especially for strengthening the quality of education. He answered to various questions raised by children relating to issues like non-availability of playground, school boundary wall, etc. Tukuni Sahoo, Minister of Woman and Child Development briefly responded to the questions asked by the children like the process adopted by Govt. of Odisha for construction of AWC building, toilet & drinking water facilities at AWC. Sandhyabati Pradhan emphasized to

Contd:

provide opportunities to children for participation in different developmental activities. She added up saying that public hearing can be used as a tool to address the issues of the children in districts where major issues are found. This kind of survey is surprisingly unique, said Monica Nelson of UNICEF. She congratulated the children for confidently questioning the ministers and conducting the survey. She was happy for children coming forward to discuss their issues and at the same time felt sad for the challenges faced by them. She ended stating the need to think & reflect on children's issues and come up with solutions. S. Pradeep Biswal also thanked the efforts of child researchers for conducting such a mega research and gathering the valuable findings. Mr. Subash Singh said that along with UNICEF & PECUC the government will take effort in doing away all the atrocities on children. The vote of thanks was given by Ms. Usharani Behera.

Panchayat Elections and Children – Children Handed Over Memoranda to Candidates in Uttarakhand

The Mountain Children's Foundation is an organization that works in the mountainous state of Uttarakhand in India. It focuses on a child-driven model which equips children with knowledge, leadership and communication skills that creates a platform for them to discuss their concerns and find realistic, locally tenable solutions.



The Mountain Children's Foundation is working with children in 27 villages and has till date formed 27 Bal Sangthans in the Vikas Nagar Block of Dehradun Uttarakhand which are in line with the Article 15 of UNCRC. The MCF firmly believes that the children have a right to share information and raise their concerns with their communities and leaders of their community. Through these Bal Sangthans the children conduct various activities in their villages.

The panchayat at the village level need to be an integral part in ensuring the rights of children in their village and for achieving this Panchayats need to be aware about the issues of the children in their village. The children with the help of MCF and in partnership with NACG EVAC India drafted a memorandum



and presented it to the candidates standing for elections to the post of Pradhan in each of the 27 villages. Each candidate signed the memorandum and promised that they would take steps to mitigate the issues that the children had raised.

The major issues raised by the children in the memorandum were focused on drinking water facility in school during summer, repairing of panchayat ghar with electricity facilities, repairing of road to school, providing *dari* or mat to children for their meeting, separate toilet for both boys and girls and also arrangement for regular cleaning, participation in all activities of Bal Sangathan, providing sports materials at village level and organising child protection committee meetings at village level to take up the issues of the children on priority basis.

58 candidates from 13 Panchayats were met by the children from 27 Bal sangthans.

Regional Training on Child Protection System



Plan International's Asia Regional Office (PlanARO) held a two-day regional training on **Child Protection Systems: Key components, functions and actors** from October 15-16 in Bangkok, Thailand. The training brought together 22 participants from 13 Asian countries, including representatives of CRC Asia and NACG from ASEAN and SAARC countries. Representative countries were: Bhutan, Cambodia, India, Indonesia, Republic of Korea, Laos PDR, The Maldives, Malaysia, Myanmar, Nepal, The Philippines, Vietnam and Thailand.



This training was followed by a discussion on Increased Accountability of ASEAN and SAARC for the Realisation of Children's Right to Protection. Plan International Asia Regional Office Annual Project Progress Review Meeting for Child Rights Coalition Asia (SRC Asia) & Children as Zones of Peace National Campaign (CZOP) was also held on 17th and 18th October 2019, Bangkok, Thailand.

News in Brief

Asian Children Summit

Asian Children's Summit on the occasion of CRC@30 was organized by SAIEVAC Regional Secretariat (SRS), CRC Asia and ACWC Thailand for ASIAN Region, held at Bangkok from 25th Nov to 30th Nov 2019. Four child representatives namely Preetimayee Sahoo, Milonee Mishra, Pratihit Singh and Sasha Agrawal from India participated in it. They were accompanied by three adult chaperones. (Details in next issue..)

Mr. Ranjan Kumar Mohanty, Chairperson, NACG, India, was invited to a **One day National Consultation on Child Rights and New Education Policy, 2019**, organized by National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) on 10th of October at Gulmohar Hall, India Habitat Centre, New Delhi to give his inputs on New Education Policy.

In the next issue of NACG Newsletter, we are planning to carry out a special bulletin on CRC@30 observation reports. We expect write up from all our member organizations and partners for this purpose. All are requested to send their write up to nacgevac.india@gmail.com as earliest as possible.

Published by: NACG EVAC India,
Secretariat, PECUC Coordination Office,
House No.-63, Phase-2, Indraprastha,
Pokhariput, Bhubaneswar,
Odisha, India, Pin-751020.
Telephone No-+91-674 2382175/2352278,
Tel. Fax: +91-6742352232.
E- mail: nacgevac.india@gmail.com
For private circulation only