

Dear Friends,

I hope my email finds you in good health. We witnessed a catastrophic second wave during Covid-19 pandemic. All of us have lost our friends, colleagues and loved ones. Past many months have been incredibly difficult. Although, I sincerely hope this is the end of all the suffering, the reports suggest a third wave.

It is in this context that I write to you: to provide information about how we can best support our children now and in the future, to seek your inputs moving forward and to assure you that we are in this together.

Perhaps, the worst hit in the pandemic are the children. They are the silent, and invisible victims. Loss of parents can be traumatising and can have far reaching consequences.

Delhi Commission For Protection of Child Rights (DCPCR), Govt of NCT of Delhi has so far identified nearly 1960 children who lost one parent and 67 children who lost both parents. It is incredibly tragic to hear stories of these children and see them suffer. No child must suffer like this. A gentle phone call of reassurance to all children may go a long way too. So, please call all your students, and just ask how they are doing.

If any child needs any kind of assistance, please do call on our Helpline which we set up (+91 93115 51393) to timely respond to all distress calls related to children.

In 2.5 months, our Helpline has received 4530 complaint calls till 27th June, of which 2170 calls were distress calls or SoS calls which needed immediate attention, nearly 90% of SOS calls were addressed within 24 hours. *You are requested to share our Helpline amongst your students so that they can reach out to us with whatever help they need. This may include children needing counseling support, access to essential supplies, sufferings as a consequence of parental loss, protection from violence, and medical attention.*

Nothing can assuage the pain caused by parental loss. However, the least we can do is to support these families with counseling, essential supplies, medical care and financial assistance.

Government of Delhi has notified a scheme of financial assistance for the families which lost loved one to Covid-19. It includes Rs. 50,000/- (one time), and Rs. 2500 per family per month. For children who lost both parents, the Rs. 2500 per month assistance shall continue till they attain the age of 25 years in addition to their educational support. You may read the detailed scheme here.

I urge you all to ensure each one of your students who lost his/her parents avails the assistance under the scheme. This is the least we can do to mitigate the disaster that parental loss is. I am attaching a short document that details the process for you. For any specific query or support, you may call on our helpline.

Besides this, owing to the nation-wide lockdown that extended for months on end, children have not been able to interact adequately with each other and have had to experience a long and abrupt change in their regular schedule of attending school and interacting with their teachers and peers. The changes in schedules for exams for senior secondary grades, especially board exams, has also resulted in an atmosphere of uncertainty which has led to anxiety and mental distress amongst many students.

It is our shared responsibility to provide support for children experiencing mental duress, as this can greatly hinder development and personal growth of our students. To address this, we have initiated a project to link students experiencing mental distress with counsellors for mental health support. You are hence requested to share details of any student who might be experiencing mental distress and is in need of counselling and support.

I hope that you share this information with us on our helpline no. +91 93115 51393 so that we can support our students in a way that they feel emotionally and mentally supported.

Please do write to me with your thoughts, suggestions and questions. I look forward to hearing from you.

Regards,

Anurag Kundu
Chairperson,
Delhi Commission For Protection of Child Rights (DCPCR)
Government of NCT of Delhi

“When people go hungry, it is not the food but justice that is in short supply”