

BALAKNAMA

UNIQUE NEWSPAPER FOR AND BY STREET CONNECTED CHILDREN

Balaknama is the newspaper presented by Street and Working children themselves to fight for their own rights and problems because they are being completely ignored.

REGIONAL MEETING ON CHILD PROTECTION HELD IN NEPAL

On 30 and 31 August 2025, a major regional meeting on child protection was held in Nagarkot, Nepal. The event Organized jointly by South Asia Initiative to End Violence against Children (SAIEVAC) and Nepal Government. The event, titled "Regional Consultation on Child Protection in Humanitarian Action," aimed to address the challenges children face during emergencies and humanitarian crises, and to develop joint strategies at the regional level. The two-day meeting brought together representatives from the Government of Nepal, officials from the United Nations (UN), delegates from several Asian countries—including India, Pakistan, Bhutan, Maldives, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka—along with international organizations and NGOs working on child rights. A significant highlight of the event was that children themselves were invited to share their



experiences, concerns, and recommendations, ensuring their voices were heard at the policy level. The discussions focused on the fact that disasters such as floods, earthquakes, pandemics, storms, and heavy rains have the most severe impact on children. When families are displaced, children lose access to education, many are forced into child labour, girls are pushed into early marriages, and numerous children

become vulnerable to abuse, violence, and exploitation.

Representatives from Nepal shared how recent floods and earthquakes had affected thousands of families, leaving children homeless and depriving them of education and nutritious food. Delegates from Sri Lanka and other countries also highlighted that children were forced to drop out of school during disasters and experienced violence and insecurity. From India's side,

it was shared that children often end up working during crises to support their families. One of the most inspiring aspects of the consultation was the active participation of children. Children from Nepal presented their declaration and emphasised that their opinions must be prioritised in all disaster management plans and policy decisions. They expressed that access to timely education, healthcare, and safety enables them to cope

with difficult situations more effectively.

Senior officials and policymakers attentively listened to the children and assured them that their voices would play a central role in future policies and programmes.

The meeting concluded with a shared agreement that every country must strengthen its preparedness before disasters occur—through school-based disaster management training, community awareness, and improved emergency relief systems—to ensure maximum protection for children. The core message of the meeting was clear: no matter how severe a crisis may be, the safety, rights, and well-being of children must always come first. The consultation demonstrated that when children, communities, and governments work together, a safer and stronger future for all children in the region becomes possible.

CLIMATE CHANGE INCREASING RISKS FOR CHILDREN

During the two-day meeting held in Nepal, one critical issue emerged prominently—climate change is becoming an increasingly serious threat to children. Experts highlighted that disasters such as floods, droughts, storms, earthquakes, and extreme heat directly affect children the most. The impact is not limited to physical health but also influences their education, mental well-being, safety, and long-term development.

Experts shared that during climatic disasters, children's education is the first to be disrupted. Many schools are damaged or destroyed, and many remain closed for months. As a result, children stay away from learning for long periods. One girl from Nepal shared that her school was shut down due to

flooding, and she could not study for one and a half years. She said emotionally: "When our education stops, our dreams stop too."

Children also face shortages of nutritious food and clean drinking water after disasters. Representatives from Bangladesh shared that diseases like diarrhoea, fever, and malnutrition rise significantly among children after floods and cyclones. India also reported that heatwaves affect young children the most because their bodies cannot tolerate extreme heat.

Climate change also affects children's mental health. A representative from Sri Lanka said that when children lose their homes, schools, or friends, their fear and anxiety increase. Many become



withdrawn, lose interest in studies, or struggle with sadness and stress.

In response to these concerns, the meeting agreed that:

- Children must receive climate education in schools,
- Schools should provide disaster-preparedness training so children know

what to do during floods, earthquakes, or emergencies.

• Children should be engaged in environmental activities like planting trees, saving water, and reducing waste.

