



Module 7

Child Labour and Trafficking

Time: 2 hours

Introduction

The subject of module 7 of Safe Childhood Programme series is that child labour and trafficking openly violate child rights and deny them education, physical, mental and social development opportunities. Child labour and trafficking push children to such world of darkness where they are denied all that which is necessary for them such as their basic rights.

Session Objectives

At the end of the session, participants will know:

- Definition of child labour, how child labour violates child rights
- Steps needed to be taken by them to stop child labour and trafficking at village level
- Steps required to be taken at family, community and panchayat level to rehabilitate children saved from child labour and trafficking
- Efforts and work that can be done in cooperation with panchayat, police, administration, members of child protection committees, teachers and other stakeholders to stop child labour and trafficking

Session Process

Step 1

Begin the session by welcoming all the participants and thank them for participating in it. Introduce yourself and ask them to introduce themselves. Start the session with a motivational song.

Step 2

Discuss with participants that following important steps can be taken to stop child labour and trafficking:

- Making parents understand that it is not right to make children work to earn money either at home or outside. This affects their education.
- Making parents and society aware that no child under the age of 14 years can be made to work at any factory, mine or do hazardous work.
- Making those families involved in making bidis, tailoring, farming or household work understand that involving their children in such works is also part of child labour as it affects education of the children and denied other facilities.
- Take immediate and necessary actions in case any incident of child labour comes to light, either in the family, by any agent/contractor or by taking children to other cities in exchange of money.
- Enquiring from school teachers about families who are making their children discontinue studies. Counselling such families against it and taking immediate necessary action in case there is anticipation of such families sending their children for labour or sending them to other cities. Making efforts to make such families agree to let their children continue their education.
- Raising issues of child labour and trafficking in gram sabha meetings and hold discussions in order to create awareness amongst members of gram sabha.
- Referring cases of child labour and child trafficking to police and associated officials for taking necessary actions.
- Discuss with participants that if they take these steps and follow the process, they will be able to curb incidents of child labour and child trafficking.



Step 3

Share following information with the participants:

India has maximum number of child labourers amongst all countries. As per Constitution of India and International Labour Organization (ILO) definition of labour is: "Child labour means making any child below the age of 14 years work on any task which is harmful for health and development."

Villages in India have higher numbers of child labourers as compared to cities. The reason for this is that in villages, children work in fields, contribute in household work and also in family work. Share with the participants that for this reason only, the need to end child labour is much more in villages than in cities.

The bad effects of child trafficking can be: fake marriages, pushing them in prostitution, making children work at very less or no wages.

Child trafficking is a common practice in cities, especially in villages in India. Children from many backward states are brought to cities on the pretext of work. There, they are made to work in factories at very meagre wages. The situation of girls is all the more bad. They are often taken to cities to work as household help or pushed into prostitution.

Following are the areas where children are made to work as labourers in India: agriculture, mines, tea gardens, construction industry, bidi industry, zari and embroidery work, domestic work, cleaning dishes at hotels, dhabas and canteens, removing garbage, brick kilns and prostitution etc. As per Census 2001, 1.25 crore children in the age group 5-14 years were working in different types of industries. These figures do not include those children who work in family professions or farming. Panchayat members should also spread this information to others and find out if there is any family in the village which make their children work in above-mentioned trades.

The main reasons of child labour in rural areas are: poverty, most of times families are not aware that it is illegal to make children work, unemployment – no work for parents, parents not sensitive towards education of their children, selling of children by parents themselves in exchange of money.

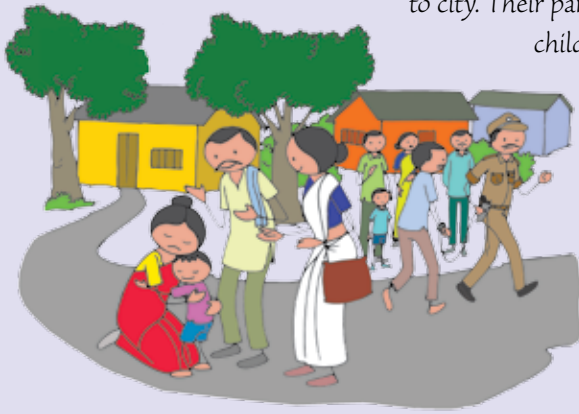
Case Study

Vishu along with his wife Meera and five children were a family of seven put together. Meera worked as a sweeper in Panchayat House and Vishu was a farm labourer. They were somehow managing the household expenses but Vishu now desired that his elder son, Champu studying in class 8th, should also contribute in family income. He felt that Champu was turning 14 and there was no need for him to study further. Vishu's wife Meera would say, 'you don't worry; I will work hard and manage household expenses. If required, I will also work with you at the farm. But I want that our children should get educated. At least Champu should study till class 12th. Thereafter only we will think what needs to be done.'

Vishu had this feeling that his child should also contribute to family income. His viewpoint was that nothing would be achieved if children study. Therefore as soon child 'grows up' s/he should start working so that family income can increase.

