
Child Protection Policy

December 2019

People Oriented Program Implementation (POPI)

English version: January 25, 2019 -----

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY OF POPI

Introduction

Protection is every child's birthright. Providing special care to pregnant women is the first step towards ensuring child rights. During the first 30 months after birth, children are completely dependent on their mother for their survival. Protecting the mother during this period means that the child is also protected. While the child's dependency on the mother gradually decreases over time, the child is entitled to protection from the family, society, country and the state until reaching 18. It is an unforgivable crime against humanity to fail or to show reluctance in ensuring child protection. Every adult human is accountable for such a failure. Mother's care, language, culture, food and shelter are rights of every child.

POPI was established in 1986 with the aim of fighting poverty and discrimination. As an NGO, it has been working on providing maternal and child care, nutrition, health, education, recreation and economic empowerment. Poor, extreme poor women and their children have been at the centre of the NGO's all development programs.

From adolescent girl's education, health, nutrition and skill development to providing care during pregnancy, childbirth, and neonatal period to the child's schooling--POPI's contribution can be seen in each of its project areas. Although the project areas span about 3,800 villages, special focus on child development has not been achieved in all the areas. The main hurdles are lack of resources and opportunities. But POPI is committed to disseminating the child rights protection policy and implementing it throughout the project areas.

The policy is a document that must be valued above all other institutional rules of POPI in all its branch offices.

How global awareness on child rights protection began

The realization that children are most vulnerable and unprotected of all people first dawned on a great English woman Eglantine on the eve of the bloody World War I. She was standing on top of a medieval gothic tower devastated by the war when the realization came in disguise of Persian kitten.

With support of her sister, she introduced The Declaration of the Rights of the Child, also known as the Declaration of Geneva, in 1923. Her proposal was: "We will demand certain rights of children and try to garner international support to the cause. Not only select few who have the ability to contribute to relief funds, but people who came in contact with children somehow--in a word a large proportion of humanity can take part in taking the movement forward."

A decade after forming a draft declaration of child rights based on this proposal, the [Convention on the Rights of the Child](#) was adopted by UN General Assembly In 1989. On September 2, 1990 it became international law. Bangladesh also became a signatory to the convention in and/or ratified it in August 3, 1991.

Some special information:

According to Bangladesh bureau of statistics data, 50 percent of Bangladesh's population is aged between 0-18. Some aspects of Bangladeshi children's lives before they reach 20:

1. Early childhood: the first five years after birth is the period of innocence protected by none other than the mother herself.
2. Childhood: children aged from 6-10 begin to go to school.
3. Early adolescence: right before reaching puberty (pre-puberty period), girls aged 11-12 begin to experience physical changes. They also become aware of their roles.
4. Adolescence: the period from 13-15 is the primary stage of puberty. Boys and girls not only become aware of their respective gender roles but also act accordingly. Children who do not pick up the right gender roles are soon ostracized by the society.
5. Coming of age: girls' marriage becomes a topic of interest when they are about 16-20 while the parents try to impose some responsibilities on the boys of this age. Free mixing of girls and boys is not simply frowned upon but prohibited.

Age-wise child-related laws in Bangladesh

- Contract Act 1872: defines a person under 18 as a child
- Mines Act 1923: person under 15 is considered as a child
- Child Marriage Protection Law 1092: considers a boy under 21 and a girl under 18 as a child
- The Employment of Children Act 1938: considers a person under 15 as a child
- Shops and Establishment Act 1943: states that a person below the age of 15 shall not be employed as a worker. However, a person within the age limit of 15-17 may be employed by fulfilling the following conditions:
 1. Working hour should be limited to 5 hours;
 2. Should not be employed before 7.00 A.M. and after 7.00 P.M.;
 3. Work environment should be clean and there should be scope for recreation.

International Human Rights Mechanisms

At the global level, United Nations is the legal custodian for ensuring human rights. Since its inception, the UN has been very vocal about stating that human rights, justice, peace and development are inseparable from each other and neatly connected.