Children themselves expressed that they want to learn about climate change and be part of decision-

making. One child said: "We are the future, but the future will be safe only if we start learning today." Officials acknowledged that children's needs have often been overlooked in climate-related planning, even though they are among the most vulnerable.

They agreed that governments, communities, and international organizations must work together to protect children from the growing impacts of climate change. The meeting concluded with the message that climate change is not just an environmental issue, but a major threat to children's rights, education, health, and their future. Without urgent action, children will face increasingly severe risks in the years ahead.

BALAKNAMA SHINES IN NEPAL!

REPORTER JYOTI MAKES A POWERFUL MARK AT INTERNATIONAL WORKSHOP

A two-day workshop was recently held in Nagarkot, Nepal, and our Balaknama reporter Jyoti got a wonderful chance to take part in it. This was the first time that Balaknama joined an international workshop, and Jyoti felt very proud to represent the voices of children. The workshop took place in a beautiful hill area where people from many countries came together. Representatives from different organisations and senior guests attended the event. Everyone had gathered to learn how to protect children from sexual violence and how all countries can work together for this important cause.

The workshop was divided into four main parts. In the beginning, a minister from Nepal inaugurated the event and welcomed everyone. After that, experts from different countries spoke about child safety and shared their experiences. Jyoti listened to all the speakers very carefully. During one session, she raised her hand and asked, "What can children do if they feel unsafe and no



adult is listening to them?" The experts appreciated her question and explained that every child should know whom to trust, how to speak up, and that adults must make safe spaces where children feel heard.

Representatives from NACG EVAC India also held a special meeting during the

workshop to discuss how India and neighbouring countries can support each other in protecting children. Jyoti was part of this meeting as well, and she asked another thoughtful question: "How can children in villages and slums get help if they don't know about these organisations?" The

team replied that awareness programmes, child reporters, and youth groups play a big role, and they also said that Balaknama itself is an important way to reach children who need information and support.

In the evening, a colourful cultural programme was organised where

participants from different countries performed dances and songs. Jyoti enjoyed this a lot and said it was exciting to see how different cultures celebrate. The whole workshop was organised under the guidance of Dr. Rinchen Chophel, Director of the South Asia Initiative to End Violence Against Children, and from India, NACG EVAC India's Chairperson Mr. Sanjay was present. In the final session, Jyoti asked another question that made everyone think: "What can young reporters like us do to help protect other children?" Dr. Rinchen replied that child reporters can spread awareness, support their friends, and share real stories so that adults understand children's challenges better.

In this special Balaknama report, we are sharing the discussions held in the workshop, Jyoti's questions, and some photographs from Nepal so that every reader can understand what happened there and why it is important for all of us to work together for the safety of children.

SOUTH ASIA UNITES IN NEPAL!

STRONGER CHILD PROTECTION SYSTEMS IN EMERGENCIES TAKE CENTER STAGE

A two-day meeting on child protection during emergencies was held in Nagarkot, Nepal, on 30–31 August. Many important people from South Asian countries came together, including government officials, UN teams and child protection experts. They all discussed how to keep children safe during disasters like floods, earthquakes, climate problems and conflicts. Even though countries have made progress, everyone agreed that children still face many dangers and need stronger protection.

On the first day, different countries shared what they are doing to protect children. Bhutan explained that child



protection has been added to their Disaster Management Act, and special units work together during

emergencies. India shared that they have strong laws, a national helpline 1098 and big training programmes to

prepare people for disasters. Bangladesh talked about their child care centres and helpline, and also about the

challenges faced by Rohingya children living in camps. The Maldives said that their

cont. on pg. 3

CHILDREN FORCED INTO LABOUR DURING DISASTERS

SERIOUS CONCERNS RAISED AT NAGARKOT REGIONAL MEETING

A two-day regional meeting held in Nagarkot, Nepal, raised deep concerns over the alarming rise in child labour during disasters and emergencies. The event, titled "Regional Consultation on Child Protection in Humanitarian Action," brought together government representatives from Nepal, India, Bangladesh, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka, along with UN agencies, international organizations, child rights activists, and children themselves.

