



NISARGA FOUNDATION
CHILD PROTECTION POLICY MANUAL

About Us

Nisarga Foundation founded in 1997 under the Indian Trust Act, its a non-profit, voluntary, registered organization, its based in tribal Taluk of Heggadadevana Kote of Mysore district in Karnataka. The organization is governed by a Governing Body which comprises of six members of repute. Based on a firm decision of the GB, Nisarga Foundation since its inception has opted to work for the realization of rights of the tribes and non-tribes in and around Heggadadevana Kote.

Over the past two decades, Nisarga has been involved in the tribal movement for forest Rights, land struggle, class system and the main stream attitude of discrimination and exclusion, literacy movement, women empowerment, protection of tribal culture, dialect and tribal identity.

NF has set its goal to ensure the positive socio-economic change of the indigenous communities and underprivileged, downtrodden and marginalized communities by taking up various activities.

Vision

An initiative towards enhancing quality of life with dignity in tribal areas

Mission

Ensure positive, Socio-economic, cultural and political empowerment in the indigenous, underprivileged and marginalized communities, while protecting the environment and nurturing its bio-diversity.

Purpose of the Document

Nisarga Foundation child protection policy is to provide a safe and healthy environment for children. Nisarga Foundation values young people and children as a vital part of society and desires to see them grow, mature and be challenged in a healthy and safe environment. NF adhere to the principles of United Nations Convention on the rights of children and The Protection of Children from Sexual Offenses Act 2012 (POCSO) and other acts of India which safeguards children from all sorts of abuses.

Nisarga Foundations major work is with indigenous communities . NF believes that there will be situations where NF team members might interact with children directly or indirectly hence NF adapts Zero tolerance of child abuse in any form. This policy aims building awareness, provide guidelines, procedures in case of any wrong doings, CPP committee and its role.

Nisarga Foundation fulfil the moral and legal imperatives of protecting children in our care and Comply as per the law of the land.

Scope of Nisarga Foundation's Child Protection Policy

The Child Protection Policy applies to everyone working for or associated with Nisarga Foundation.

Coverage

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

Definition of Child

Convention on the rights of child (CRC) defines a child as “every human being below the age of eighteen years unless under the law applicable to the child, majority is attained earlier”.

Nisarga Foundation treats all persons of the age 0 to 18 as children

Definition of Child Protection

Article 19 of CRC defines protection of child as “protect the child from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse, while in the care of parent(s), legal guardian(s) or any other person who has the care of the child.

Nisarga Foundation through this policy aims to protect all children within their work area from all forms of abuse by reducing their vulnerability.

Child Abuse

WHO defines child abuse as “abuse and neglect that occurs to children under 18 years of age which includes all types of physical and/or emotional ill-treatment, sexual abuse, neglect, negligence and commercial or other exploitation, which results in actual or potential harm to the child's health, survival, development or dignity in the context of a relationship of responsibility, trust or power.”

Physical Abuse

Any form of physical injury caused by way of striking, punching, kicking, beating, burning, or biting the child, or any action that results in a physical impairment of the child.

Sexual Abuse

It's involving a child in sexual activity where he / she has no ability to give consent

- Using a child for the sexual gratification or satisfy the needs of the other person.
- Inducement of a child to engage in any unlawful sexual activity
- Use of a child in prostitution
- The exploitative use of children in pornographic performances and materials, etc.

Emotional Abuse

It's a failure to provide conducive and supportive environment for the development of a child by injuring the psychological capacity or emotional ability of a child. It is also known as verbal abuse, mental abuse, and psychological maltreatment

- Restriction of movement of child, Scapegoating, Threatening, Scaring, Discriminating a child based on race, religion, colour etc. Other non-physical forms of hostile activities.

Neglect

It is a failure mostly by a parent or guardian by denying development of child in all spheres.

- It is the failure to provide child's basic needs such as educational, emotional etc.
- Not providing adequate food or clothing, shelter, appropriate medical care, supervision, or proper weather protection & abandonment.
- Failure to provide appropriate schooling or special educational needs, allowing excessive absenteeism.
- Lack of any emotional support and love, never attending to the child.
- Allowing the child to participate in drug and alcohol use.

It is the duty and moral responsibility of all persons falling under the scope of this policy to report any form of child abuse.

Procedures of Child Protection policy

Awareness:

All Nisarga Foundation new staff /donar/Trustees/Volunteers will undergo thorough training on CPP during their induction into the organization. Nisarga Foundation team will receive similar training at least once a year by CPP committee. All pertinent data / information would be shared with Nisarga Foundation team including any changes / update done to the policy.

Nisarga foundation will create awareness on its CPP with all external stakeholders who work for NF. Nisarga Foundation will ensure CPP protocols are adhered during program planning, partnership, recruitment or with any external agency involved for work.

Nisarga Foundation will create posters, handbills etc to spread awareness on different forms of child abuse and the ways to prevent it. Names and common contact number / email ID of CPP committee will be displayed at all office spaces of NF.