Human rights related major UN Declarations

- The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948 (UDHR)
- The Geneva Convention, 1949
- International Convention of Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD), 1965
- The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), 1966
- International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), 1966
- Convention of The Elimination of All Forms Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)
- Convention on The Rights of Persons with Disability (CRPD), 2006

UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), 1989

Four Fundamental principles of UNCRC

1. Non-discrimination
2. Protection of best interest of Child
3. Rights to life and development
4. Rights to have opinion

Important Elements of UNCRC

- Definition of child
- General policy/guideline
- Human rights and freedom
- Family environment and alternative care
- Primary health and welfare
- Education, recreation and cultural activities
- Special protection mechanisms

Child Protection Policy of POPI

Contents of this policy

1. Defining: who are children?
2. What is meant by child protection?
3. Who is this policy for?
4. Objectives of this policy
5. Scope of this policy
6. Responsibilities of various levels of staff in implementing this policy
7. POPI's commitments to child protection
8. What shall we do?
9. Child abuse: Types
 - a. Physical abuse
 - b. Mental abuse
 - c. Sexual abuse
 - d. Economic oppression

9.1 Incidence of oppression and its extent

- Consequences of abuse
- Extent of abuse

10. Cases of child abuse/torture in POPI will be addressed and assistance extended.
11. Code of conduct of POPI in dealing with incidences of child abuse/ torture
 - a. Values and principles followed by POPI in working with children.
 - b. Role and responsibility of child supervisor
 - c. Things to be remembered by all staff and other persons who will come in contact with children.
 - d. What usually should not be done
 - e. Things that must not be done under any circumstances
- 12 . Monitoring process

1. Whom we call a child

Any person below the age of 18 will be considered as a child. However, under specific law(s) a person may be considered an adult even at a lower age.

2. What is child protection?

Protection of child means to put in place necessary structures, systems and programmes with the objective of creating a favourable environment so that every child is protected from abuse, torture, neglect exploitation and violence.

3. The user of this policy

This policy aims to cater to POPI's Executive Council, General Body, all employees, volunteers and other related persons (representatives of partner organisations, consultants, researchers, contractors etc.). This policy offers a clear guideline on working with children and combating child abuse/torture. It is imperative that all staff become well conversant about this policy and follow it to the letter and spirit. Whatever limitation this document may have, it is equally applicable for all.

4. Objectives of this policy

Staff and representatives of POPI are to come in contact with children who are its programme beneficiaries. It is very important that all POPI staff are well aware about the issue of child abuse, its effect on the victim, how to prevent incidence of torture/abuse, how to protect a child from being a victim as well as about the rehabilitation mechanisms and processes etc.

- To aware staff, volunteers and other representatives about child abuse and various risks attached.
- To offer a guideline to staff working on preventing child abuse/torture.
- To provide a clear idea about what should be done in a situation of possible occurrence of incidence of torture/ abuse.

5. Scope of this policy

A. The implementation of this policy will rest upon:

- Employees, apprentices, volunteers, consultants, researchers or any other person appointed by POPI.
- Employees, apprentices, volunteers, contractors appointed by POPI's partner organizations.
- Executive Council and General Body members of POPI.

B. This implementation process narrates the individual's responsibility and accountability and describes the punishment mechanism for perpetrators of violence against children. This policy will replace all earlier existent instruments, processes and documents of POPI on child protection. Any policy or a part

of any policy that is inconsistent with this policy will be considered as null and void from the date of its enforcement.

6. Responsibilities of various levels of relevant staff/ organizations

This policy aims at protecting children from any type of abuse /torture, as such it has to be implemented everywhere within the organization. All staff collectively as well as individually will remain responsible to ensure its implementation. All staff has to grasp this policy properly and act accordingly.

POPI will take immediate administrative and legal action against its personnel(s) allegedly involved in act(s) of child abuse, be it in the workplace or elsewhere. POPI is fully committed to taking appropriate actions after assessing the nature, extent and severity of the offence conducted.

General Body

The General Body is the highest decision making forum of the organization. It symbolizes the organization and formulates all major policies, examines and approves its programmes/plans, and implements its strategies. It is the responsibility of the General Body to formulate this child policy, review it from time to time and make necessary changes/ adjustments.

