

Conferences and Advocacy

Child Trafficking and Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children: Medical & Psychosocial Services for the Victims, India International Centre, New Delhi, October 13, 2016

Child Trafficking and Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children (CSEC) are violations of the fundamental rights of children to be safe and are in contravention to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). The exact numbers of victims of child trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation are unknown, although estimates range into millions. The interaction of poverty and gender-based violence in developing countries heightens the risk of sex trafficking and CSEC. Along with Indian Child Abuse Neglect & Child Labour (ICANCL) group, IAP Delhi, India Alliance for Child Rights and World Vision, BUDS co-organised a National Consultation on this very important public health problem. *The consultation aimed to help professionals, coming in contact with survivors/victims of child sexual abuse, get a better understanding of the issue of Child Sexual Abuse and equip them with information to prevent and respond to victims of sexual abuse.* Presentations at the consultation provided global and national perspectives on the status of Child Trafficking and

Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children that included legislative and policy initiatives. The term trauma informed approach and trauma informed care, while responding to children who have been sexually exploited, were introduced as was the importance of including mental health and emotional evaluations and interventions along with the medical treatment. Representatives from international agencies, government, advocates and representatives from civil society discussed the pros and cons of the draft Anti Child Trafficking Bill, community based child protection systems, child helpline and the importance of documentation for providing medical evidence in court.

Participants agreed on the need for a multi-disciplinary approach to interventions and for focused initiatives to prevent trafficking and child sexual abuse by strengthening child protection mechanisms in the community. Attitudinal change was identified as a key factor for bringing about real changes in the lives of children at risk of sexual exploitation. Given the general lack of awareness while examining child victims of sexual abuse, it was agreed that medical curriculum must include modules to train doctors on key medico legal aspects that include

comprehensive history taking, identifying psychosocial and mental health symptoms with a non-judgmental and open attitude. Knowledge of risk factors, recruitment practices, and common medical and mental health problems experienced by victims will help the pediatricians recognize potential victims and respond appropriately. In addition, all medical and multidisciplinary professionals must comply with child abuse mandatory reporting laws and existing legislations.

