

VEDIC Society

(Voluntary Education Development and Integrated Cultural Society)

Child Safeguarding Policy



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About VEDIC Society

VEDIC Society initiated its social development endeavours in the year 1990. The impetus behind it was the movement against the displacement of poor people due to the construction of the Auranga Dam that caused submergence of several villages. While this movement was going on, a group of like-minded people came up with the idea to set up an organisation, dedicated to address different issues of sustainable development of area and its populace. In 1991, it got the registered as society and established its office at Ranki Khurd in Palamu district. The office later shifted to Tumbagara in 1995 and finally to Latehar in 2001.

Since the inception, this society has been relentlessly working for and with the people towards achieving its much-cherished goal of holistic development of the downtrodden people of the society. Though Latehar district and its adjacent districts are extremely affected by the extremist activities that pose severe threat to the process of development, this organisation always nurtures its indomitable will of being thrived as a catalyst in bringing positive socio-economic changes in the lives of the poor people, especially women, children, and people of backward classes and of indigenous tribal communities.

VEDIC Society is at present working in two of the most backward districts of Jharkhand from its headquarters at Latehar and an extension office at Tumbagara. The present operational area covers **Latehar** and **Palamu** districts. The organisation addresses the following thematic areas:

- Basic Education
- Community Health
- Livelihood – Agriculture and Natural Resource Management
- Child Rights and Development
- Women Rights and Development
- Governance and People's Participation

In the context of the socio-political situation that prevails in its operational area, the core of VEDIC Society's target and its major beneficiaries are formed with the most vulnerable tribal population and people from backward classes. In its entire endeavour, special emphasis has been given on the women, children, and the rural marginal farmers.

Vision

Creation of adjusted and vibrant self-governed society, where people of all communities live with dignity in peace and harmony.

Mission

To make the society free from exploitation and discrimination by empowering people belonging to the tribal communities and underprivileged section of the society, especially children, adolescents, and women by ensuring their rights and promoting inclusive development.

Objectives

- To ensure equal opportunity to growth for all irrespective caste, creed, and gender
- To improve the status of children and women, especially of the tribal and backward communities in respect of their rights and entitlement
- To create conducive environment for effective and quality basic and primary education
- To generate community awareness towards health and facilitate the health service providers with quality training inputs for improving overall rural health status
- To ensure steady progress in generating livelihood opportunities for the people of economically weak section of the society by organizing them under CBOs and SHGs, and by providing skill development training
- To conserve the natural resources and promote efficient management thereon to mitigate environmental degradation and to enhance livelihood opportunities
- To empower marginalized people and women, especially of the tribal and backward communities by assisting them in leadership development and awareness building towards increased participation in rural self-governance
- To collaborate with the government departments and other development agencies to make convergence of all development programmes in an integrated manner for sustainable holistic development

1. Introduction

Violence against children is widespread and remains a harsh reality for lakhs of children from all socio-economic groups in India. Both girls and boys in the country face early marriage, domestic abuse, sexual violence, violence at home and in school, trafficking, online violence, child labour and bullying. All forms of violence, abuse and exploitation have lifelong consequences on children's lives.

India has a comprehensive policy and legal framework addressing rights and protection for children, providing opportunities to ensure that all children have equal access to quality protection services. The core child protection legislation for children is enshrined in four main laws: The Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection) Act (2000, amended in 2015); The Prohibition of Child Marriage Act (2006); The Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act (2012), and The Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act (1986, amended in 2016).

This policy details out VEDIC Society's commitment to safeguard children with whom it works and with whom it does not work also. It is targeted at all its employees and related personnel, including but not limited to governing body members, chief functionary, consultants, contractors, and visitors to the organisation's premises and working area.

2. Objectives

- To promulgate child safeguarding policy for all VEDIC Society employees and related personnel
- To ensure that roles, responsibilities and expected standards of conduct in relation to child safeguarding policy are known within VEDIC Society
- To create and maintain a safe environment for children by taking appropriate measures for this purpose, internally and in the communities where VEDIC Society operates

3. Definitions

Child refers to any person who is below 18 years of age

Safeguarding means protecting

Child Safeguarding Policy makes it clear what the organisation will do to keep children safe. It is our commitment to protect all children

The word **representatives** includes the organisation's employees, governing board members, consultants, volunteers, visitors to its premises, their family members, etc.

4. Safeguarding Policy

VEDIC Society seeks to safeguard children by preventing child abuse, setting up a system of reporting child abuse and responding to child abuse. The organisation's representatives will never:

- Act in ways that may be abusive or place children at risk of abuse.
- Hit, physically assault, or physically abuse children or threaten to do so.
- Engage in actions that are physically inappropriate or sexually provocative.
- Partake in sexual activities or have a sexual relationship with a child, irrespective of the age of majority or consent or local custom.
- Engage in a sexual relationship or sexual activity with an enrolled person or someone benefitting from the organisation's programme or activity.
- Stay alone overnight with one or more children participating in the organisation's programme who are not a part of their family, whether in their house, on project premises or elsewhere.
- Have a child participant who is not part of their family stay overnight at their home.
- Sleep in the same bed as a child participant or sleep in the same room as a child participant who is not part of their family.
- Exchange personal contact information or ask for children's personal information.
- Call, text or communicate with child participants outside of the project or on a personal basis.
- Develop relationships with children that could be deemed exploitative or abusive.
- Share or transfer child programme participant data outside the organisation without encryption.
- Store child programme participant data on a personal device.
- Use language, make suggestions, or offer advice to children that is inappropriate, offensive, or abusive.
- Do things for child participants of a personal nature that they could do for themselves, such as dressing, feeding, and washing.
- Improperly disclose children's sensitive information.
- Condone or participate in behaviour toward children that is unsafe or illegal.

To realise this the organisation will:

- Ensure that all representatives are adequately trained and supported in preventing and responding to child safeguarding concerns and are aware of the expectations of this policy.
- Take all reasonable steps to make the organisation safe as it conducts its routine operations, programme implementation, policy and campaigning efforts.
- Apply robust recruitment procedures to ensure that our staff and representatives do not pose an unacceptable risk to children.

5. Responsibilities

All VEDIC Society representatives are responsible for familiarising themselves with and adhering to the requirements of this policy and accompanying procedures. They are required to promote strong safeguarding practices within day-to-day behaviours and programmes.

They have an obligation to be alert for possible violations of this Child Safeguarding Policy and to report violations as soon as possible and not later than 24 hours, stating that a child has been abused or exploited or is at risk of being abused or exploited. All representatives must cooperate fully and confidentially in any investigation of concerns or allegations.

VEDIC Society Director and Governing Board members are accountable for the implementation of this Child Safeguarding Policy.

6. VEDIC Society's Commitment

VEDIC Society is committed to prevent child abuse and promote child safeguarding. It will periodically conduct risk assessments for programmes and activities involving children or those having a direct impact on children, to ensure that it meets the standards for safeguarding children.

When conducting risk assessments, consideration must be given to factors such as age, gender, disability, language, culture and all aspects of inclusion that may affect the risks and vulnerabilities associated with children participating in programmes.

6. Adoption and Amendment

This Child Safeguarding Policy is being adopted at a meeting of the Governing Board of VEDIC Society held on 28 February -2023. It has come into force immediately. It will be reviewed at the end of every three years from the date of its implementation, and suitably amended if necessary.