

Aawvaaz



The Newsletter of Tulir - Centre for the Prevention and Healing of Child Sexual Abuse

Vol. 2, Apr-Sep 05

Catch us online...

The world is getting smaller. Just a click of a button now makes it possible to access information from any corner of the globe. Recognizing this potential, we have launched our website as yet another platform to keep up the drumbeat on the issue of child sexual abuse and to make an attempt to plug the gap of paucity of information on the internet around this issue, especially within the Indian context. Besides discussing the issue and its dimensions in general, the website provides specific information for schools and parents with respect to their roles in protection of children.

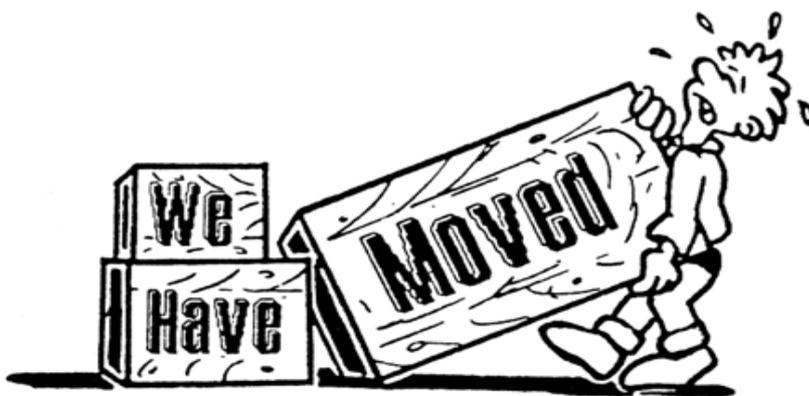


www.tulircphcsa.org

Other webpages include information on myths surrounding child sexual abuse, case-studies, process of abuse, Tulir's services and activities, and

also a list of links to other informative and educational websites on child sexual abuse, sexuality and violence against children.

Our new address....



Please note our **new address and phone number:**

57-A, L Block, 26th Street,
Anna Nagar (East)
Chennai - 600102
India
Phone: 044-26632026

Workshops on Child Sexual Abuse

In order to build capacities of professionals, parents and other concerned adults to address and prevent Child Sexual Abuse, Tulir-CPHCSA organizes a range of workshops at regular intervals. Conducted about twice every year, these workshops are facilitated by Lois Engelbrecht, our Consultant, and attended by social workers, teachers, doctors, lawyers, journalists, parents and other human service professionals from within and outside Chennai. The response to these workshops has become increasingly positive and encouraging over the years.

In September 2005, four workshops were conducted by Tulir-CPHCSA in Chennai:

- i) Awareness and Responding to Child Sexual Abuse
- ii) Child Sexual Abuse Prevention through Personal Safety Education
- iii) Healing Issues within Child Sexual Abuse: Introduction to Therapeutic Interventions
- iv) Preventing and Healing Child Sexual Abuse through a Bible-based curriculum

Would you like to know when we are planning our next set of workshops? Just drop a line at tulircphcsa@yahoo.co.in, and we will keep you informed.

Addressing Child Sexual Abuse

Tulir-CPHCSA helps other organizations working on a wide variety of issues such as child rights, social development, human rights, law, HIV/AIDS etc., in addressing child sexual abuse as a cross-cutting issue within their existing framework of work. Such awareness and capacity-building is significant, since any organization that works with children has an opportunity of reaching out to and helping children facing sexual abuse, as part of their

routine operations. It also assists both Tulir-CPHCSA and the organizations it works with, in connecting their primary areas of concern with other related issues so as to make their respective interventions more holistic.

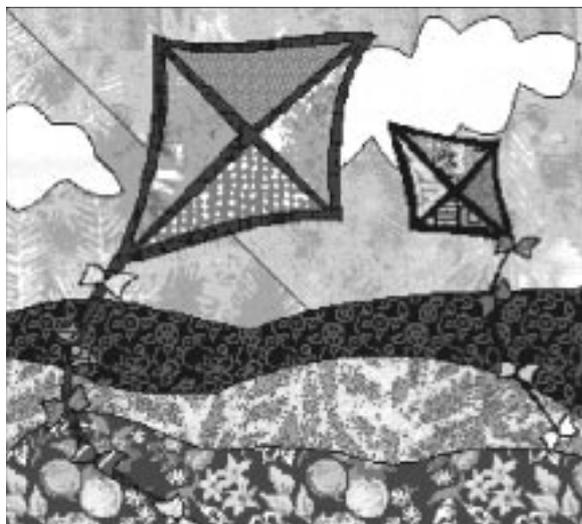
With this approach as its premise, Tulir-CPHCSA facilitated a 3-day workshop for the Maharashtra project partners of **Save the Children (Canada)**, who work on a diverse range of issues such as child labor, child domestic work and HIV

/AIDS. Organized in Pune in July 2005, the residential workshop evoked much discussion and participation.

