

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT

LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 1412
TO BE ANSWERED ON 28.07.2023

HANDING OVER CHILDLINE TO STATES

1412. SHRI DAYANIDHI MARAN:

Will the Minister of WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

- (a) the rationale behind the decision to handover Childline to States;
- (b) whether the partnership between Childline and civil society organizations continue after this handover, if so, the details thereof and the manner in which their roles and responsibilities would be affected;
- (c) the measures being put in place to ensure that local police stations/authorities are equipped to handle distress calls from children effectively and promptly;
- (d) the details of plans to enhance the training and capacity-building programs for local police stations in this regard;
- (e) the manner in which the transition of Childline to States will be managed indicating the timeline for this and likely changes in the governance structure or oversight of Childline after the handover; and
- (f) the manner in which the Ministry would ensure that the rights and confidentiality of children making distress calls are protected during the transition and beyond?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT
(SHRIMATI SMRITI ZUBIN IRANI)

(a) : Childline Services is defined under section 2(25) of Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015 (JJ Act, 2015), as amended in 2021 as a twenty-four hour emergency outreach service for children in crisis, which links them to emergency or long-term care and rehabilitation service. The transition in Child Helpline to States/UTs has been done to ensure better integration with service delivery structures under JJ Act, 2015 and to ensure prompt response to emergency distress calls. The Childline India Foundation even after many years of operation could not cover all districts universally. The call logs were maintained manually and lacked interoperability with other services like Police, Fire, ambulance services leading to loss of precious time in reaching out to children in distress situations. The Government has taken a decision to automate integrate Child Helpline with the Emergency Response Support System-112 (ERSS-112) helpline of Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) so that the responsibility of the administration towards children is taken over and made functional through responsible and responsive administration. Child Helpline enhances the scope of access to emergency response services through voice calls, Short Message Service (SMS), Global Positioning System (GPS) and Geographic Information System (GIS).

The technical integration with the ERSS-112 is expected to usher in seamless flow of information to aid repatriation and restoration of children in vulnerable situations within the district, State/UTs and across the States and UTs effectively.

(b): No Sir, Child Helpline to run in coordination with State and District functionaries and integrated with the Emergency Response Support System 112 (ERSS-112) helpline of MHA.

(c) to (f) : The primary aim of Child Helpline Service is to support and assist any child who has fallen out of the safety net to provide emergency and immediate response and connect the child to existing long term services. This can range from providing medical, shelter, legal aid, emotional support or guidance. Childline acts as a crucial link between children in distress conditions and services available for their rehabilitation, restoration or social reintegration. For children with different needs, who call in anytime, anywhere, and for anything, it acts as a one-point contact which facilitates instant access to support, advice and active intervention.

Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for Child Helpline has been issued to the States/UTs on 31.03.2023 for implementation of the services. SOP provides for overall supervision of Child Helpline under Mission Vatsalya scheme at State Level and district level. The review of Child Helpline *inter-alia* includes key performance indicators for effectiveness, impact and response time of Child Helpline.

As per the Mission Vatsalya scheme guidelines, since Child Helpline to run in coordination with the State and District Administration, a 24x7 dedicated WCD Control Room (WCD-CR) is setup for Child Helpline in each State/UT and integrated with ERSS-112. The District Child Protection Unit, working under the overall supervision of District Magistrate is the nodal agency for ensuring that rights and confidentiality of children in distress calls are protected and ensures linking to the service delivery structures for care and protection of children in the district. The District Child Protection Unit (DCPU) implements all child protection legislations, schemes and work for achievement of child protection goals as laid out in the Mission Vatsalya scheme guidelines.

Centre for Development of Advanced Computing (C-DAC) is providing technical training including hands-on training at the WCD Control Room, where Women Helpline (WHL)/Child Helpline (CHL) personnel are working and CHL Units at DCPU to work on the system and to familiarize the operations of the system. States/UTs extending all support to C-DAC for conducting the training. Ministry is also collaborating with C-DAC, National Institute of Public Cooperation and Child Development (NIPCCD), Ministry of Railways and National Institute of Mental Health and Neurosciences (NIMHANS) for capacity building of staff including police, developing of intervention protocols/training modules for effective implementation of the Juvenile Justice Act (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015 (as amended in 2021) and for providing psycho-social support to children during calls and physical interventions. Ministry also supports outreach strategies to universalize access and use of the Child Helpline in the States/UTs.

In the first phase, Automation and integration of Child Helpline have successfully been rolled out w.e.f. 07.07.2023 in 09 States/UTs i.e. Andhra Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh, Bihar, Dadra & Nagar Haveli and Daman & Diu, Gujarat, Goa, Ladakh, Mizoram and Puducherry.