One day a man named Satyaprakash came to visit Vishu from a neighbouring village. He lived in a distant city and worked as a contractor there. He told Vishu, "your son is good enough to start earning. Why don't you send him with me to the city. There he will get job and will live a comfortable life." Vishu was impressed by his talks. Little did he know that Satyaprakash was involved in child trafficking and he gets them work as labourer and abuses them. Despite Meera stopping him many times, Vishu sent Champu to work in a distant city along with Satyaprakash. He had hope that Champu will earn a lot of money, send money to them at home and will also remain happy.

For next two years, there was no news of Champu. Meera used to remain very worried. She had not liked the fact that Champu left studies in between and went to city to work. After being repeatedly coaxed by Meera, Vishu visited Satyaprakash's village. He got to know that Satyaprakash works as middleman in city and visits his village rarely. On further enquiry, he got to know that he has also taken many other village boys along with him



to city. Their parents also told Vishu that they had not heard from their children ever since they had left homes. Vishu returned home very disturbed and shared every thing with Meera.

Meera was a sensible woman. She immediately went and approached panchayat member Sharda Devi and narrated the whole incident to her. Sharda Devi spoke to panchayat head Raj Kishore ji.

After getting the matter enquired at panchayat level, it was found out that Champu was working at a hotel and used to clean dishes. The hotel owner was giving him

only food and no wages. After few days, Raj Kishore Ji told Meera and Vishu that Satyaprakash is involved in trafficking of children and he sells them to others as child labourers. Raj Kishore ji further told that panchayat has also approached police in this regard. Satyaprakash had taken many other children also on pretext of work to other cities. He has now been arrested by the police.

Meera asked, “ when will my son come back?”

“ He has already returned. Look in front,” Sharda Devi said. When Meera looked in front, she saw that her son was standing amongst other children who had been rescued from child labour. Meera broke down. She said her son was never so weak and in such a bad condition. Champu clung to his mother and cried bitterly and said, “mother, I could not send money for you and the family.”

After his return, panchayat helped Champu in his rehabilitation. Panchayat members helped him in getting admitted to school. Now Champu is studying in class 9th and his father has sworn that he will never put his children in child labour again.

Step 4

Questions:

- Was Vishu’s thought process correct that child should be made to leave studies in order to work?
- Was his wife Meera’s opinion right when she said, “ let children continue for now. We will somehow manage household expenses?”
- Satyaprakash was involved in child trafficking. How should such people be stopped?
- Satyaprakash’s words - “ your son Champu has grown up enough to start earning. Why don’t you send him with me to city?” What kind of alertness should be shown by parents to such suggestions?

- Did Meera do the right thing by telling them about what had happened to Champu?
- Champu's words, " Mother I could not send money to you or for family." How can self esteem of such children be built?
- What steps can village community and panchayat take to stop such incidents. Does this incident put light on the situation of child labour and child trafficking?
- How can panchayat members contribute in saving children like Champu from child trafficking?

.....

Ask participants to answer such questions and add any left out points.

.....

Step 5

Points to be kept in mind by participants (write the points on a chart and display them)

- Panchayat members should immediately intervene in case any incident of child labour or trafficking comes to light
- They should motivate parents to send their children to school and in cooperation with school administration, make registration process easy for parents.
- If children are working in factories, shops, dhabas around the village, they should talk to owners and tell them that it is illegal to make children work as child labour and they can even be punished for the same. Despite that, if they do not release children, panchayat members should take help from police and labour department. In the same manner, if any middleman has trafficked children to other cities, they should try to find them and seek help from police and administration.
- Panchayat members should also seek information from migrating families in the village as to where are they going, what is the purpose of their migration and what would their address be.
- Public awareness campaign should be organised at village level against child labour, child trafficking and bonded labour. Support of NGOs can be taken in staging street plays on these.
- Panchayat members should take measures to make anganwadis and bal wadis in their area active and effective so that mothers can leave their young children and go for work and elder children, especially girls do not have to take care of younger siblings at the cost of their studies.
- They should also arrange for crèches and baal wadis at MNREGA work areas keeping these objectives in mind so that mothers can leave their young children and older children can continue studies.
- Panchayat members should also ensure quality of education, mid day meals, drinking water and toilet facilities in schools in cooperation with village education samiti so that children do not discontinue studies

.....

Ask the participants to discuss on above points and motivate them to add any left out points.

.....

Step 6

Monitoring mechanism and data collection

Share with participants that although data related to child labour is mainly collected through population census via national sample survey (NSS), but with their own efforts, panchayat members can collect data on the following indicators at the village level:

- Number of children between 6-14 years of age who do not go to school or have discontinued school
- Number of child labourers in village
- Number of families in village who have migrated to find work in other places
- Number of children who ran away from home or left for other cities on pretext of work
- Number of children between 6-14 years of age whose parents make them work in fields or at home
- Number of children between 6-14 years of age who stay at home to look after their younger siblings

.....
Ask the participants to have a discussion on above indicators and ask if they would like to add or amend/remove any one of them
.....

Summarise the discussion as below:

Above indicators can help panchayat members in keeping an eye on and understanding status of child labour at village level. These can also help in preparation of monitoring mechanism and help in making village free from child labour.

Repeat the key messages and end the session after thanking the participants.