Participants highlighted that during floods, earthquakes, landslides, and pandemics, families often lose their livelihoods, forcing many children to leave their homes and schools to engage in labour. Representatives from Bangladesh shared that Rohingya children living in Cox's Bazar are often pushed into work during cyclones and floods, taking up jobs in brick kilns, fields, and small roadside shops. Such labour breaks their continuity in education and poses serious risks to their physical and



mental health.

Nepalese officials admitted that preventing child labour during relief and rescue operations remains a big challenge.

Many children end up working in dangerous locations and unstable

conditions. Delegates from Pakistan and Sri Lanka echoed similar concerns, stating that economic hardship during disasters pushes families to rely heavily on their children's labour.

Indian representatives shared that many children

in India also take up temporary jobs during crises to support their families. They emphasized that technology could play a key role in strengthening child protection by using mobile alerts, helpline 1098, digital data systems, and tools to

identify high-risk zones.

The meeting also revealed that parents, often unaware of the long-term consequences, send their children to work during emergencies. Community awareness, therefore, is crucial. Children themselves voiced their concerns, saying, "We should not be forced into labour. We need safe education, play spaces, and opportunities to learn."

Experts recommended that disaster management plans must include child-friendly safe schools, relief centers, play areas, psychosocial support, and accessible healthcare services to ensure that children remain protected even during crises. In the concluding session, countries agreed to strengthen regional cooperation and develop policies that prioritize children's safety, education, and health during disasters. Experts warned that without timely action, future generations may continue to lose their rights in the face of recurring emergencies.

SOUTH ASIA UNITES IN NEPAL!

from page no. 2

country is very vulnerable to climate change and that their laws include child protection during emergencies.

Nepal shared that child labour and child deaths have reduced because of good local programmes and active child clubs, but there are still gaps in justice systems and helpline access. Sri Lanka spoke about its work against child labour and its national plan, while Pakistan said that child marriage and trafficking still remain difficult problems. Experts said that all countries are trying, but they must improve coordination and emergency planning.

Later, the meeting focused on climate change, child labour and safety planning. Experts said that climate change is making children's lives harder by increasing disasters and affecting mental health. Sri Lanka trained many people to understand child risks, while Nepal talked about

how child clubs help spread awareness. India shared special modules to prepare children and communities in disaster-prone areas. Everyone agreed that children must be included in climate discussions and early warning systems must be stronger.

Another panel discussed how emergencies push more children into labour. Bangladesh said disasters especially harm Rohingya and cyclone-affected children. Sri Lanka called for long-term solutions, and Pakistan shared safety nets to support families. India and Nepal talked about using technology to track child labour cases. Experts said that strict enforcement, community discussions and planning can stop children from being pushed into work during crises.

On the second day, the meeting discussed sexual violence and child marriage during emergencies. Many speakers said that poverty,

displacement and harmful traditions make these problems worse. Pakistan has raised the legal marriage age in one area, while the Maldives has banned child marriage but still struggles with implementation.

Nepal shared that justice gaps make it harder for children to get help. India and Sri Lanka said that child marriage is decreasing, but more work is needed to change social norms. Another panel focused on children who are on the move — such as refugee children, trafficked children or those without documents. UNHCR warned that statelessness and trafficking

are rising risks. World Vision shared that overcrowding and poverty affect Rohingya children badly. Groups from Bangladesh and Sri Lanka said trafficking needs urgent action, while Pakistan talked about internal displacement issues. Experts said that countries must work together and make sure all children are included in protection systems.

The final part of the meeting gave examples of successful work. One important project across Nepal, India and Pakistan showed that child labour in brick kilns can be reduced by opening daycare centres and giving families

support. Nepal's work after earthquakes and floods showed that preparation and strong community support help save children. These examples proved that when communities, governments and groups work together, children become safer.