South India AIDS Action Programme invited Tulir-CPHCSA to conduct a workshop for their community counselors in September. Another program was facilitated for the **Spastics Society of Tamil Nadu**, who have recognized child sexual abuse as a major issue since challenged children are at an increased risk of abuse.

Change Looms....

Ashoka Foundation (an international organization working towards development of social entrepreneurship in different parts of the world) and **Pravah** (an NGO in Delhi, active in the field of promoting youth's role in social concerns and leadership) together have instituted the **Changelooms Awards**, to be awarded to young people who have taken initiatives to start innovative projects in the social development sector. Besides being an award, it is a process of skill building and mentorship.



Alankaar, Vipin and Nancy of Tulir-CPHCSA won the award in September 2005, after having been short-listed for it through a process of applications, interviews, and a week-long mentorship-cum-evaluation program in New Delhi. The award, given on the basis of Tulir's schools-based program for preventing and addressing child sexual abuse through Personal Safety Education, was a learning process besides being an affirmation of the work we do.

Domestic Work and Sexual Abuse....

Research from across the world indicates that children in especially difficult circumstances are even more vulnerable to sexual violence as compared to the mainstream child population. Within the Indian context, a special population that is marginalized but is yet to be responded to appropriately, is that of child domestic workers. Due to their life situations, these children often become victims of abusers who take advantage of their vulnerable conditions and relative inaccessibility to support services. Recognizing these factors, the West Bengal Office of **Save the Children (UK)** has taken the commendable initiative to address the problem of violence and abuse faced by these children as part of their Child Domestic Workers project. As a step in this direction, the organization arranged for a workshop on awareness and responding to child abuse (April 2005), followed by another one on Personal Safety Education for children (June 2005), both of which were facilitated by Tulir-CPHCSA. The organization plans to work at both policy and practice levels in order to address issues of violence and abuse against child domestic workers. We hope many more organizations take such proactive steps to address sexual violence against the children they work with!

Personal Safety & UNCRC

For the purpose of preventing child sexual abuse, the Personal Safety programme of Tulir-CPHCSA focuses on 5 articles of UN Convention on the Rights of the Child as follows:

First, we define “rights” for children very simply as “something that all children MUST have,” and we define abuse as “when someone older or bigger than you hurts you on purpose.” For older students, we add that “abuse” implies a relationship and is thus different from “assault” where you would be attacked by a stranger. **Article 19** thus becomes important because we state clearly that even parents, with whom we usually share the closest relationship, cannot hurt a child and that in fact it is the parents’ responsibility to protect the child. Article 19 states that no one should hurt the child in any way; adults should make sure that the child is protected from abuse, violence and neglect; even the parents have no rights to hurt the child. Second, we go further to introduce to students **Article 34** which states that every child has the right to be protected from sexual abuse. This means that nobody can touch, take pictures or make the child do or say things of sexual nature through coercion, force or trickery. This article for young students leads to teaching the Touching Rules that “it is never all right for someone to touch your private body parts except to

keep you clean and healthy; and if someone tries to break this rule, say NO, Run, and Tell a trusted adult to get the help you deserve.” For older children we discuss the concept that ‘touch’ includes visual and verbal elements as well. It is important to teach children about this concern, just as we talk with children not to play with fire, how to escape a burning building, and even how to cross the street. This means that adults are obligated to teach children also how to keep themselves safe from abuse. In this context, **Article 17** is the mandate, stating that every child has a right to collect information from radios, newspapers, television, books, internet form all around the world; adults should make sure that the child gets information that the child can understand. Information to help keep children safe must include the concept of safe vs. unsafe touch. Understanding our feelings will help keep ourselves safe. “We are each the boss of our own body and only I know what I like, what touches I like, when I like to be touched and by whom.” This is supported by **Article 12** that states every child has a right to express his/her views and such opinions should be taken into account in decisions affecting the child. All feelings are natural and should be developed as the rest of our bodies and character, and how we can use these feelings positively can be taught. Others, especially adults, should respect the feelings of the

child. However, how a child expresses those feelings are also discussed.

