Concept note on School Safety

Introduction

S - Search for hazards (Our place of living and learning may be hazardous and therefore we need to identify some of the potential hazards we may come across.

A - Analyse the Risks (understand the magnitude of danger hazards may affect our lives

F - Find the Causes (Identify the possible causes and its possible effect of each hazard you and me come across and affect our lives.

E - Eliminate the causes (After having identified the causes, every one of us much work to reduce or totally eliminate the causes

T - Tell Others, We should not keep the knowledge of any fact only to ourselves; rather we should tell others so that everyone becomes aware of the hazards and be prepared.

Y - You are safe. Finally you are safe and your neighbours too are safe. Immediately after the introductory note, the facilitator of the day took over the sessions explaining to the students on the various types of fire hazards, its causes, effects and preparedness measures and more specifically how to responds to the fire hazards.

School has been the second most important institution for the children next to their homes wherein they spend about 7 to 8 hours of their total hours for learning, playing and fun making and exploration of various opportunities. Parents having sent their children to school remain at peace as they feel the environment where in their children study is safe. Safety at school allows both children and parents to being in an encouraging environment promoting social and creative learning. If by chance their safety is not met, children remain in constant risk and in worse children may not be allowed to go to school. Promoting school safety creates an open space for kids to learn and explore many new things.

Students of all ages require a safe learning environment for their better education and development. Various studies illustrate that children who feel unsafe at school perform worse academically and are more at risk for getting indulged in drugs and delinquency due to both natural and man made hazards.

Both government and private school are faced by the major crisis both of natural and manmade hazards which ultimately lead the children to live a life of vulnerability

Types of vulnerabilities the schools are facing today

Poor Infrastructures

Both structural and non structural facilities both in rural and urban areas are not in proper shape. The school infrastructures either are very old or new building having being built poorly. In case of old building asbestos are either fully or partially damaged, doors or windows are broken, paka roof are licking due to poor construction. School infrastructures are constructed in low land areas which are prone to water logging due to flood or cyclone. The children go to school with the situation and many of such children fall prey to such kind of hazards.

Natural and manmade calamities like flood, cyclone, and heat wave

Natural calamities like flood, cyclone and heat wave have been threatening phenomena for the school authorities and children guardians as during rainy seasons many of the rural schools are non resilient to these cited hazards. During rainy seasons schools either remain closed or declare holidays due to poor construction of schools or located in very low land areas which become inaccessible for the children to get connected to their home and schools.

Increased Violence in School

Increased violence in schools is a major concern for the education sectors. Violent acts in schools occur at all educational institutions. Some students involve in physical fight or one or the other reasons and at times due to insufficient safety measures innocent children are injured or die of conflict, fight and misunderstanding. This kind of violence in the schools many times prevents children to get access to school for teaching and learning purpose. These are some of the violence take place in the schools Assaults, bullying, Victimization, Theft, Classroom disorder, Fights, Robbery, Use of weapons, Sexual attacks

Physical safety

- It is essential to keep the school environment including the school buildings, premises, playgrounds, laboratories, swimming pool, computer rooms, libraries, toilets, drinking water facilities, school buses, transport area and the surroundings safe and secure. Every facility that a school has needs to be safe and secure for the children to comfortably use or make use and be at safe.

- The buildings should be built to ensure "life safety", and be more resilient to hazards
- School administration, staff, teachers as well as students need to be better aware and prepared to respond to any catastrophe, natural or man-made

Psychosocial safety

- Just as the physical safety of children in schools is important to ensure complete student safety, so too is their psychosocial safety
- Children who are victims of violence show continuous symptoms of depression, dissociative reactions, feelings of helplessness, lack of emotional intelligence, and aggression
  - Installing CCTV cameras at strategic locations across school premises would ensure that a child's day-to-day life in school is constantly being monitored and recorded
  - The schools must be vigilant and constantly be on the lookout for any forms of child abuse, whether physical, emotional, or sexual. The staff should be trained to understand key indicators of child abuse, and be prepared to respond instantly to inappropriate or harmful behaviour
  - The policy framing process of schools must follow the prevention, preparedness, response, and recovery (PPRR) model of risk management. In matters pertaining to child safety, this model would help the school administration to be vigilant

Digital Safety

With a higher number of teachers using technology to educate their students, the need to understand and promote safe internet usage is critical. Online, children are at risk of being bullied by peers and being taken advantage of by adults preying on younger folks. Exposure to inappropriate content and disturbing images and language should also be considered when using computers or tablets in the classroom.

Many of the children, students get easy access to mobile, tablets and desk top with data connection and that very facility take them to ample opportunities to explore on line both good and bad. Children get addicted to all kinds of games online that ultimately causing destructive effect and impact on their lives. At times the teen age students get accessed to adult types of film which ultimately lead them to become more of immoral and unethical.

Developing School Safety Plan

The school safety is one of the significant measures in the national disaster management plan. School Safety is important because students, teachers, parents and school authorities can concentrate on developing and maintaining better and safe learning environment within school premises where everyone feels safe and secure

Vision: To promote a culture of safety in the school.

Objective:

- To sensitize children and the school community on disaster preparedness and safety measures.
- To motivate direct participation of key stakeholders in activities that would help building towards a disaster resilient community.
- To promote capacity building of officials, teachers and students in and through hands on practice and series of demonstration.
- To initiate policy level changes for ensuring safe school environment
- Need of School safety Program

Proposed activities

- Identification of school
- Training and orientation on the need and importance of school safety
- Formation of School Safety Committee
- **Hazards assessment**
    - Identification of various natural and manmade hazards
    - Prioritizing of hazards
    - Analysis (causes, effect, consequences, possible vulnerable children as victims, identification of children as cause of creating conflict or fighting etc
    - Document all major findings for developing action plan to respond and mitigate
- **Vulnerabilities assessment**
    - Who and which are at risk

Some of the PRA tools to be used for assessment of the school safety are

- Resource mapping
- Hazard mapping
- Vulnerability mapping
- Institutional mapping
- SWOT analysis

- o Causes of at risk
- o Effect and impact
- o Document all major findings
- **Capacity Assessment**
  - o Identify all coping capacities that a school has
  - o List out the number of capacity building measures school and its inmates require.
  - o Identify capacity gaps
  - o Develop set of activities with the major findings found out.
- Human Resource Support
- Technical support
- Safety kits
- Mock drill
- Develop Structural Mitigation Plan
- Develop Non – Structural Mitigation Plan
- Monitoring and supervision

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