



## **CHILD PROTECTION POLICY**

**(Revised Version 2019)**

**At/PO: Kolabira-768213 District- Jharsuguda, Odisha**

Contact Details: Mob: 9437068185, Phone: 06640285185

Email: [sewakolabira@yahoo.com](mailto:sewakolabira@yahoo.com)

[www.sewakolabira.org](http://www.sewakolabira.org)

## **INTRODUCTION:**

SEWA is a not-for-profit organization working in Odisha for over 28 years focusing on alleviating poverty and social injustice, established by the initiative of Mr. Sushil Kumar Dash, the founder cum Secretary and legally registered in the year 1991-92 under Societies Registration Act XXI of 1860.

SEWA, as legally registered Odisha based women centric and child focused organization working with disadvantaged children. Its aim is to create an opportunity for these vulnerable children to be included in the world that they have largely been left out from. SEWA's efforts are to empower children from marginalized group of society living in difficult circumstances by providing positive healthcare integrated with livelihood, addressing issues related to their rights and entitlement for a life of dignity.

According to the United Nations Charter on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), SEWA is committed to protect its children from exploitation, neglect, sexual and physical abuse and therefore has formulated a Child Protection Policy translating its commitment into practicality. SEWA is giving top priority to keep children safe from all forms abuse and exploitation within and outside of the organization. The policy also serves as advocacy to create consciousness on child protection in the community and in the family. This Policy is in conformity with the laws of the country-drawn keeping in view SEWA's Philosophy, Mission and Vision, approach and Partnership policy on Child Protection.

### **Policy Statement:**

SEWA is committed to practice which protects children from harm. All personnel, staff, volunteers, interns, consultants, visitors or anyone else connected with SEWA will accept and recognize their responsibilities to develop awareness of the issues which cause children harm.

This policy is based on the following principles

- The welfare of the child is paramount;
- All children, whatever their age, culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin religious beliefs and/or sexual identity have the right to protection from abuse;
- All suspicions and allegations of abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately;
- All staff (paid/unpaid) have a responsibility to report concerns to the Designated Person with responsibility for child protection.

### **Definitions**

1: A child is defined as any person under the age of 18 years.

2. Child Abuse is defined as all forms of physical abuse, emotional ill treatment, sexual abuse and exploitation, neglect or negligent treatment, commercial or other exploitation of a child and includes any actions that results in actual or potential harm to a child. Child abuse may be a deliberate act or it may be falling in action to prevent harm.

3. Child protection entails safeguarding children from any harm deliberate or otherwise and Policy enunciates responsibilities, measures and activities proposed to be undertaken

## Defining

Definitions of abuse	Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent feigns the symptoms of, or deliberately causes ill health to a child whom they are looking after. This situation is commonly described as factitious illness, fabricated or induced illness in children after the person who first identified this situation. A person might do this because they enjoy or need the attention they get through having a sick child. Physical abuse, as well as being the result of a deliberate act, can also be caused through omission or the failure to act to protect.
Emotional abuse	Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional ill treatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve making a child feel or believe they are worthless or unloved, inadequate or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of the other person. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. It may also involve causing children to feel frequently frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of a child. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of ill treatment of a child, though it may occur alone.
Sexual Abuse	Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of, or consents to, what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative acts such as rape, buggery or oral sex, or non-penetrative acts such as fondling. Sexual abuse may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, pornographic material or watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways. Boys and girls can be sexually abused by males and or females, by adults and by other young people. This includes people from all different walks of life.

**Note:** Recent guidance notes other sources of stress for children and families, such as social exclusion, domestic violence, the mental illness of a parent or carer, or drug and alcohol misuse. These may have a negative impact on a child's health and development and may be noticed by an organization caring for a child. If it is felt that a child's well-being is adversely affected by any of these areas, the same procedures should be followed.

### **Scope: Child Protection Policy (CPP)**

The Child Protection Policy applies to everyone working for or associated with SEWA as follows:

- ✓ All Staff Members and Resource Persons based in Head Office, Project offices in field areas or elsewhere.
- ✓ Other Members- Members of Board, Volunteers-Students, Corporate and community volunteers, contractors and others who may come into contact with the children through SEWA
- ✓ Guests/Visitors- donors, journalist, media, researcher, celebrities etc who may come into contact with the children through SEWA.

### **SEWA aims to safeguard children by**

- Adopting child protection guidelines through procedures and a code of conduct for staff and volunteers.
- Sharing information about child protection and good practice with children, parents and careers, staff and volunteers.
- Sharing information about concerns with agencies who need to know, and involving parents and children appropriately.
- Carefully following the procedures for recruitment and selection of staff and volunteers.
- Providing effective management for staff and volunteers through support, supervision and training.
- SEWA will commit to review the policy and good practice regularly.