By the end of the two days, all countries agreed that child protection must become stronger, especially with climate change creating new risks. The meeting ended with a promise from South Asian countries that they will cooperate, share ideas and make better plans so that every child stays safe during emergencies and no child is left behind.

**CHILDREN'S HELP
LINE NUMBERS**
CONTACT THESE TOLL FREE NUMBERS
IF YOU FACE ANY PROBLEM.

**Child line Number
1098**
**Police Helpline
Number 100**

JYOTI'S JOURNEY TO NEPAL: GIVING WINGS TO A DREAM

I, Jyoti — former editor of Balaknama — feel immense pride, joy, and emotion as I share my experience of traveling to Nepal. Being invited to participate in an international workshop held in Nepal was not just an opportunity for me; it was one of the greatest milestones of my life. This was my first foreign trip, and stepping outside my country felt like a dream coming true.

Coming from a background associated with the homeless community, getting a passport was never possible for me. But fortunately, travel to Nepal is allowed with an Aadhaar card — and that is what gave my dreams a sky to fly in. Sitting in an airplane for the first time was an adventure in itself. My heart was racing, my hands trembled, but CHETNA's Pooja didi was with me. She encouraged me at every step, made me feel safe, and turned every moment of the journey into something beautiful. The most special moment came when she pointed out Everest



from the sky — a sight that will remain etched in my eyes and heart forever.

After arriving in Nepal, I was taken to Nagarkot — a stunningly beautiful, serene, and naturally rich place where the workshop was organized.

The green mountains, clear skies, cool breeze, and peaceful surroundings felt like I had stepped into another world. The workshop brought together nearly 80 representatives from seven countries — Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh, Pakistan, India, Sri Lanka, and Maldives. Meeting people from such diverse nations, listening to their thoughts and experiences, and learning about the challenges faced by children in their countries

was deeply insightful and inspiring for me.

During the workshop, I learned about many important issues — the social and economic pressures on children, the efforts being made to secure their future, and the dedication shown by organizations across countries.

But the most unforgettable moment of my life came when I was informed that I would be receiving a certificate of appreciation from a local minister of Nepal. Tears filled my eyes — tears of joy, pride, and the realization that my journey, my struggles, and my work truly matter. This trip was not just a learning experience; it marked the beginning of a new chapter in my life — one where I feel stronger, more confident, and deeply inspired. I want to express my heartfelt gratitude to CHETNA, to Pooja didi, and to everyone who made this journey possible and helped give wings to my dreams.

RISING THREAT OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE AND CHILD MARRIAGE AMONG CHILDREN

During a two-day meeting held in Nagarkot, Nepal, experts raised a deeply concerning issue while discussing child safety — the increasing risk of sexual violence and child marriage during disasters and emergencies. They noted that when crises such as floods, earthquakes, or pandemics strike, families and communities often end up taking decisions that violate children's rights.

Nepalese officials shared that despite legal reforms and widespread awareness campaigns, child marriage and sexual violence remain serious challenges in the country. When families face extreme hardship, girls are often married off early to reduce financial burden. Many adolescent girls also face violence and exploitation during such vulnerable times.

Pakistan faces similar challenges, where a significant number of girls are married before the age of 18. Although the government has set a legal minimum age



for marriage, social norms and family pressures make enforcement difficult.

Examples from India and the Maldives highlighted that displacement and poverty further weaken children's safety. Experts stressed the need for safe schools, shelters, and healthcare services for

children during disasters. Families must be provided with economic and social support so they do not resort to early marriage or other harmful practices.

UNICEF ROSA reported that by 2025, nearly 10 million children in South Asia may be left without essential

humanitarian assistance. This figure underscores how severely disasters affect children's education, health, and protection.

Experts emphasized that preventing child marriage and sexual violence requires not just strong laws, but also active community

involvement.

Children who attended the meeting also shared their views, saying, "We need the freedom to study and play — not to be married."

