

**Half a Day Consultation on “Revisiting School Safety and Security”
Organised by NIDM and UNICEF as a “curtain-raiser event”
ahead of the 2nd meeting of the National Platform for DRR
17th April, 2017
NIDM, New Delhi**

The concept of ‘school safety’ has evolved over the last couple of decades as the threat to the physical wellbeing of children has become more visible both globally and in the country. “Comprehensive School Safety” has emerged as the leading concept to address the nexus between disaster risk and the need for education and child protection before, during and after emergencies. Under the overall heading of disaster risk reduction and resilience-building it embraces the need to provide 1) safe learning facilities through disaster resilient design, safe construction and safe site location 2) school disaster management through assessments and planning by school disaster management committees, with education continuity and contingency plan and building capacity for effective disaster response 3) risk reduction and resilience education through inclusion of related aspects in formal curriculum, teacher training and staff development as well as extra curriculum and community-based informal education. The concept of school safety has been enlarged recently to include both safety and newly security issues both inside and outside the school. It has been defined as the creation of safe environments for children starting from their homes to their schools and back. This includes safety from large-scale ‘natural’ hazards of geological/climatic origin, human-made risks, pandemics, violence as well as more frequent and smaller-scale fires, transportation and other related emergencies, and environmental threats that can adversely affect the lives of children.

Although late, in India the subject started gaining high attention post 2001 Kutchh Earthquake in Gujarat when 971 students and 31 teachers died due to an earthquake. In addition 1884 school buildings collapsed, 5,950 class rooms were lost, 11,761 school buildings suffered major to minor damages leading to additional 36,584 class rooms becoming unfit for holding school lessons (Ref. Gol, Ministry of Home Affairs: School Safety). Since then quite a few important actions and programmes have been implemented by the Government (national and states) as well as by the various non-governmental organisations across the country. Some of the noteworthy actions are as follows:

- ❖ Post-2002 Disaster Management was introduced as a subject in the frontline curriculum of the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) as well as by several State Education Boards.
- ❖ During 2003-2008 GOI and UNDP implemented the Disaster Risk Management programme in 17 states across India in which schools safety was an important component.
- ❖ The Ministry of Home Affairs produced a handbook on School Safety in 2004.
- ❖ In 2005, the Disaster Management Act was passed. The Act envisages developing a Disaster Management Plan for all entities - including schools and all other educational institutes.
- ❖ In 2007, the Ahmadabad declaration on School safety was formulated.

- ❖ The 2009 Right to Education (RTE) Act prescribes that each child in India must have access to schooling for 200-220 days in a year. This highlights the urgent need to ensure that schools are less vulnerable to disasters/emergencies and better prepared to bounce back and return children to learning as soon as possible.
- ❖ In 2011, the National School Safety Programme was launched by the National Disaster Management Authority, covering 22 states in India.
- ❖ The National Institute of Disaster Management has been conducting ToTs on school safety every year as a part of their annual training calendar.
- ❖ Since 2011, UNICEF is implementing the School Safety Programme in Bihar. Initiated in 2011 covering 155 schools in disaster prone districts, the programme today covers 3139 schools in 6 districts. (*Darbhanga, Supaul, Samastipur, Sitamarhi, Madhubani and East Champaran*). In addition the programme is also being implemented in another 278 schools in Vaishali near Patna (integrating DRR in CFSS pilot schools). As a result of sustained investment, children, teachers and block level officials from education department have emerged champions and have been providing generative leadership to the school safety agenda.
- ❖ At central level, UNICEF has been working with the Ministry of Human Resource Development and the National Commission for Child Protection in finalising standard operating procedures for comprehensive school safety and security.
- ❖ Moreover on a sub-regional level, UNICEF India's DRR Section provided technical support and facilitation to its Regional Office in South Asia (ROSA) and the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) for its adoption in late 2015 of a child inclusive DRR Road Map 2015-2030, which includes comprehensive school safety as one of its four pillars
- ❖ In 2016, GOI issued National Guidelines on School Safety. The definition of school safety as per the national guideline is as follows: "The creation of safe environments for children starting from their homes to their schools and back. This includes safety from large-scale 'natural' hazards of geological/climatic origin, human-made risks, pandemics, violence as well as more frequent and smaller-scale fires, road accidents and other emergencies, and environmental threats that can adversely affect the lives of children" (National Guideline, School Safety Policy, 2016).

Despite the major achievements and adoption of the safe school agenda by the national and several State governments as well as the other non-governmental actors more needs to be done to sustain, intensify and expand the engagement at national and State level to achieve the two "Ds" of zero deaths and zero days of school lost due to disasters.

