



Our Responsibility to Children

Harnessing collective efforts

Introduction

Children are the future and require opportunities and encouragement for their survival, development, protection and participation to ensure that they realise their optimum potential. This responsibility is vested in the family, the immediate community, the law makers and service providers and the society at large. However, in Kerala, crimes against and involving children were reported to be on the increase. The Kerala State Commission for Protection of Child Rights (KSCPCR) has released recent data showing that 1,029 children in the 15-18 years age group and 800 children in the 10-14 years age group faced sexual harassment.

Children and Police (CAP)

With a farsighted and proactive vision, the Kerala Police developed an umbrella programme called Children and Police

(CAP) which contains several police initiatives to prevent abuse and violence against children and ensure better child protection. CAP aims to create “an invisible wall of protection” around every child and recognises that:

1. The extent of children’s commitment towards responsible citizenship depends on the foundation built during childhood
2. Problems faced by children even if identified, are often unreported or unattended. In some cases, they are attended unscientifically, thus causing a damaging effect
3. The present process of handling youngsters with deviant behaviour needs to be revisited as isolating them from the mainstream may enhance the negative tendencies within.

Within CAP, a basket of unique programmes have been developed, each responding to a particular lacuna/gap in child protection. One of these unique programmes is Our Responsibility towards Children (ORC).

Key indicators KERALA



One of the most developed states in India, tied at first place with Himachal Pradesh on Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) India Index, 2018



Well performing in indicators related to Goal 3 (Good Health and Well-being), Goal 4 (Quality Education) and Goal 5 (Gender Equality)



94%

literacy rate compared to national average of 74.04% (Census 2011)

3.4 million

children

88.68%

children between 5-17 years of age in school.

ORC

Resilient minds, empowered children

ORC is a collective initiative to ensure that children have a safe environment in schools and their areas of residence to develop and flourish. It includes good practices such as

- identifying children with development and behavioural issues
- providing them psychological support, mentoring and support and conducting learning and activity camps
- creating local committees for children's safety
- developing a curriculum for standardised knowledge and skill delivery to children
- training teachers on the relevant aspects of the programme and their roles and responsibilities in its smooth functioning
- ensuring support by counsellors and psychologists in every school and regular monitoring of activities at school, district and state levels.

It is being led by the Department of Women and Child Development (DWCD) and from being initiated in 19 schools is now operating in 320 schools in Kerala. ORC was made part of the Integrated Child Protection Scheme (ICPS) in 2014.

3-dimensional framework

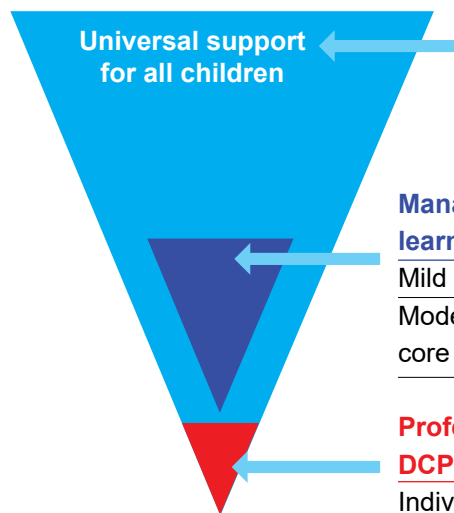
PREVENTION: Reducing the incidence of delinquency by enhancing the collective responsibility of parents, schools and community members – improving skills of parents and school staff to appropriately address children at risk, ensuring greater awareness and exposure to the world through better mentoring



PROTECTION: Supporting, mentoring and advocating on behalf of juveniles in the juvenile justice system

PARTICIPATION: Involving children in constructive activities in their school and home environments to realise their potential, understand their self-worth and engage with and in the outside world with confidence and integrity

Key components



Strength & problem assessment through 'I Know My Student' card (IKMS card)
 Life skills education
 Strengthening student forums/clubs
 Parenting sessions

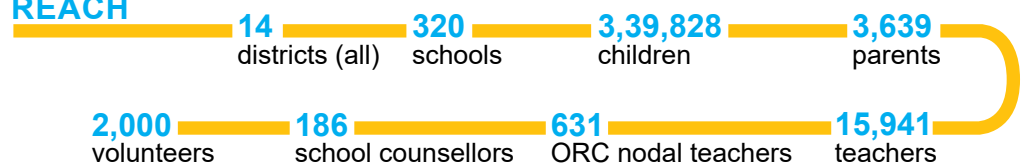
Management of behavioral - emotional learning - mental health - social issues

Mild issues: Classroom level by class teachers
 Moderate issues: School level management by core team & SMART – 40 activities

Professional help at district level through DCPU/ORC District Resource Centres

Individual care plan by ORC district team

REACH



I really valued the Ammaye Ariyan session as it helped me understand my responsibilities towards my parents and how I should build my relationship with them. I also used to be afraid of public speaking but after ORC, I am able to talk openly to people. I also learnt that child marriage is a crime and should be eradicated from society. I learnt that I have a responsibility to help those who are less fortunate than me. After the camp, I could feel that each and every one of us had changed.



Ayesha Salsa, SMART – 40 student
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