They urged that their voices must be included in disaster response and relief planning. The meeting concluded with a commitment to develop coordinated plans to protect children during disasters. These plans will include education, healthcare, legal protection, community participation, psychological support, and safe environments to ensure children remain protected even in times of crisis.

The key message of the meeting was clear: disasters and emergencies are not only moments of danger for children, but also opportunities to strengthen systems that safeguard their rights. Without timely action, children risk severe psychological and physical harm.



MIGRANT AND DISPLACED CHILDREN FACE THE HIGHEST RISKS

A two-day meeting held in Nagarkot, Nepal brought forth another pressing concern regarding child safety — the vulnerability of migrant, refugee, and displaced children. Experts shared that due to conflict, disasters, poverty, and economic instability, millions of children across South Asia are forced to leave their homes and end up in highly unsafe conditions. UNHCR and other organizations presented data showing that South Asia hosts a large number of displaced children: Bangladesh has more than 730,000 refugee children,

Pakistan has nearly 112,000 child refugees, and India has around 18,000.

Many among them are orphans or children with disabilities, which puts them at an even higher risk of exploitation and harm.

Experts noted that displaced children are often deprived of education, healthcare, and protection services. Without birth certificates or identity documents, they remain excluded from laws and systems meant to safeguard children's rights. Many girls face sexual exploitation and child marriage, while boys

are pushed into dangerous labor or exposed to violence. The example of Cox's Bazar refugee camps in Bangladesh was discussed, where World Vision Bangladesh provided support to nearly 497,000 people, including around 250,000 children. Despite efforts to offer education, healthcare, nutrition, and child-friendly spaces, overcrowding, poverty, and insecurity continue to pose severe risks.

The meeting highlighted that political instability and lack of long-term solutions leave these children vulnerable for years. Many

remain stateless with no access to basic services like schooling or healthcare. Member countries agreed to strengthen cross-border cooperation to protect children's rights. Ensuring birth registration and identity documentation was emphasized so children can access services and avoid exploitation.

Children who participated in the meeting voiced their concerns, saying, "We need safe schools, play spaces, and education — not fear and insecurity." They stressed the importance of listening to children's

perspectives so policies are designed in their best interest.

Experts concluded that disasters and displacement are not just periods of danger, but also opportunities to reinforce child protection systems. Timely action is crucial, as the absence of support can severely impact children's mental, physical, and social well-being. The final message was clear: "Children need not just relief, but safety, education, and rights." Protecting migrant and refugee children is not the responsibility of governments and NGOs alone, but of society as a whole.

CHANGE THROUGH COLLECTIVE EFFORTS: BRICKK PROJECT BRINGS NEW HOPE TO CHILDREN IN HAZARDOUS CONDITIONS

During a two-day meeting held in Nagarkot, Nepal, World Vision Nepal's BRICKK Project was highlighted as a significant initiative aimed at protecting children working in brick kilns. The meeting revealed that many children in Nepal are compelled to work alongside their families in extremely hazardous brick kiln environments, which severely disrupts their education and poses serious risks to their health. To address these challenges, the BRICKK Project has established 17 Child Rights Committees (CRCs), which remain actively engaged in monitoring child protection and ensuring a safe environment for children. The project has also opened daycare and learning centers, enabling 1,240 children to attend school regularly and continue their education in a



secure setting.

To reduce the burden of child labor, the project introduced alternative livelihood and skill-training programs for families, under which 154 workers

received basic training and 30 individuals secured safer and better employment opportunities. World Vision Nepal also signed agreements with brick kiln owners and private partners to strengthen

monitoring systems and improve workplace safety, resulting in a decline in the number of children working in dangerous conditions.

Children participating in the meeting voiced their

demands, saying, "We want safe schools and places to play. We should not be forced to work."

Experts praised the initiative, noting that the BRICKK Project demonstrates how collaboration among communities, governments, and non-governmental organizations can ensure children's safety, education, and rights. The meeting emphasized that removing children from work alone is not enough; they must also be provided with a safe environment, access to education, and awareness of their rights. The project ultimately shows that through collective efforts, even the most challenging circumstances can be transformed into opportunities for children, paving the way for a safer and brighter future.