In India the susceptibility of schools, children and teachers to natural and human induced hazards still remain very high. While earthquakes and cyclones pose a high risk to the school infrastructures, large numbers of schools are also affected due to annual or unexpected floods making schools and learning opportunities inaccessible for weeks. Droughts, lack of adequate and gender-responsive water and sanitation facilities also result in school drop outs and loss of learning time. Fire hazards are also common in schools. School children are also highly vulnerable to road accidents and other transport related risks like boat capsizing during their journey from home to school and back home.

During any emergency and in post disaster situations, parents and children identify access to education as a priority concern. Past disasters have provided enough evidence on how putting education at the centre of humanitarian response can have a positive impact in helping children and the larger community to heal up their trauma and gain back normalcy.

Also there is a need to address other day to day vulnerabilities which exists within a school premise like violence and exclusion. Violence in educational settings is highly prevalent across India. Children experience and witness various forms of violence within and on the way to school. Corporal punishment and other disciplinary violent practices are highly prevalent and widespread in educational settings across India despite legal prohibition. Physical violence, as well as sexual violence, abuse and harassment, are also present in schools. According to a study conducted by the Ministry of Women and Child Development (MWCD) on Child Abuse in 2007, two out of three school going children experienced corporal punishment, and about 53 per cent of children reported having faced one or more forms of sexual abuse.¹ By addressing the issue of violence and protection of child rights an integrated approach could be established towards school safety which will focus on both safety and security of a child.

Lastly there is a need to make school safety programming more child centred with organic linkages to safe families and safe communities. Schools are more than a place of study. Schools are a valuable local investment of a nation and provide the children the platform and the knowledge through which they can reach out to the broader community of children, parents, teachers, neighbors and local governments. Through school lessons, children can be informed and trained on various essential services like healthcare, child protection, water, sanitation, and nutrition, disaster safety and climate change adaptation. These children in turn can further educate their community and help establish the link between the school and the community thereby ensuring participation of the entire community in better school development planning, community development and effective disaster preparedness and response.

It is in this context National Institute of Disaster Management and UNICEF propose to organise a half a day consultation on school safety to achieve the following objectives

- 1) Take stock of how far we have progressed in achieving the three pillars of comprehensive framework on school safety and integrated security aspects.
- 2) Explore how to better and wider integrate safety and security to promote a comprehensive approach towards school safety from “ home to school back home”
- 3) Identify a few key, time bound actions for comprehensive school safety programming and planning at national and state-level
- 4) Prepare key messages and “key asks” for the National Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction, convening end of April in Delhi.

Expected participants:

NDMA, NIDM, MHA, MHRD, NEUPA, National Commission for Protection of Child Rights, State governments, UNICEF, non-governmental organisations and subject matter experts.

¹ MWCD, Study on Child Abuse: India 2007, New Delhi, 2007.

Agenda

0930-0940	Opening remarks	Prof. Santosh Kumar, Executive Director, NIDM
0940-1000	Inaugural remarks	Shri Kamal Kishore, member, NDMA
1010-1020	“School Safety Initiatives in India- A broad overview	NIDM (Dr. Ritu Raj, Dr. Amir Ali Khan)
1020-1040	Implementation of National Guideline for school safety by states- broad recommendations and actions	Prof. Santosh Kumar, Executive Director, NIDM
1040-1050	Promoting an integrated approach for school safety- sharing experiences and key reflections	Mr. Lars Bernd DRR Chief, UNICEF
1050-1100	Discussions	
1100-1115	Tea Break	
	Technical Session Chair: NIDM (Prof. Santosh Kumar, ED, NIDM) Co-Chair: UNICEF (Mr. Lars Bernd DRR Chief, UNICEF)	
1115-1130	Child friendly school environment and safer facilities- key intervention points and road ahead (WASH, Road Safety, child friendly spaces and cleanliness)	Mr. Kabir Vajpayee School Safety Expert
1130-1145	Road ahead for an integrated approach for child safety and security within a school (Protecting child rights and protection against violence abuse and trafficking)	Mr. Prayank Kanungo, NCPCR
1145-1200	Role of Disaster Education and potential in development of a framework (curriculum and co-curricular)	Dr. Pranati Panda, Professor and Head, School standards and Evaluation Unit , NEUPA
1200-1215	School level Disaster Management planning and preparedness- learnings, challenges and key recommendations for future actions	Mr. Moin Sahib Director Distance Education and HoD, Teacher Education, SCERT, Government of Bihar
1215-1230	Disaster Resilient construction and retrofitting of schools-Key actions for future	Mr. Rajendra Desai, Structural Safety Expert and Director,NCPDP
1230-1245	Continuation of education during emergencies (disasters and conflicts)- challenges and road ahead	Mr. Ramachandra Rao Begur, Education Specialist, UNICEF Delhi
1245-1330	Discussions	
1330-1400	Summarizing the key messages and actions by the Chair	
	Lunch	