Executive Committee

The Executive Committee (EC) will ensure full implementation of this policy within POPI. It will also assess whether it is being implemented properly, identify shortcomings if there is any and take needed steps to overcome those shortcomings. It will also initiate a process for disciplinary action against persons violating this policy. In short, it is the duty and responsibility of EC to implement this policy and to update it from time to time.

Staff

This policy states the roles and responsibilities of a POPI staff in protecting children from abuse as well as provides the ways and means to respond to a case of reported incidence of child oppression. It also highlights how to address a situation where a child is exposed to potential danger/risk. It also describes the desired pattern of behaviour of staff with the child and other related persons.

Under no circumstances will the violation of this policy by a staff, irrespective of his/her position or place of station, be tolerated.

Volunteers

It is very important to make all volunteers fully aware about this policy. It must be ensured by all managers operating at different levels that every volunteer who comes in contact with children frequently, are sufficiently aware of this policy and understands the various aspect of it to the letter and in spirit. A separate service rule will be formulated in light of this policy for recruiting volunteers in POPI.

Others:

A. PARTNER ORGNIZATION:

In conducting programme activities and/or office work, abuse on children will not be acceptable under any circumstances. POPI's partners, it is expected, will never practice the following in conducting activities under partnership arrangement:

1. Involve children without proper risk assessment
2. Select activities and/or site without taking appropriate risk mitigation measures
3. Work with a child alone separating from others
4. Discourage group members from expressing their concern regarding child protection
5. Discourage children from expressing their concerns on child protection
6. Dilly-dally/neglect to take visible initiative to identify risks and control or mitigate those risks
7. Involve children in illegal/dangerous/torturous activity
8. Keep a child in staff's own house overnight without supervision
9. Share a bed and or room with a child
10. Show special interest/care to a particular child

POPI, from time to time and as required, appoints consultant, researchers and contractors for their services. The organization has a responsibility to make these different groups of people aware about its child protection policy and educate them about its concerns and commitment in protecting children from any form of oppression/torture. This will help them to conduct their activities in accordance to the policy.

7. POPI's commitment to child protection

The protection of children is one of the core values of POPI. POPI opposes any form of child abuse as it is inconsistent with the spirit of The Universal Declaration of Child Right of the UN. The child protection activities of POPI will be conducted in line with the UN declaration and existing laws and policies of Bangladesh. If a person attached to POPI conducts any activity/behaviour in work place or for that matter anywhere which is inconsistent with the code of conduct, if reported, will be dealt severely and appropriate punishment will be handed over to the offender.

POPI is fully committed to establishing an oppression-free and child-friendly society through its words and deeds.

8. Things POPI will do

POPI will fulfil its commitment of child protection through the following ways and means:

A. Awareness raising

POPI will conduct a comprehensive awareness-raising programme amongst different types of staff as well as other relevant persons. Besides, children also have to be made aware sufficiently about the issue of child oppression, risks attached to it and ways and means to fight against it.

B. Prevention

Being aware of and following this protection policy, staff as well as group members will work to prevent incidence of child abuse. Besides, they will also extend support as a case may require.

C. Reporting

A process will be in place so that any information on a child's security/safety is reported to appropriate forum/authority without any delay. The persons designated with these tasks will be trained for acquiring needed skills. The designated staff must know to whom, where and when to report once they receive any information on a case/incidence of child abuse.

A guideline and accompanying tools will be followed in preparing report.

d. Responding

In case of an incidence or possibility of occurring an incidence, the staff of that level will extend the highest possible assistance and support to victim(s).

To ensure required level of assistance POPI will conduct the following:

- a. Offer adequate orientation to staff and other related persons about child protection policy
- b. Extend all possible assistance and cooperation to implement this policy
- c. Monitor and follow up the functioning of this policy on a regular basis, suggest changes and prepare plan of action.

9. CHILD ABUSE: Definition and Analysis

Child abuse is a state where a child is affected in various ways such as:

- Physically
- Psychologically
- Sexually
- Economically.