ALL RELIGIONS UNITED FOR CHILDREN

During the two-day meeting held in Nagarkot, Nepal, experts, child rights advocates, community representatives, and religious leaders discussed how children are the most vulnerable in times of disaster. The meeting emphasized that faith-based and interfaith organizations often step forward as first responders, providing crucial protection and relief to children and families. Representatives shared that Buddhist, Hindu,

Muslim, and Christian communities in Nepal work collaboratively during crises. Whether the challenge is an earthquake, flood, or any humanitarian emergency, religious institutions immediately open their temples, mosques, churches, and community centers as safe shelters. These spaces provide children with protection, food, clean drinking water, and essential care. Another major contribution of these organizations is the

psychological and emotional support they offer. Faith leaders comfort children, listen to their fears, and help families rebuild hope. This emotional stability plays an important role in reducing children's anxiety and helping them slowly return to normalcy. The meeting also highlighted that faith-based organizations hold strong trust and credibility within communities. This trust allows them to communicate effectively about children's

rights, safety, and the importance of continuing education, even during emergencies. They ensure that support reaches children quickly, including safe learning spaces, recreational activities, and opportunities to keep studying. Children also shared their perspectives during the discussion. One child mentioned:

"We feel safe in temples and schools during crises — we are less afraid, and we can continue learning." Their

voices reminded everyone present that children's participation and opinions are essential in shaping effective disaster response. The meeting concluded with a commitment to strengthening collaboration among faith-based and interfaith organizations. Together, they plan to initiate special programs focused on children's safety, emotional well-being, learning continuity, and community preparedness for future crises.

NACG MEETING: A COLLECTIVE COMMITMENT TO MAKE SOUTH ASIA A CHILD-FRIENDLY REGION

On the second day of the Nepal gathering, an important meeting of the National Action and Coordination Group (NACG) was held, bringing together representatives from Nepal, Bhutan, India, Sri Lanka, the Maldives, and several other South Asian countries. The meeting served as a key platform for strengthening regional cooperation on child rights and protection.

During the session, representatives shared updates on the work being carried out by NACG in their respective countries. They discussed successful initiatives, positive outcomes of child-focused programmes, and the challenges faced at the ground level. This exchange of experiences created a valuable learning environment, enabling countries to understand



each other's strategies and identify opportunities for collaboration.

A major focus of the discussion revolved around how South Asian countries can collectively address critical issues such as child care and protection, child

trafficking, child labour, exploitation, and all forms of violence against children. Participants emphasized that these challenges require not just national efforts, but a unified regional approach—where cooperation, coordination, and shared

responsibility play a central role.

The group also explored possibilities for stronger cross-country collaboration in the coming years. They reflected on how NACG networks from all countries could support each other in

transforming South Asia into a truly child-friendly region, where every child is safe, protected, and empowered.

Observing the meeting, it became evident that all participating nations were deeply committed and enthusiastic about working together for children's well-being. Representatives unanimously expressed their dedication to safeguarding children's rights and strengthening collective action across the region.

The core aim of this meeting was to build a shared vision for the welfare of children in South Asia and to lay the foundation for long-term, unified efforts. By the end of the session, all countries renewed their commitment to work hand in hand to ensure that South Asia becomes a region where every child can live, grow, and thrive with dignity, safety, and opportunity.

SHINGKHAR COMMUNITY DEMONSTRATES THE POWER OF COLLECTIVE ACTION IN PROTECTING CHILDREN

The Shingkhark community of Bhutan has shown that child protection is not just the responsibility of parents, but a collective effort strengthened through community participation and cultural values. Known for its deep-rooted cultural and spiritual traditions, Shingkhark places strong emphasis on education, ethics, and collective well-being.