Article 13 states that every child has a right to find out information and say what s/he thinks through speaking, writing, art, unless it violates the rights of others. This means that “while I am the boss of my body and know what I like, regardless of your intention for touching me, I have to communicate my feelings to you in an appropriate manner. In other words, I cannot hit you or give you a bloody nose.” Instead, we need to teach students how to communicate assertively and clearly. And if our words are not taken seriously, we can go to another adult to talk about the problem.

The above concepts are very basic to personal safety (prevention education). However, we all know that because abuse is about relationships, then saying NO to people we know or love is very difficult. Even if we feel uncomfortable it may be hard to get away. And certainly telling a trusted adult about something sexual done to us, about what we feel shameful about, is even more difficult. So, the most important concept we have to teach children is that whenever they are touched in a way they do not like, it is NEVER their fault. Nobody, especially a child, can be blamed for the behavior of somebody else.

- Lois Engelbrecht

Lois is a Consultant with Tulir-CPHCSA, and works in a similar capacity with CPTCSA (Philippines), P.S. the Children (Malaysia) and Prevent Child Sexual Abuse (Vietnam)



Because of the relative lack of helping services in small towns and rural areas, it becomes imperative to reach out to spread awareness on child sexual abuse and build capacities of organizations and volunteers there to respond to this appalling violation of childhoods and children's rights. As part of our endeavors to extend our message to all areas – urban, semi-urban or rural – Tulir-CPHCSA facilitated a 2-day workshop for volunteers and staff of non-governmental organizations in Cuddalore and Vadalur (Tamil Nadu) in July 2005.

(Tulir-CPHCSA tries to make its workshops as participatory and activity-based as possible. Picture: Participants involved in a role-play exercise)

News from Tulir-CPHCSA

Tulir-CPHCSA was invited to make a presentation on “Awareness and Responding to Child Sexual Abuse” at a meet organized by **Terres des Hommes (Germany)** in Hyderabad for its project partners from the four southern states in July. The presentation emphasized the need for organizations to develop their own guidelines, standards, and protocols in working with children.

Research has indicated strong correlations between child sexual abuse and substance abuse. It is important to take serious note of these correlations in order to view both sexual and substance abuse in a multidimensional manner so as to then offer holistic interventions. **T T Ranganathan Clinical Research Foundation** that works very actively on issues of substance addictions, has taken cognizance of these linkages and asked Tulir-CPHCSA to facilitate a half-day workshop for its counselors in July 2005.

Tulir-CPHCSA conducted workshops for the social workers and field-staff of **World Vision**, an international organisation working on development issues, in Chennai (June 2005), and New Delhi (August 2005).

Tulir-CPHCSA participated in a national level consultation on laws concerning children, organized jointly by **Department of Women and Children, Govt. of India**, and **Human Rights Law Network** in June 2005.

Voice of a Survivor...

Progress

Some people ask
When I tell my story
How did you survive?
Don't you just hate them?
Couldn't you kill them?
If it was me, I would want to destroy them
Revenge, revenge, how sweet can it be
My answer is simple:
Not one day goes by, when I could deny,
That at some point my anger makes me see red,
Not one whole day passes, when I don't see the ashes
Of those hated, cremated, but not yet dead
The ghosts here surround me, they followed and found me
They tied me and bound me, but my revenge will be:
Not in murdering, killing,
Doing their deeds, unwilling,
Not in hurting them more
Than they hurt me before,
Revenge, revenge, how sweet will it be
Just by laughing and living,
Sharing and giving,
Hoping and helping others like me
By doing these things
They didn't win
This revenge will be sweeter
Than any I see

By **Leah Johnstone**
(from "Anger for Breakfast")

About Us...



*Tulir - in Tamil - the first leaves of a plant;
leaves following a period of adversity,
symbolising children, and the belief in
the resilience and resurgence of life.*

Even though research on child sexual abuse has gained momentum abroad, it is still a neglected area in Indian and South Asian context. For any issue to be appropriately addressed, it is very important that an adequate body of knowledge be built to make informed decisions as far as policy and practice are concerned; and research is a very relevant process in this direction. In order to address the need for indigenous research on child sexual abuse, Tulir-CPHCSA is being supported by **Save the Children – Sweden**

(Regional Programme for South and Central Asia) to conduct a research on “Prevalence and Dynamics of Child Sexual Abuse among Schoolchildren in Chennai”. The project, currently in the data collection stage, involves 11th standard schoolchildren. Besides collecting data on abuse if and as experienced by these children, it also imparts them age-appropriate information on sexual violence and informs them of support services available, and provides them with resources to contribute towards ensuring their right to feel safe all the time.

News from Tulir-CPHCSA...

