

Introduction to Incremental Training Modules under Safe Childhood Programme



Children are considered the biggest assets of mankind. But even today, their situation is a matter of major concern in many countries. India is also one of such countries. Lack of safety and backwardness of children in India gets highlighted from these facts: Children do not get basic access to health and education; millions of children are forced into child labour; children are trafficked with intent of abuse and many children loiter on streets owing to poverty and discrimination.

The situation of children is all the more worrisome as shown from these figures: During 1999-2011, sex ratio of 0-6 years children fell from 945 to 914 showing discrimination towards girls. According to Sample Registration System national Infant Mortality Rate in 2010 was at 47. Female infants mortality rate has been higher than male infant mortality rate in all the states. As per figures from 2009, only 61% children between 12-23 months of age were completely immunised. As per National Family Health Survey-3, 11.8% children are engaged in child labour either for their own families or for others. Figures show that crime against children in the country also increased from 58,224 in 2013 to 89,423 in 2014. In addition, evil practice of child marriage has been rampant in the country.

Seeing insecure and pathetic condition of children that has emerged out these figures and facts, UNICEF and other non-governmental organisations (NGOs) felt the need for intervention. Accordingly, a decision to develop the 'Safe Childhood Programme' was taken.

The initiative of UNICEF to adopt 'Safe Childhood Programme' as a behavioural practice has got inspiration from The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. It articulates the universal rights of children to survival, development, protection and participation. Therefore UNICEF has made these four indicators as the basis while making modules for 'Safe Childhood Programme'. All components related to rights of children, whether they are related to health, development, and education of protection of rights have been included in this. Another important fact is that all these indicators are based on life cycle approach of a child.

This series of nine incremental learning modules have been developed for training panchayat members based on four indicators of 'Safe Childhood Programme' - child survival, child education and development, child protection and child participation.

Objectives of Safe Childhood Programme incremental module series:

At the end of the series, participants will be able to:

- ➔ Know main issues related to Safe Childhood Programme
- ➔ Understand the roles of panchayat members, village based organisations and child protection samitis in resolving issues related to children

- ⇒ Understand how developing Safe Childhood Programme can contribute in improving the current scenario related to health, development, and education of children
- ⇒ Understand how messages given in these nine modules can be implemented at the village level
- ⇒ Understand how these nine modules are linked to each other and how they can collectively be the foundation of Safe Childhood Programme

Safe Childhood Programme is a model which is being implemented in selected 11 states through a nation wide campaign. It is a joint initiative of NCPDR, UNICEF, Plan India, CRY and Action Aid whose main objective is to ensure child survival, development, protection and participation.

The main principles and values of this initiative are: All interventions and activities would be child centric. Interventions will protect children from harm and ensure their basic human rights, including their right to protection from discrimination; stigma, exploitation, abuse and their participation will be ensured in interventions planned. The interventions and activities will be family centric and community based. The capacity of community-based organisations to support children directly is strengthened and services and support are delivered using community structures. Focus has also been on the role of panchayat members.

A few more important aspects of the programme are: It shall address issues of stigma and discrimination based on caste, creed and gender. The reduction of stigma and discrimination against children made vulnerable by HIV, the needs, concerns and perspectives of both girls and boys are addressed in the planning, implementation and evaluation of programmes. To encourage and support active role of district administration, panchayats, child protection samitis, police, juvenile justice boards in dealing with exploitation of child rights through incidents such as child labour, child marriage, female foeticide, child trafficking and sexual abuse.

This incremental learning module series has been prepared as a 'facilitator guide' for NGOs so that they can provide training to panchayat members at every opportunity and motivate them. Being elected representatives of village and society they understand what is the situation of children in their village, what are their rights and how they can help children come out of insecurity by protecting child rights. Being aware that panchayat members cannot be available for long duration at a stretch, duration of each module has been limited to two hours. NGO members get many such opportunities during their routine tasks when they can provide training to panchayat members.

The objectives of these incremental modules is to provide information to panchayat members on how they can make their panchayats child friendly by following principles of Safe Childhood Programme. NGO workers shall facilitate the training.

The information given in these modules will help panchayat members in becoming aware and capable in carrying out their duties towards children.