### **Implementation guidelines**

#### **This policy sets out agreed guidelines relating to the following areas**

- Responding to allegations of abuse, including those made against staff and volunteers
- Recruitment and vetting of Staff and volunteers
- Supervision of organizational activities

#### **1. Awareness program:**

- Organize regular awareness program on Child Rights to Staff Members, Volunteers, community leaders, field volunteers
- Impart special training to Project Staff on child protection

#### **2. Program intervention**

- Design interventions with rights-based approach- responding to needs, sensitizing and empowering children, giving them voice.
- Making Community advocacy program on child rights and gender issues integral part of all interventions
- Mobilizing and sensitizing women/ mothers in order to make them and their spouse responsible for well being of children and prevention of exploitation, abuse.

#### **3. Compliance mechanism**

- Capacity building of staff members working with children in projects, to effectively deal with and promote rights of children and to help protect from any kind of exploitations and abuse.
- Monitor staff's performance and conduct to ensure the same is in tandem with philosophy, mission and vision of SEWA and also culturally sensitive.
- All personnel –staff, volunteers, interns, consultants, visitors or anyone else connected with SEWA will not spend time alone with a child, nor touch the child inappropriately or make child feel insecure.
- Children must not only be heard but also encouraged to voice their concerns and problems. All staff, volunteers and whoever come into contact with children must ensure it. However, it must be watched and suitably guided that their interactions are friendly and decent.
- Children must be weaned away from labour- domestic servant. They must not be employed as domestic worker by staff

#### 4. Complaints/ Allegations handling

- SEWA shall extend moral support to parents and the victim (child) and if need be; help to file the First Information Report (FIR) at the local police station. SEWA has the responsibility of informing the abuse case immediately to who will then initiate appropriate legal recourse - dealing the case with due sensitivity and confidentiality.
- In case the wrongdoer is a staff member or any other person connected with SEWA, the matter shall be reported to the Secretary, the alleged person put under suspension with immediate effect.
- Child subjected to abuse, more often than not, gets psychologically upset which is very traumatic, leaves deep scar on mind. Often faced with conflicting emotions- confusion, fear, anger, shame, depression- result into lack of confidence, low self-esteem, in such upheaval may have serious repercussions later in life. Understandably, due personal care along with professional, effective counseling is critical and must be provided.
- SEWA will be networking and collaborate with likeminded individuals and institutions for sharing knowledge and experiences (best practices); and support advocacy campaigns on child protection, development and promote children's participation.

#### ROLE AND CONCERN

The role of the designated person is to	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Obtain information from staff, volunteers, children or parents who have child protection concerns and to record this information.</li> <li>• Assess the information quickly and carefully and ask for further information as appropriate.</li> <li>• They should also consult with a statutory child protection agency such as the local social services department to clarify any doubts or worries.</li> <li>• The designated person should make a referral to a statutory child protection agency or the police without delay.</li> </ul>
Allegations against a member of staff	<p>SEWA will assure all staff/volunteers that it will fully support and protect anyone, who in good faith reports his or her concern that a colleague is, or may be, abusing a child. Where there is a complaint against a member of staff there may be three types of investigation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A criminal investigation,</li> <li>• A child protection investigation,</li> <li>• A disciplinary or misconduct investigation</li> </ul> <p>The results of the police and child protection investigation may well influence the disciplinary investigation, but not necessarily.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Action if there are concerns</li> <li>• Concerns about poor practice</li> </ul>
Concerns about suspected abuse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Any suspicion that a child has been abused by either a member of staff or a volunteer should be reported to the Designated Person,</li> </ul>

	<p>who will take such steps as considered necessary to ensure the safety of the child in question and any other child who may be at risk.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ The Designated person will refer the allegation to the social services department who may involve the police, or go directly to the police if out-of-hours.</li> <li>➤ The parents or careers of the child will be contacted as soon as possible following advice from the social services department.</li> <li>➤ If the Designated Person is the subject of the suspicion/allegation, the report must be made to the appropriate Manager or Chair who will refer the allegation to Social Services.</li> </ul>
Internal Enquiries and Suspension	<p>The Designated Person will make an immediate decision about whether any individual accused of abuse should be temporarily suspended pending further police and social services inquiries. Irrespective of the findings of the social services or police inquiries the organization will assess all individual cases to decide whether a member of staff or volunteer can be reinstated and how this can be sensitively handled. This may be a difficult decision; particularly where there is insufficient evidence to uphold any action by the police. In such cases, the organization must reach a decision based upon the available information which could suggest that on a balance of probability; it is more likely than not that the allegation is true. The welfare of the child should remain of paramount importance throughout the existence of SEWA.</p>

**Note: This policy was revisited, adopted and being approved by the Governing Board of SEWA in the Resolution No. 29 dated 23/12.2019. This policy will be revisited when and where needed.**