As much as it is important to work with the communities and professionals, it is equally relevant to interact with the students of social work and inform them of the field-realities and other issues within child sexual abuse. To assist in the growth of professionals in the making, Tulir-CPHCSA facilitated a half-day workshop for Masters in Social Work students of **D G Vaishnav College**, Chennai, in Aug 2005 and made a presentation on “Child Sexual Abuse: An NGO Perspective” at a state level seminar on child protection organized by the student body of **Madras School of Social Work** on Sep 30, 2005.

Continuing its work with the schools to promote prevention of sexual abuse through Personal Safety Education, Tulir-CPHCSA worked with the teachers, parents and students of **Good Shepherd Mat. Hr. Sec. School**, **Bala Vidya Mandir Sr. Sec. School** and **Pathshala Montessori School**.

Children’s Rights in Goa is an NGO in Panjim, working actively on protecting children against sexual exploitation and abuse, particularly in the field of tourism related pedophilia. On April 1, 2005, CRG organized a seminar on dealing with child sexual abuse for professionals and volunteers working in the state on issues of child protection. Tulir-CPHCSA made a presentation on “Prevention of Sexual Abuse through Personal Safety Education”.

In order to help build skills and capacities of volunteers at **SARC**, an NGO working on child sexual abuse and gender-issues in Varanasi, Tulir-CPHCSA facilitated a 2-day workshop for the organization in Aug 2005. Mutual sharing of experiences and strategies was a very positive outcome of the workshop.

On an invitation by the **National Health Services Trust of Tees and North East Yorkshire**, Vidya Reddy of Tulir-CPHCSA visited the UK for three weeks in September. The purpose of the visit was to learn about the child protection arrangements there and the issues which are addressed by professionals working in pediatric, child psychiatry, law enforcement and judicial services. Visits were also made to voluntary agencies that work with sexually abused children and offenders and also to local authority Social Service Dept in order to be acquainted with the processes and the way in which children and families are assessed and if appropriate, protected in the UK.

Working with the systems

Tulir-CPHCSA has a firm belief in working with the existing government systems to support and strengthen them in order to develop a multifaceted response to sexual abuse of children. Vidya Reddy, Tulir-CPHCSA, made a presentation on Responsiveness to Child Victims of Abuse and Child Witnesses at an interactive workshop for Judicial Officers on Juvenile Justice on September 11, 2005, in Kerala, organized by the **Directorate of Social Welfare, Govt. of Kerala**, and a similar presentation for Juvenile Aid Police Officers from across Kerala in August (organized by **People's Society for Social Justice, Kochi**) discussing legal dimensions of the problem and emphasizing on appropriate training of stakeholders in-

involved to tackle the issue efficaciously. At another platform, Tulir facilitated a workshop for the Superintendents of government children's homes in Maharashtra, who were brought together through the collaboration of **Action for the Rights of the Child, Pune**, and the **Dept. of Social Welfare, Govt. of Maharashtra**. Sexual abuse is a serious concern with respect to quality of care issues within children's institutions, and this workshop with the superintendents was a small yet important step towards building sensitivity and capacity of the administrators and caregivers who form a crucial link in the chain of protection of institutionalized children from violence and abuse.

Case study...

Sanjivani (not her real name) a 13-year child was systematically sexually abused over successive summer holidays by a very close friend of the family who accompanied them with his family. Sanjivani lost her voice completely and had to even drop out of school for a year. She never told her family who kept taking her to various doctors who in turn could not diagnose anything specifically wrong with her. Though she eventually regained her voice she felt she had undergone a complete personality change. When we met her in her later teenage years just sharing the simple fact with her that she was not the only person who had experienced being abused as a child, seemed to make a tremendous difference to her entire perspective on life and helped her towards a more positive well being.

Thank you...

We would like to thank the following individuals and organizations for their support and belief in our work :

- * Mrs. Madhuran Narayanan Charitable Trust
- * Vishnu Devananda Charitable Trust
- * Archana
- * Malavika
- * Browny Amudha
- * Dr. Raina Anand
- * Hanna Ejderos
- * Ravi Narayan
- * Mr. H.K. Kotecha
- * Sushma
- * Jeeva
- * Kanini Computers

News from Tulir...

Nancy Veronica of Tulir CPHCSA attended a month-long course on child protection organized by **National Institute of Social Defence** at New Delhi in April 2005. She also attended a Play Therapy workshop in Nepal in September, organized by **Save the Children - Sweden**. Play is the child's natural medium of communication, making it a very appropriate method to address psychosocial needs of children and offering them a form of self-therapy.