Keeping in mind aspects of Safe Childhood Programme, division of module topics has been done as below:

Survival	Education and development	Protection	Participation
<p>Module 1: Maternal health: Maternal health is deeply related to life and health of children. This module covers aspects such as four ante-natal check-ups for pregnant women, vaccination, use of IFA tablets and institutional delivery</p>	<p>Module 3: Early and elementary education: It includes topics like registration of children, safe drinking water, level of education</p>	<p>Module 6: Child marriage: It covers subjects like evil practices of child marriage, awareness of parents related to it, role of law enforcing agencies and panchayats in curbing it.</p>	<p>Module 9: Participation and right to information: Children’s right to information, establishment of bal panchayats in villages and their linkage with village panchayat</p>
<p>Module 2: Neonatal and infant care: it covers topics such as immunisation for the child, complementary feeding, registration of children at anganwadi</p>	<p>Module 4: Recreation facilities: It covers availability of playing grounds and recreation facilities for children at school, home and community</p>	<p>Module 7: Child labour, trafficking and migration: Effects of these issues on children and role of panchayats and child protection samitis in stopping these activities have been discussed in this module</p>	
	<p>Module 5: Gender based discrimination: It covers issues such as discrimination of girls in education, nutrition, falling sex ration female foeticide etc.</p>	<p>Module 8: Sexual abuse of children: Factors responsible for abuse, legal provisions related to it and role of panchayats have been covered in this module.</p>	

Module 1 Maternal Health

Maternal health is deeply related to life and health of children. This module covers aspects such as four ante-natal check-ups for pregnant women, vaccination during pregnancy, use of IFA tablets and institutional delivery.

Health workers can take initiative on their own and ensure registration of pregnant women, undergo four ante-natal check-ups during pregnancy and undergo delivery at the hospital. In case of any difficulty, they can inform panchayat members about the same. Panchayat members will know through this module how their contribution and participation will lead to lowering of maternal and infant mortality in their village and how their support can make their panchayat child friendly.

Module 2 Neonatal and infant care

This module covers immunisation, complementary feeding, registration of child at anganwadi etc.

This module gives information to participants that immunisation of children, initiation of breast-feeding within one hour of birth, and making mothers aware of introduction of complementary feeding from six months onwards are the responsibilities of ANM and ASHAs. It is the responsibility of anganwadi worker to get the child registered at the Anganwadi Centre and distribute nutritional food. The main responsibility of panchayat members is that they oversee whether anganwadi centres are being managed efficiently. Additionally, registration of birth of the child in panchayat register is also part of their roles.

Module 3 Early and elementary education

This module focuses on topics such as registration of children, drinking water, level of education.

Through this module, panchayat members will be able to understand that their main role is to oversee management of the village level schools. To ensure that children are registered and admitted to the school at the right age, the school has safe drinking water and toilet facilities, students attend the school regularly and level of education in the school is good. They can take support from teachers for this purpose.

Module 4 Recreation facilities

It covers availability of playing grounds and recreation facilities for children at home, school and community.

By undergoing this training, panchayat members will be able to understand that playing and recreation facilities are important for healthy development of children. In order to achieve this goal, panchayat members can pay attention to making such recreational facilities available not only in the village but also playing grounds at school as well as making families and community aware that along with education, playing and recreational activities are also important for healthy development of the children.

Module 5 Gender based discrimination

It covers topics such as discrimination of girls, based on education, nutrition, falling sex ratio and female foeticide.

Through this module, panchayat members will be able to understand that there is dire need to make families, community and society aware about common practice of discrimination of girls and also on falling sex ratio. They can carry out this task in cooperation with community-based organisations. They can immediately report any case related to female foeticide to the police.

Module 6 Child marriage

This module covers the evil practice of child marriage, awareness of parents related to this, role of law enforcing agencies and panchayats in curbing this practice.

Being leaders of the community, panchayat members can play an important role in curbing child marriage and creating awareness about it. In case they come to know of any incident where child marriage is likely to take place in their village, they can intervene by making the parents understand. In case they are not able to convince the parents, they can try to make the concerned families postpone the wedding till children attain legal marriage age.

Module 7 Child labour, child trafficking and migration

Issues related to child labour, child trafficking and migration and their effects on children and role of panchayats and child protection samitis in stopping this have been discussed in this module.

Panchayat members will be able to understand that their roles are : to make families aware about child labour, report incidents related to child trafficking to police and take steps for rehabilitation of children in distress due to migration. They can support in creating such an environment in the village so that parents pull out their children from labour and get motivated to send them to school. They can also contribute in reporting incidents of child labour and child trafficking to police and law enforcing authorities.

Module 8 Sexual abuse of children

Factors responsible for sexual abuse of children, related laws and role of panchayats have been discussed in this module.

After undergoing this training, panchayat members will know that parents of sexually abused children do not share the information with anyone owing to humiliation in society. Panchayat members can support such families by reporting such matters to police, getting them legal assistance and also assuring them that the name of the child will be kept confidential. They can take support of teachers, ANM and local organisations in creating awareness about it.

Module 9 Participation and right to information

This module covers: rights of children to information, establishment of bal panchayat in the villages and their linkage with village panchayat.

This module helps in making panchayat members understand that children have the right to know everything that is associated with their development and rights. In addition to this, they also have the right to participate in such matters. Establishing bal panchayats or bal samitis in villages with these objectives can be an important step. Bal samiti should be motivated to work in cooperation with panchayat.