Program Planning:

- NF will ensure all its programs to have child protection protocols in its training, field visits, get together, exposure visits or any other types of events or activities.
- In all NF programs where the possibilities of interactions with child is high, the policy do restrict NF representatives not to engage with the child in absence of primary care giver, inappropriate touch of a child, help that is not asked for, any unwanted favours such as sweets, special preference etc, meet a child in secluded places, taking a photo of single child without permission of care taker, showing a pictures/document/videos which exhibit horror, violent etc and don't ask any personal information of the child
- NF instructs all its representatives while interacting with children or working with children to care them warmly, organise child friendly environment, appropriate child care facilities and listen and address any concern if child express.
- None of the NF programs to include any program/activity/event which is harmful to children either physically or mentally

Recruitment:

- All the advertisements for any position in Nisarga Foundation will clearly specify that we are child friendly environment and adhere to the child protection law of the land.
- Background check on any kind of direct or indirect involvement in any incident related to child abuse of the selected candidates done through the reference provided, prior to issuing appointment letter. During the reference if NF gets any information or any incident wherein the selected candidate indulged in any incident of child abuse, such candidates will be not issued appointment order.
- All new joinees will be handed over CPP during their induction period to understand and sign the acceptance of adherence.

MOUs/Agreements:

All MOUs/ Contracts of NF will always have a clause on CPP.

CPP Committee and Grievance Management

Formation of Child Protection Committee (CPC)

NF CPC will have a minimum of 4 members

- One Board Member
- One External Person from NGO or Other sector experts in children issue
- One Field staff
- Operations Manager
- One senior staff member

Roles and Responsibilities of CPC

CPC plays a major role in upholding the children safety and their rights. Following are the key roles of the committee

- Meet at least 3 times a year
- Elect one member as its Chair
- Receive complaints, manage communication with victim, accused and management
- Address issues if any reported within stipulated time
- Continuously try to improve the child protection policy and practices within the organization
- Create awareness among NF staff, consultants, interns, external stakeholders, Board members, advisory committee members, partners and other visits
- Maintain the committee meeting minutes in a designated Minutes Book and report all the meeting agendas and discussions of the meeting in the same
- Maintain concerned document in a confidentiality
- Be advocacy agents with external world for betterment of child protection

Steps to be followed by the committee during any child abuse Incident

- Receive formal complaint by the Partner/Child/Fellow staff/ Victim from nominated committee member
- Ensure the safety of the victim from future risk
- Respond to the complaint within 8 hours with further notice
- Validate the complaint, if the nature of complaint requires an enquiry summon both parties separately within 24 hours
- If the preliminary enquiry proves the faultiness of the NF representative, recommend for suspension until the enquiry ends
- Provide enough time for both parties to explain from their end.
- Seek for evidences and ensure fairness without any bias
- Close the full enquiry process with in the maximum limit of 30 days and recommend the next steps to the management based on the findings of the enquiry
- Committee to treat each incident seriously and recommend further steps to curb repetition of such incidents in the organisation.
- Cases that require serious legal interventions, seek assistance from Police department.

Confidentiality

- Any unfortunate incident happening within the purview of this policy will be dealt sensibly with utmost care protecting the rights and dignity of the abused child.
- Committee also protect all the individual details or incidents from the outside world. Any information collected or heard will be only used for the enquiry purpose only.

Tenure of CPP Committee and Chairmen

- Chairmanship will be for a period of one year who can be re-elected with a gap of year

- All members of the committee to rotate on annual basis for the role of Chairmanship, except HR representative
- Committee will have a tenure for three years from the date of its inception and same will be renewed and members either re elected or new members will be inducted
- One-month notice period is required in case of any committee member decide to resign from the committee
- In case of any member resigning, the Chair has an authority to replace a suitable new member within the 30 days
- In case if any incident reported against committee members the same rules of the grievance management will apply to committee member
- In case if any incident reported against committee chairmen, NF board will interfere to take appropriate actions/decisions

Role of Executive Director and The Board.

- ED to facilitate the process of committee formation and seek board resolution for setting up CPP committee
- ED to provide required operational support for the effective function of the committee
- ED to accept and act as per the recommendation of the committee made on any cases
- Report quarterly to the board either a Nil report or in any complaints received or dealt with
- The role of the board is to pass the resolution for adapting the policy and the committee
- Take decisions in case if the Chairman of the CPP committee indulge in any wrong doings
- Review policy once in 3 years or whenever the new Govt law imposes for any amendment

Details of the Nisarga Foundation 1st CPP Committee:

- Devamma - Chair Person
- Raghavendra - Ex Staff Nisarga Foundation
- Marcelin R Fernandez - Senior Staff
- Gurudevaradhya - Senior Staff
- Divya M R - Operations Manager

Contact Information

Mail ID: nisargafoundationcpp@gmail.com

Phone Number: 8228-257873

Declaration of Commitment by Concerned NF Members

I, hereby declare that:

- ❖ I have read and understood the “Child Protection Policy” of NF and I agree to adhere to this policy.
- ❖ I will work within the procedure as laid out in the “Child Protection Policy” of NF.
- ❖ I understand that the policy holds good in all the locations where I represent NF directly or indirectly.
- ❖ I understand the procedure involved in handling any complaint and I accept to cooperate with committee in case if I am the accused for any child abuse.
- ❖ I understand the decision of the committee is the final
- ❖ I agree to attend any awareness or training program that NF organizes related to CPP

For External Cover

Tips for you to be safe

3.2.1 Don'ts:

- Do not engage with the child in absence of primary care giver

- Do not touch a child
- Do not help if not asked for
- Do not give favours like candies without any reason
- Do not meet the child in secluded places
- Never take a photo of single child without permission of care taker
- never show any pictures/document/videos which exhibit horror, violent etc
- Don't ask any personal information of the child

3.2.2 Do's:

- Talk to children warmly
- Always meet child in an open place/room
- Call child with his/her name
- With care taker permission interact with child
- Inform child the purpose of your meeting
- Treat every child are equal
- Wear clothes that are appropriate keeping in mind local context in which the children live.