Usually it happens due to failure of the parents or supervisor in ensuring sufficient care and security.

1. Physical abuse includes any injury that causes pain, discomfort and/or embarrassment to the child which include but not limited to slapping, pulling hair or ear, hitting by stick, kicking, pinching etc.
2. Psychological abuse or neglect includes behaviour and activities that create a negative impact on a child's mind and/or fearful atmosphere which may include, but not limited to, the following:
 - Verbal abuse
 - Threat
 - Scolding
 - Utterance of a curse
 - Asking them to get out of home
 - Depriving them of decent healthcare, nutrition, education opportunity
 - Ignoring child's opinion and views
3. Sexual abuse includes any behaviour or activity conducted with a child which has got sexual undertones, such as, showing pornographic materials, pictures/photographs, videos, offer for sexual favour, stalking (eve teasing), erotic conversation, touching body unnecessarily and any other activity that has been defined as an act of sexual harassment in POPI's gender policy.
4. Economic oppression includes paying unjust and low wages, paying girls less than boys for equal work and depriving children from their due share of property etc.

Incidence of child abuse: extent, types and impacts

1. Extent of child oppression

More than half of the 50 million children in Bangladesh live under the poverty line. According to the alternative report of child rights in Bangladesh presented to the UN, only 16% children considered that they lived a secured life and felt safe within their families. 12% children reported that the incidences of child oppression have decreased over the year. On the contrary, 30% children stated that child marriage was increasing. According to the State of the World Children Report 2005 (1986-2003 on average), the incidence of child marriage was 65%; 31% children considered that they had no security and had live within the confines of a room; 16% had experience of staying in shelter homes; 28% children were victims of sexual harassment and oppression; 18% girl children opined that they had faced discrimination since their birth; and 15% children experienced physical torture in their families. It is not that easy to measure the extent and gravity of child oppression as most of the cases of oppression and injustices take place within the family and thus go unnoticed and unreported. There is severe lack of reliable information and data on this issue and whatever little statistics is available is not readily accessible.

In 1997, The World Health Organization (WHO) of the UN in its 'Fact Sheet No. 150' maintained:

- a. Child abuse is a century old problem and it persists in every society across the globe;
- b. Authentic sources reveal that 5 children out of every 5000- 10000 die due to physical torture;
- c. Out of every 180- 1000 children 1 (one) child experiences physical torture.

2. Consequences of Abuse

The consequences of child abuse may be very devastating for the victim, causing:

- Death
- Continued physical torture impeding child's physical and mental growth
- Disruption of studies
- Sensitivity/ emotional loss
- Lack of self-confidence and low self-esteem
- Feelings of guilt or negative thinking that eventually leads one to get involved in criminal activities
- An oppressed child in the long run to turn into an oppressor
- A tendency to avoid other people, if s/he is disturbed constantly

Due to above consequences, the relationship between the victim child and other important persons around her/him deteriorates; the child behaves arrogantly and may become aggressive and turn to be a drug abuser.

ABUSE:

Abuse takes place at various levels:-

- a. State
- b. Society/ community
- c. Family
- d. Work place
- e. Educational Institutions
- f. Medical service centres
- g. Child shelters

Which cases of abuse on children POPI will respond to:

1. Any abused child belonging to the family of POPI's General Body and EC members or staff,
2. Any child from POPI working areas who reports to be a victim or expresses possible risk of becoming a victim or reports about any other child who possibly may end up as the victim any moment,
3. Victim of any reported case of abuse from POPI's partner organization,
4. A child attached to POPI facing oppression by a staff,
5. A child attached with POPI programmes abused/tortured by other child,
6. Any child abused by any POPI staff,
7. Any child who may not be attached to POPI activity but asks for help,
8. National and international events/cases on this issue to which POPI can lend its moral support.

