



CASE STUDY

Child Protection in Disaster Situation: Post-Phailin Experience Child Friendly Spaces - A Case Study by CYSD

Cyclone Phailin: Profile

2013 tropical cyclone

Extremely Severe Cyclonic Storm: Phailin was the most intense tropical cyclone to make landfall in India since the 1999 Odisha cyclone (Super Cyclone). [Wikipedia](#)

Highest wind speed: 260 km/h

Total fatalities: 45

Date: 5 October 2013 – 14 October 2013

Total fatalities: 45 total

Affected areas: [India](#), [Myanmar \(Burma\)](#), [Thailand](#), [Odisha](#), [Nepal](#), MORE

Category: Category 5 Hurricane (SSHWS), Very Severe Cyclonic Storm (IMD)

Children are the worst affected by a natural disaster, especially in its aftermath. They are usually neglected by their parents who are busy trying to get their life back on the rails - repairing houses, salvaging items, getting food, etc. This often has a negative impact on their health and education. In some cases they are orphaned or separated from their families, and fall prey to anti-social elements. This is why there is an urgent need to provide special care and protection and counseling in the post-disaster scenario to traumatized children.

Post-Phailin a new approach was introduced by Center for Youth and Social Development (CYSD) to create Child Friendly Spaces (CFSs) to reduce fear, mitigate the risk of migration and prepare children to go to Anganwadis and schools.

Objectives:

- Mobilize communities for protection and wellbeing of all vulnerable children
- Provide scope for children to play, joyful learning, and receive social support
- Provide counseling support for psycho-social care of vulnerable children
- Build confidence in them for relief from stress and fear

Programme:

Post-Phailin 40 CFSs contributed towards providing care and protection to affected children in their village environment. The children (below 14 years of age) were assembled in a community place and provided ample opportunity to be together, play with toys and games and told stories





to lessen their trauma. It was a unique programme designed to make the children happy and enable learning.

23 CFSs were set up in Polasara block, 12 in Ganjam block and 5 in Badasahi block. The process started with village sensitization meetings being conducted by the project team with the help of Village Disaster Management Committees (VDMCs) about the concept of CFSs and their objectives etc. Next, community buildings or spaces were selected for CFSs and their operating time fixed (6 a.m. to 9 a.m.). It was decided to use local languages, such as Odia, Sabara and Telegu, for better communication in the CFSs.

Forty female CFS facilitators, drawn from local communities, were selected by VDMCs and appointed by CYSD. As part of their capacity building, a five-day intensive training programme was held in Gopalpur, Ganjam in December 2013 by CYSD with the support of Plan-India.

The experts from Plan-India oriented the facilitators on issues that affect children, such as migration, early marriage, child trafficking, child abuse etc. Training was also provided on child psychology, how to engage children in various creative activities and the process of reporting. Stress was laid on the fact that their main responsibility was to create a favourable environment for children to enable them to share openly, explore, think and read.

Activities Conducted:



The CFSs were in operation for three months, i.e., January to March 2014. During this period the children were engaged in a variety of activities, which included playing, drawing painting and storytelling from different story books like *Kasturi*, *Jhulu re hattijhul* etc. produced by CYSD.

There were also confidence building activities to reduce stress among children and activities for parents, group discussions on parenting skills, effective hygiene and waste management,

children's rights, child participation etc.



All activities were designed in harmony with the local culture and discussions on child rights, child education, child marriage, maintenance of health and hygiene were held regularly. Parents as well as community members were sensitized on child protection issues. Full community participation at all stages was ensured through CFS program design and implementation. Local people (boys, girls and women) helped maintain, monitor and manage the CFSs regularly.

Exit and process of handing over of materials:

Prior to closing down the CFSs, several meetings were held and 'Handing Over Agreement' signed between CYSD, Child Development Project Officers (CDPOs) and VDMCs. This was done to ensure a protective and child friendly environment in the communities, admitting non-starters/dropouts back to formal schools, including Anganwadis, and handing over of CFSs Playing and Learning items to nearby schools and Anganwadi centers for furtherance of quality learning.

Results:

- Facilitators drawn from villages, especially girls, for the programme
- Orientation programme held for facilitators to make CFSs more productive in rural areas
- Places provided by the community
- Children happy with toys and other playing materials provided to them
- Timing decided by the community
- CFSs - a source of encouragement for Anganwadis
- 1322 children mainstreamed
- Migration of children reduced
- Anganwadi centres activated through demonstration effect of CFSs
- Children, especially girls, got an opportunity to learn and share freely
- CFSs considered a centre for exploring innate potentialities of children
- Children could come together to share openly

Lessons learnt:

- Children from poor families can discover their latent talents if they are provided a platform.
- CFSs made functional immediately after a disaster will be more effective in fulfilling their objectives.





- There is a need for an intensive programme in the context of child protection, life skill development and maintaining personal as well as community hygiene.

The CFS experience was well received by children, their parents and the community. The children were productively engaged and their despair and sorrows lessened. The experiment has provided valuable experience based learning and is recommended to be used for all disaster mitigation and rehabilitation processes. This successful experience has tremendous scope for replication.

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