During the meeting, experts explained that many youths from Shingkhark migrate to other regions for higher education or employment, leaving several children in the care of grandparents or

relatives. These children often face emotional and social challenges, including loneliness, pressure to engage in traditional labor, and lack of daily parental guidance.

However, the Shingkhark community has demonstrated how strong cultural practices and community involvement can provide a safety net for such children. The Longchenpa Center plays a vital role by offering moral education, spiritual guidance, and opportunities for children to stay connected with their cultural heritage. Additionally, the Shingkhark Community Development and Welfare Association

(SCDWA) ensures children's well-being by running disaster relief initiatives, and social and economic development programs.

To strengthen family incomes, the community has established a milk processing unit and other livelihood programs. A student exchange initiative with Japan has further expanded children's exposure to global learning and cross-cultural experiences. Efforts to revive traditional watermills and preserve cultural heritage have helped children develop a stronger sense of identity and pride in their roots.

Children and youth in

Shingkhark actively participate in community life. They organize sports and cultural events, lead cleanliness drives, and take part in local festivals—helping them stay safe, confident, and socially engaged. Families living abroad or in other regions also contribute by sending financial support for children's education, health, and daily needs, while maintaining regular contact through calls and visiting during festivals.

These combined efforts have ensured strong protection, education, and social inclusion for children. Remarkably, between 2017

and 2025, the number of households in Shingkhark increased by 122 percent, even as the national population saw a decline—showcasing the community's strength and resilience.

The meeting highlighted a core belief of the community: "In Shingkhark, a child is not just the responsibility of parents, but of the entire community."

This example clearly demonstrates how culture, community collaboration, youth participation, and family support together can create a safe, nurturing, and empowering environment for children.

DIRECTOR GENERAL SAIEVAC, DR RINCHEN SPOKE TO BALAKNAMA

Child protection experts, policymakers, civil society representatives, and grassroots organizations from across South Asia came together in Kathmandu for a groundbreaking regional consultation on child protection during emergencies. The event, organized under the NACG (South Asia Initiative to End Violence Against Children) collaboration, aims to create a unified, collaborative approach to safeguarding children impacted by disasters, crises, and other emergencies.

The consultation is unique in its scope and objective, focusing on three pressing areas affecting children during emergencies:

The impact of emergencies on children in homes, Child marriage, and Child labour.

Over the course of the consultation, participants engaged in thematic presentations, panel discussions, and interactive sessions, ensuring that insights were collected from multiple perspectives,



including practitioners, policymakers, and child-focused organizations. This approach aims to identify gaps in current child protection systems, share best practices, and develop practical strategies to protect children effectively during crises.

A key highlight of the event was the participation of Dr. Rinchen, Director General of SAIEVAC, who spoke exclusively to Balaknama, the South Asian newspaper produced by street-connected children. Dr. Rinchen highlighted the importance of including

children's voices in policy-making, emphasizing that meaningful engagement of children themselves is essential in designing effective protection mechanisms. He also underscored the significance of regional cooperation under the NACG framework, which allows South Asian countries to work collectively in strengthening child protection systems.

The consultation also provided a platform for knowledge sharing and networking. Participants from India, Nepal,

Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, and Bhutan discussed challenges and shared experiences regarding emergency response and child protection. Special focus was placed on designing interventions that prevent child marriage, child labour, and other forms of exploitation, while ensuring that children's rights are upheld during times of crisis.

Dr. Rinchen noted, "This consultation is an important step in bringing together all stakeholders in South Asia to create a coordinated and comprehensive approach to child protection during emergencies. By sharing experiences and insights, we can build resilient systems that prioritize the safety and well-being of children across the region."

The event concluded with a consensus to continue collaborative efforts, strengthen regional coordination, and create a clear roadmap for action. The roadmap will guide South Asian countries in implementing robust child protection systems during disasters and emergencies, ensuring that vulnerable children have access to support, protection, and opportunities to thrive even in the most challenging circumstances.

This historic consultation in Kathmandu marks a significant milestone in South Asia's commitment to safeguarding children during emergencies, laying the foundation for stronger collaboration, practical interventions, and policy innovations in the years to come.