CODE OF CONDUCT OF POPI FOR WORKING WITH CHILDREN

1. To become aware of possible risks and act accordingly
2. To plan and select place carefully so as to avoid risk of child abuse
3. To work with a child openly as far as possible
4. To ensure favourable environment so that concerns are aired and discussed openly
5. To ensure accountability so that no incidence of misconduct or oppressive action goes unquestioned and unpunished
6. To talk with children about the nature of relationships between them and staff and others, and encourage them to share their concerns
7. To empower children and to encourage them to discuss their rights, acceptable and unacceptable behaviour and share what to do if they encounter a problem etc.

Values and Fundamental Principles of POPI in Working with Children

1. Health, security, welfare and the best interest of children will receive top priority,
2. Increase of welfare of children so that their potential is fully realised,
3. Understanding and valuing a child keeping in mind his/ her background e.g. culture, language, caste, religion and ethnicity; assessing his/her needs and trying to address them accordingly,
4. Listening to them patiently, considering their opinion with importance and encouraging them to participate in matters that involve them,
5. Showing respect to children and considering them as independent persons on their own rights,
6. Treating them positively, never forgetting that as individuals they have their own choices and rights, and highlighting their potential in contributing to the progress of society,
7. Working with them with respect, trust and spirit of genuine partnership,
8. Giving importance and valuing their opinions,
9. Working with them in such a way so that inherent/ intrinsic potentials, skills levels increase,
10. Trying to understand them, appreciating the condition/ environment in which they live and come from.

Role and responsibility of supervisor

All staff of POPI as well as other related persons must bear in mind that being a senior and/or designated person, it is their legal responsibility to ensure safety and security of children within their jurisdiction. As children could be abused in different ways, it is an imperative for staff and others to stick to this protection policy and act accordingly to address this problem.

Important points to be remembered by staff and others

1. To remain constantly prepared to face problems/risks
2. To conduct activities in assisting victim child in such a manner so that it becomes visible to everybody
3. To put mechanisms in place for making staff fully accountable for their actions
4. To ensure an environment so that children can share their opinion/ concerns freely
5. To refrain from discriminatory treatment
6. To maintain confidentiality

Usually should not be done

1. To spend long time with a particular child isolating him/ her from others
2. To invite/ take a child to staff's own place of residence especially where the child has to share bed with the staff
3. To use a child for staff's personal work.

STAFF AND OTHERS MUST NOT DO EVER

1. To hit, beat or hurt a child and harass physically or mentally
2. To establish sexual relationship with a child
3. To establish any relationship with a child that is exploitative/ abusive
4. To push/put a child in a risky/abusive situation
5. To use derogatory language, proposal and/or advice that is improper and aggressive
6. To invite a child (programme beneficiary) to staff's own house and keep him/her without proper supervision
7. To make physical gestures/behaviour that has sexual implication
8. To share a room/bed with a programme beneficiary child
9. To conduct a child's personal work which s/he is capable of doing her/himself

10. To condone or to participate in a child's illegal, risky or improper activities
11. To shame a child, belittle her/ him and do anything that hurts her/ his sentiment
12. To behave discriminately and ignoring others by paying special attention to a particular child
13. To do anything that may affect the future of the child negatively.

It is mandatory for a staff or a person attached with POPI who receives information of an incidence of child abuse to report to the appropriate authority in the prescribed way as mentioned in the Child Protection Policy.

The incidence and/or complaint must be documented in writing and should be sent to appropriate authority within 24 hours. The document should bear the sender's name and signature with date. All information of the document has to be correct and truthful. This document should be prepared keeping in mind exactly how the child has described the incidence. All documents should be preserved properly and communication must be done maintaining due confidentiality.

When One Should Be Concerned For a Child

If a situation seems alarming and there is a possibility of causing immediate harm to a child, then intervention must be made without delay. The failure to do this may further increase child's risks/sufferings.

Response to person disclosing

Sometimes children themselves may disclose that they have become victims of abuse. In such a situation, it is very important to handle the matter with great care and patience, with an attitude of helping the victim/potential victim.

A child should not be ever blamed for being the victim of harassment/ torture/abuse; rather s/he should be assured that s/he is not responsible for it and that disclosure of such incidents is in no way a bad thing.

