

**REGIONAL SEMINAR ON NATURAL
DISASTERS AND CONFLICTS AND
THEIR IMPLICATIONS IN REALIZING
CHILD RIGHTS**

6-7 NOVEMBER 2008

Organized by

Dept. of Social Work Jamia Millia Islamia,
New Delhi India &
Save the Children Sweden, Regional Office
for South and Central Asia

CALL FOR PARTICIPATION

Background

The rights-based approach is acquiring prominence in the development discourse across the world. A rights-based approach to development promotes justice, equality, participation, accountability, inclusion, freedom and tackles the power issues that lie at the root of poverty and exploitation. Almost all international development agencies stress on the importance of using rights-based approach in working with people, including with children. The rights based approach makes use of standards, principles, and methods of human rights, social activism and of development.

Working with children and for their rights has, largely remained the domain of child welfare and child rights organizations. While no development or human rights agency can afford to ignore gender issues, many continue to leave children's issues to child-focused organizations. However, children and child rights should be the concern of all agencies and departments, not just child-focused organizations.

The role of academia is extremely important in bringing child rights perspective in the functioning of organisations and development interventions through developing a strong

knowledge base of child rights rooted in southern realities and producing professionals who can advance the knowledge and skills to the various arenas of development practice.

Rationale:

Since 2004, Save the Children Sweden, Regional Office for South and Central Asia has been working with academia for initiating a dialogue between the academia and the practitioners of the region in order to make child rights as a subject of academic discourse. It has partnered with various academic institutes in South Asia to integrate child rights in higher education. In India, Dept. of Social Work, Jamia Millia Islamia became a trailblazer in this work by introducing a one year diploma programme in Child Rights.

In the recent years South Asian countries are facing frequent natural disasters- resulting in massive destruction of properties and loss of human life. A close analysis of recent disasters in the region suggest that children are one of the worst sufferers of disaster- in terms of their high proportion in death counts as well as other impacts on their lives such as , discontinuing of their education, trafficking for various purposes, mental trauma, loss of parental care etc. Considering their special rights, as recognised by United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child-1989 and also their high level vulnerability, children require special attention and response by organisations and actors involved in disaster mitigation and response. This will only happen when their rights are recognised and responded by all. Academia can play a very pivotal role in this by developing strong knowledge repository based on research and documentations and by producing professionals who are capable to understand and address the special needs of children, as also by developing discourse on child rights.

Conflicts like religious violence, caste violence, terrorism etc. have been another major challenge the South Asian society is facing. Experiences from the region suggest that any kind of violence has a lasting impact on children's lives. In Afghanistan where a large number of children have either lost their lives or have become permanently disabled, the situation reflects the horrendous realities of conflict. The regular occurrence of caste and communal violence in India and some other countries in the region and its impact on children have regularly been an issue of interest for media. However, the response from the child rights based organisations especially on the latter issue has been inadequate and they have often lacked promptness in responding to such kind violence.

Recognizing the need for promoting a dialogue and building discourses on child rights on the above issues Dept. of Social Work Jamia Millia Islamia and Save the Children Sweden are jointly organising a two days **South Asia Regional Seminar on Natural Disasters and Conflicts and their implications in realizing Child Rights during November 6-7, 2008 in Delhi India**

Theme of the Seminar

The themes of the two day South Asia Regional Seminar on Natural Disasters and Conflicts and their implications in realizing Child Rights are identified and structured in a way to develop a cogent and convincing argument for the advancement of child rights in conflict and disaster situations through promoting dialogue and experience sharing. The presentations and discussions would focus on the following:

1. Promoting Children Rights in Natural Disaster Preparedness and Response: Opportunities and Challenges

2. Communal and Caste Violence and its Impact on Child Rights.
3. Growing Violence and Conflict in South Asia and Challenges for Child Rights.

Academics, Practitioners and concerned professionals are invited to share their experiences in the above seminar. Those willing to participate in the Seminar are requested to kindly contact Prof Zubair Meenai, Department of Social Work, Jamia Millia Islamia or Mr Akmal Shareef, Save the Children, Sweden as per details given below.

Participants whose abstracts are accepted by the organisers for presentation shall be reimbursed 2 AC to and fro railway fare. The organisers are making efforts to arrange accommodation for the participants. However, accommodation on the campus is modest and limited.

In order to participate in the seminar please adhere to the following deadlines.

Last date of submission of Abstract	October 15, 2008
Last date of submission of final paper	October 31, 2008

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