**CHILDREN'S
HELP LINE
NUMBERS**

**CONTACT THESE TOLL
FREE NUMBERS IF YOU
FACE ANY PROBLEM.**

Child line Number

1098

Police Helpline

Number 100

INSPIRING ADDRESS BY MR. SANJAY GUPTA, CHAIRPERSON OF NACG EVAC INDIA, AT THE NEPAL WORKSHOP

During the multi-national workshop held in Nepal, Mr. Sanjay Gupta, Chairperson of NACG EVAC India, delivered an impactful and engaging address that captured the attention of all participants. He began his speech with a popular and meaningful line from an Indian film song:

"Hai preet jahan ki reet sada, main geet wahan ke gata hoon; Bharat ka rehne wala hoon, Bharat ki baat batata hoon." The hall immediately resonated with applause, as the audience warmly connected with the emotion, cultural pride, and sincerity reflected in his opening.

In his address, Mr. Gupta described India as a progressive and forward-moving nation, one that often plays the role of an "elder brother" among SAARC countries. He emphasized that India has some of the strongest laws for the protection, safety, and welfare of children. Highlighting two major legislations—the



Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act and the POCSO Act—he explained how these laws serve as a powerful shield of safety and comfort for millions of children, and how their implementation is now visible and effective at the grassroots level.

Mr. Gupta also shared

that in India, awareness about child rights and relevant laws is being integrated into the school curriculum. The justice system too has been strengthened to ensure that the best interests of the child remain at the center of every process and decision. These developments reflect India's strong commitment not

only to creating laws but also ensuring their successful implementation.

He expressed that NACG EVAC India is eager to share its extensive learning, experiences, and best practices with neighboring countries so they too can implement strong child protection programmes

within their nations. This spirit of collaboration is an important step towards making South Asia a truly child-friendly region.

Towards the conclusion of his speech, Mr. Gupta proudly mentioned that NACG EVAC India has grown into a powerful network consisting of nearly 550 voluntary organisations across the country. What makes this network remarkable, he added, is that each of these organisations follows the laws, guidelines, and policies of the Government of India with complete dedication and compliance. This collective integrity significantly strengthens the child protection system across India.

Mr. Sanjay Gupta's address proved to be highly motivational for the participants and effectively highlighted India's commitment to safeguarding child rights.

COLORFUL CONCLUSION OF THE WORKSHOP IN NEPAL

The multi-day workshop held in Nepal concluded with a vibrant and culturally rich ceremony. Representatives from all participating countries attended the event dressed in their traditional attire, adding color, charm, and excitement to the atmosphere. The moment one entered the hall, the energy of diverse cultures could be felt all around. The event began with a melodious Nepali song performed by the participants from Nepal. Their graceful dance and soulful singing created such a joyful environment that many in the audience couldn't resist moving to the rhythm. Even some senior officials joined in, singing and dancing along with the performers.

Following this energetic start, representatives from India, Bangladesh, and Bhutan also showcased their



cultural heritage:

- India's representatives presented a collection of folk

and popular songs that filled the hall with enthusiasm.

- Bangladesh participants

sang their traditional songs, adding depth and musical diversity to the evening.

- Bhutan's team, dressed in their unique and elegant traditional outfits, captivated everyone's attention with their dignified presence.

The cultural celebration not only served as entertainment but also symbolized the unity, shared heritage, and warmth among South Asian nations. During the event, participants expressed the idea of organizing similar programs for children in the future, so they too can celebrate and proudly present their cultural identities. The ceremony concluded with a delightful dinner, where guests enjoyed a variety of delicious Nepali dishes. The workshop wrapped up on a positive, energetic, and heartwarming note—leaving everyone with beautiful memories of cultural harmony.

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Balaknama is written originally in Hindi by children reporters. This is translated version of Hindi and translation assistance is taken from adults ensuring the original feel intact.