

Sambhali Juvenile Justice Policy

(Policy for Child Protection within the SAMBHALI Network)



Overall Goal

To develop a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon of child abuse, with a view towards formulating appropriate policies and programs in order to effectively curb and control the problem of child abuse within the community. While children's rights are human rights, the need to focus on the child and the rights of the child especially has been recognized by internationally through agreements like the UN International Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). In today's circumstances, growing violence against children, lack of space and platforms for children to seek justice, inadequate infrastructure to cater to their needs, the perception of children as extensions of parents and their treatment as parent's property, are some of the critical child protection issues that call for utmost and immediate attention.

Guiding Principles

Sambhali is committed to the welfare and rights of children. Children being defined as all humans less than 18 years of age. All children under the care of Sambhali will be treated with respect regardless of race, color, sex, language, religion or belief, ethnic or social origin, disability, birth or other status.

Sambhali is committed to encouraging its staff to familiarize themselves with the Sambhali child protection policy and to protect and provide a safe environment for children and staff. This is also to protect the organization and encourage donors to have confidence in the organization.

Sambhali is committed to comply with all relevant local legislation on child rights and welfare in order to provide what is in the 'best interest of the child' including labor laws that apply to children.

Sambhali encourages all staff to treat all children in their care with dignity and respect. Those responsible for children are encouraged to be good role models, spending time with each child, listening to them, encouraging children when they do something well and giving good explanations on why they should not do something else. They should keep their promises. They should provide discipline firstly through verbal means.

Operational Definition of Child Abuse

Child abuse refers to the intended, unintended and perceived maltreatment, whether habitual or not, of the child which may include any of the following:

- Psychological and physical abuse, neglect, cruelty, sexual and emotional maltreatment.
- Any acts, deeds, or words which debases, degrades or demeans the intrinsic worth and dignity of a child as a human being.

- Unreasonable deprivation of his/her basic needs for survival such as food and shelter, or failure to immediately give medical treatment to an injured child resulting in serious impairment of his/her growth and development or in his/her permanent incapacity or death.

Forms of Child Abuse

The various forms of abuse specified for the study included:

- Emotional abuse (also known as verbal abuse, mental abuse, and psychological maltreatment) includes acts or the failures to act by parents, caretakers, peers and other that have caused or could cause, serious behavioral, cognitive, emotional, or mental distress/trauma.
- Physical abuse is inflicting of physical injury upon a child. This may include burning, hitting, punching, shaking, kicking, beating, forcing the child to beg, or otherwise harming a child.
- Sexual abuse is the inappropriate sexual behavior with a child. It includes fondling a child's genital, making the child fondle the adult's genital, intercourse, incest, rape, sodomy, exhibitionism, pornography and sexual exploitation. To be considered child abuse, these acts have to be committed by a person responsible for the care of a child (for example a baby-sitter, a parent, neighbor, relatives, extended family, peers, older children, friends/strangers or a day care provider) or related to the child. If a stranger commits these acts, it would be considered sexual assault and handled solely by the police and criminal courts.
- Substance abuse includes forcing or allowing the child to take/sell drugs, get involved in drug peddling and trading, take alcohol or any other forms of addiction which retards the child's physical and mental growth.
- Child neglect is an act of omission or commission leading to the denial of the child's basic entitlements/needs. Neglect can be physical, educational or emotional. Physical neglect can include not providing adequate food clothing, appropriate medical care, supervision. It may include abandonment. Educational neglect includes failure to provide appropriate schooling or special educational needs. Psychological neglect includes lack of any emotional support and love.

Indicators of Child Abuse

The study identified five different forms of abuse namely, emotional abuse, physical abuse, sexual abuse, neglect and substance abuse. Indicators for each of these forms of abuse were developed as given below:

Emotional Abuse

- Extreme forms of punishment
- Rejection
- Use of derogatory terms to describe the child
- Blaming the child

- Making comparisons
- Labeling or nicknaming

Physical Abuse

- Burning
- Hitting
- Punching
- Shaking
- Kicking
- Beating

Sexual Abuse

- Fondling a child's genitals
- Making the child fondle the adult's genitals
- Intercourse
- Incest
- Rape
- Sodomy
- Exhibitionism
- Voyeurism
- Pornography

Neglect

- Not providing adequate food or clothing to the child
- Not providing adequate medical care
- Rejection and abandonment
- Failure to provide appropriate schooling
- Lack of emotional support and love

Substance Abuse

- Forcing a child to take/sell drugs
- Involving a child in drug peddling/trading
- Forcing a child to take alcohol and other forms of addiction

Communicating the issue:

- Sambhali is committed to informing children, decision makers, and the public through the media that child abuse is wrong. It is also understood that keeping silent is also wrong.
- Child protection policies provide a safe and positive environment for children and are foundational in the education, research and advocacy initiatives that Sambhali is involved in.
- Sambhali is committed to educating its staff about the importance of child protection so that children are protected from abuse by staff and others. This is also a preventive measure to protect the integrity of staff and the organization.
- Sambhali actively encourages the development of child protection policies and active implementation of these policies within the groups and society through its meetings with them.
- Where possible children are also included as key stakeholders because Sambhali believes that children have the right to speak and be heard. Involving them in the process also enables them to know their right to protection. Children are encouraged to have active cooperation, share information and be involved in advocacy initiatives.
- All staff agrees to this policy.
- All policy is reviewed every 2 years.

Signature of Authorized Officer: _____

(Position in NGO): _____

Date: ____/____/____

Signature of Witness: _____

Name of Witness: _____

Date: ____/____/____