

Press Release
On the Occasion of Foundation Day of NCPCR

5th March 2011

The National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) celebrated its Foundation Day at Vigyan Bhavan on March 5, 2011. NCPCR was set up four years ago under the Commission for Protection of Children's Rights Act, 2005 on March 5 2007, primarily to monitor the rights that have been guaranteed to the children in the Constitution of India.

The Foundation Day was organized to celebrate four years of the Commission's existence and highlight the work that it has initiated in the entire country.

Dr. Shantha Sinha, Chairperson, NCPCR shared the status of children and institutions for children in India. She said that with a child population of 420 million, India manages the largest network of state run public institutions.

The Chairperson said that NCPCR has been instrumental in raising child related issues at all levels, and highlighted NCPCR's efforts in improving the current situation of children in the country. The following are few of the Commission's interventions:

1. The Commission in the last four years visited 24 States and 4 Union Territories in the country.
2. Public hearings have been conducted on child labour in cotton seed farming in Rajasthan which highlighted the high level of migration of children from Rajasthan to Gujarat.
3. The NCPCR's public hearings in Tamil Nadu revealed the insult and injustice meted out to children; NCPCR's public hearings in Dantewada showed how vulnerable and deprived tribal children were of their basic rights to health, survival, food and nutrition, education and protection.

"There have been positive reports of action taken by the district administration. It must be stated that every such response has given energy to the Commission to do more," the Chairperson said.

Mr. D.K. Sikri, Secretary, Ministry for Women and Child Development in his address congratulated the Commission on its successful four years. He said that the NCPCR has a huge challenge in the days to come, and suggested the following steps the Commission could take in the future:

1. To develop and streamline all child rights legislations with the national laws
2. Conduct research on children's studies and creating reliable data base
3. Generating awareness on child rights
4. Developing child rights related curriculum

5. Facilitating complaints against corporal punishment and incorporating child friendly disciplinary methods at home and school

Dr. Shekhar P. Sheshadri, the key note speaker, and eminent psychiatrist from NIMHANS, Bangalore spoke about child rights from a mental health perspective.

He said, “Unfortunately the discourse on mental health and children is largely centered on “rights violation” but there must be equal emphasis on “rights enablement.”

Dr. Sheshadri said, “Abuse and violence remains a hidden problem. Children are at great risk to both; professionals have focused on specific issues as separate problems and this has inhibited the idea of complexity and severity of these issues.”

Dr. Sheshadri specifically highlighted the patterns of child sexual abuse as well as child trafficking, and laid down the possible sequence of intervention, using the multidisciplinary approach.

Sharmila Tagore, Chairperson, Central Board of Film Certification as guest of honour, said that India is a country with many possibilities and equal responsibilities. How we manage our responsibilities, what we do with our children and how much we invest in them is what will determine the future of our nation.

She said that a Commission exclusively for children is remarkable; the Commission must listen to our children, make it a national habit and culture. She lauded the Commission on the public hearings for children that the Commission organises, and said that a regular inflow of views and concerns from children, unfiltered by adults, must be placed in front of people who formulate policies.

The Chief Guest, Minister for Women and Child Development Mrs. Krishna Tirath said that the government is committed to ensuring that the rights of children are not abused, and that children’s right to survival, development, protection and participation are ensured.

She highlighted the Ministry’s efforts in extending the Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS) to the most remote parts of the country.

Through the Integrated Child Protection Scheme (ICPS) the Ministry has provided support for institutions to reach out to all vulnerable children, street children, child labour, children in conflict with law and so on.

The Minister commended NCPDR’s work and said that the Ministry was committed to strengthening it. She stressed the role of SCPCRs at the state level and urged all state governments to set up a SCPCR at the earliest. “We are determined to make sure that children have the opportunities and facilities to develop in a healthy atmosphere with freedom and dignity, and that their constitutional and legal rights are protected.”