Confidentiality

POPI will maintain strict confidentiality in dealing with cases of child oppression. Disclosure of confidential information may be very threatening to the child as well as for staff and other related persons.

Responding and reporting

Once a concern is expressed or an incident is reported / revealed, adequate discussion should take place at the respective field office as well at the HQ about the type of concern, gravity of risks and steps that have to be undertaken. As an NGO, POPI has to operate within its own mandate and has its limitations regarding extent of intervention it can make in 'family' matters and ensure full safety and security to a child. However, it is essential to discuss the concerns and take prompt initiative and do everything that is possible by POPI. It is very complex and challenging to work on issues of child oppression. Following this policy, the concerned staff will bring the relevant cases to the notice of the management and after that, bearing review, appropriate measures will be undertaken. It is essential for POPI to respond and monitor the incidents of child oppression/abuse properly. To remain honest to its stated commitment, POPI must ensure that everything possible has been done from its side to combat the situation. POPI must demonstrate that it is capable of translating its commitment into action. It will ensure that all needed mechanisms are in place and operational. POPI will also work in collaboration with different local and international organizations on this issue.

Child Protection Policy: Implementation process

POPI will follow strategies stated below to implement its 'Child Protection Policy':

Implementation Strategies

- This policy will be strictly followed in appointing staff and consultants/service suppliers
- All other existent policies will be reviewed and necessary changes will be made in line with this policy
- CPP Code of Conduct will be signed in applicable cases
- Along with creating awareness on this policy, required measures will be undertaken for protection, prevention, monitoring and capacity building by POPI
- Initiatives will be undertaken by POPI to build and enhance networks, coordination and communication as well as information and experience sharing with other organizations working on implementation of child protection policy
- POPI will extend its support and assistance to other organizations to implement their child protection policy.

For proper implementation of this policy and for awareness-raising as well as capacity building of relevant personnel, the following initiatives will be undertaken by POPI.

Awareness Raising

POPI will undertake following steps to raise awareness of relevant persons on matters related to violence against children and their protection:

- Organize orientation meetings/ workshops/ seminars
- Maintain regular liaison with organization having child protection programmes and participate in various events organized by them
- Prepare various types of communication (IEC, BCC) materials

Capacity Development

- Orientation session will be organized annually
- Trainings and workshops will be arranged as per requirement
- Arrangements will be made to participate in workshops (organized by others) on child right issues.

Prevention

- Regular monitoring and other needed measures will be undertaken
- Child protection sensitivity test will be conducted during recruitment examinations
- An analytical report on child protection issues will be prepared annually.

Responding

- The names of designated officials with phone numbers will be displayed in all POPI offices so that a child can easily communicate their concerns without difficulty and fear
- Designated officials will visit place of occurrence and must report within 24 hours to the Management Team (MT)
- Medical treatment should be arranged and law enforcing authorities must be informed duly.

Management Committee (MC)

The MC will function as the sole authority as per the policy to take decision on child oppression matters. This 5 member committee will be formed by the Executive Director(ED). The ED will nominate a senior official having vast experience on child rights and child protection issues as the Focal Person of the committee with a clear cut TOR. The Focal Person also will act as the Head of the Monitoring Team.

Things that will be done

- Full confidentiality will be maintained at every stage
- All policies, service rules, manuals, activities and project proposals will be reviewed and updated in accordance with this policy
- Physical structures will be made child-friendly
- The Management Committee will present the report of the Reporting Committee as an agenda in the AGM of the General Body and Executive Committee meetings
- All recruitments, orientations, basic trainings, signing of various contracts (with vendors, consultants, resource persons etc) will be conducted following this policy
- A portion of the annual budget will be ear-marked for child protection activities
- Arrangements will be made so that children and their care giver/supervisor can attend various trainings, seminars and workshops. The committee will make an effort to implement the guidelines stated in various policies of POPI on child protection

- The MC in its regular meeting will have an agenda on child protection issue and discussing details
- A policy brief on 'child protection' will be prepared and added to the recruitment process of staff
- An undertaking in light of this policy will be prepared for signing by newly recruited staff
- Similar undertaking will be used by other relevant persons
- A booklet/manual on child protection issues will be developed and made available
- A short session on child protection will be prepared
- Posters on this issue will be designed, printed and exhibited
- Child-friendly furniture, fixtures and fittings will be installed
- The MC upon receiving a complaint will send the Monitoring Team to the place of occurrence without delay. On the basis of the report of the Monitoring Team an investigation team (if needed) will be formed and necessary decision will be taken up
- Medical centres have to be involved and legal firms have to be appointed if needed
- MC is given the mandate to pass any decision on child protection issues.

Monitoring Team

To ensure the full implementation of this policy, POPI will appoint a Monitoring Team. This three member team will prepare reports on child abuse cases and on the basis of these reports the MC will pass a final decision.

Monitoring Team will:

- Monitor whether the objectives, programme plans and code of conduct of staff are compatible with the child protection policy
- On any violation of policy, monitoring team will submit its report to the MC
- Conduct monitoring by direct situation observation as well as by examining documentation on half yearly and annual basis.
- Will monitor following prescribed format and submit report to Management Team.

Child Protection Team

A three member Child Protection Team will be formed headed by PC/PM/PH. This committee will submit its report to the Management Committee. After analyzing gathered information and after having adequate discussion, the team will decide on the following:

- Next internal and external investigation
- Caring process for restoring the mental stability of the child
- Nursing of victim child and security of other related children
- Reintegration of victim child into society
- Counselling of victim for restoring mental stability
- Arrangement of alternative place of residence/shelter home
- Disciplinary action against the perpetrator/accused
- Legal action to be undertaken.

Following due process, the Child Protection Team will discharge its responsibilities as stated below:

- Report to head office
- Inform various statutory agencies such as police, social welfare department etc.

Investigation

A. The Child Protection Team, upon receiving a complaint or information, from a staff or any other person related with POPI regarding an incidence of child abuse will do the following:

The complainant or any other person providing information on child oppression should be ensured that:-

1. The case will be placed before an appropriate person without delay
2. The concerned child will be provided with adequate assistance and counsel
3. Measures will be taken to protect the concerned child and other related children

B Within 24 hours of receiving the complaint, at least two members of the Child Protection Team will sit together to discuss the issue and take necessary actions.

C. The meeting will decide the followings:

1. Was the first investigation conducted with due seriousness?

2. Whether sufficient information is available to determine the followings:
 - a. Were there any lapses in reporting the incident on time?
 - b. Were the lapses due to action, inaction or negligence of alleged perpetrator?
 - c. At which stage/level of programme activity did the incident take place? Were any outsiders involved in the incident?
 - d. Extent of sufferings of the victim
 - e. Has the best interest of the child been taken into consideration?
 - f. Has the accused been informed about the complaint?
 - g. Has the victim child been transferred to a safe place and initiatives taken to minimize the risks for this child as well as other children?

Reporting

It is mandatory for all staff as well as other persons attached with POPI to report to the appropriate forum/ authority as soon as they observe or get information on any activity or behaviour by staffs which are listed as strictly prohibited in this policy.

Reporting Structure

- a. A three member child protection team comprising female and male staff will be formed for two years. Once the team is formed, if a vacant position (created due to resignation, termination, death etc.) needs to be filled up, new members can be co-opted through office circular. However, members of the existing team will continue to function till a new team assumes its responsibility.
- b. The names of team members with telephone numbers will be displayed openly.

Reporting Process

- a. Report could be made verbally, written or through email maintaining strict confidentiality.
- b. There should be sufficient description of the incident (heard, seen, anticipation/ doubts).
- c. Adequate explanation should be available regarding forms and types of abuse. Four different types of report will be prepared, e.g.:
 - Immediate (Case-based/incident-based monitoring mechanism part)

- Periodic (monitoring mechanism part)
- Half yearly
- Yearly

Confidentiality

- The identity of complainant will remain confidential.
- If the disclosure of the report has the potential of harming the victim socially, physically and or mentally then the Management Team may decide to not make the report public.