



Report

From Advocacy to Action — Youth Unite for Child Rights

#BachheAageBiharAage

Online orientation organised by Child Rights Centre, CNLU and
UNICEF Bihar on February 26, 2021

Background

Despite high growth rate in recent decades, millions of children are still deprived of their basic rights. Every child deserves a childhood in all its fullness, surrounded by protective families and communities, free from violence and with the opportunity to thrive as other children do. Rights are inalienable part of children's life and they must enjoy it, right from their birth. Poverty, exploitation and violence are not inevitable. Many of the problems that children have to face are consequence of exploitative practices and educational gaps in both developed and developing communities. A child needs a protective environment to flourish and achieve his/her goals. An environment where children's rights are respected and protected is must to continue on the path of development because children are the future.

In the year 1989, United Nations General Assembly adopted United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) to protect rights of children globally. It came into force in the year 1990. It is an international human rights treaty which sets out the civil, political, economic, social, health and cultural rights of children. India ratified this convention in the year 1992.

UNCRC has become the most widely ratified human rights treaty in the history and has helped in transforming children's lives around the world. Till date, 196 countries are party of this international convention. But still not every child gets to enjoy a full childhood. It recognises all persons below the age of 18 years as Child. It calls for all children to be treated fairly, equally and with dignity. The convention is non-discriminatory in nature and in the best interests of a child. According to the UNCRC, all children should grow up in the spirit of peace, dignity, tolerance, freedom, equality and solidarity.

As far as Government of India's policy for children is concerned, the government adopted a new National Policy for Children in the year 2013. The Policy recognises every person below the age of 18 years as a child. It recognises that a multi sectoral and multi dimensional approach is necessary to secure the rights of children. The Policy has identified four key priority areas - survival, health and nutrition, education and development, and protection and participation for focused attention.

For protection of rights of children, National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPDR) was set up in 2007 under the Commission for Protection of Child Rights (CPCR) Act, 2005. NCPDR is a statutory body whose mandate is to ensure that all laws, policies, programmes, and administrative mechanisms are in consonance with the child rights perspective as enshrined in the Constitution of India and also the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

The Commission visualises a rights based perspective flowing into National Policies and Programmes, along with nuanced responses at the state, district and block level, taking care of specificity and strengths of each region.

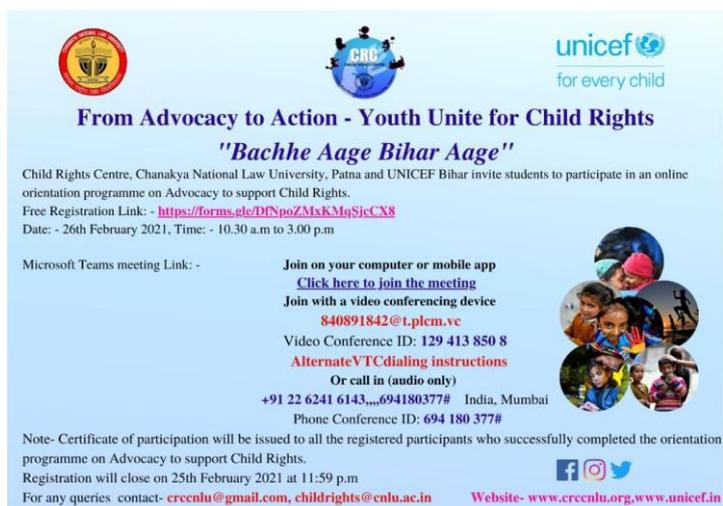
Executive Summary

Children constitute 40 per cent of the country's population while this number increases to 46 per cent in case of Bihar, according to 2011 census. The state's children population is more than the total population of Australia.

Bihar is a poor state whose economy is majorly based on agriculture. Low income of its population is a key reason of number of issues affecting children like malnourishment, trafficking, child marriage, etc. The state government has taken many steps to improve this situation; however more require to be done. Bihar has its own commission to protect child rights called as Bihar Commission for Protection of Child Rights (BSCPCR). It was setup in September, 2010 as a statutory body under Commission for Protection of Child Rights Act 2005 to protect, promote and defend child rights in the state.

Children are the pillar of future. Therefore, it is important that every child exercise all his/her rights in full spirit. To raise awareness among youth population about child rights, an online orientation titled "From Advocacy to Action - Youth Unite for Child Rights" was organised by Child Rights Centre (CRC), Chanakya National Law University (CNLU), Patna and UNICEF Bihar on February 26, 2021. It was specifically designed for students to introduce them to the tool of advocacy to support vulnerable groups such as children.

Officials of the CRC, UNICEF, Save the Children were present during the orientation and address the participants on key issues related to the subject. More than 200 participants took part in the online session including college students from CNLU, Patna University, Amity University, and other states and children from Bihar Bal Bhawan Kilkari.



The poster features logos for the Child Rights Centre (CRC), Chanakya National Law University (CNLU), and UNICEF. The text reads: "From Advocacy to Action - Youth Unite for Child Rights 'Bachhe Aage Bihar Aage'". It invites students to an online orientation on February 26, 2021, from 10:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Registration is free and closes on February 25, 2021, at 11:59 p.m. Contact information for queries is provided, along with a website link. A collage of children's photos is shown on the right side.

Figure 1: Invitation of the online orientation

The online orientation began at 10:30 am and concluded at 3 pm. The whole program was moderated by Shaheena Ahluwalia, Centre Coordinator, CRC, CNLU.

Inaugural Session

Shaheena Ahluwalia, Centre Coordinator, CRC, CNLU began the online orientation by welcoming all the speakers and participants. She briefed the participants about the agenda of the program and put forth her views on protection of child rights. She said that it is vital to make common people aware about interests of children and their rights. If you want to help children in need then you can contact Child Line by dialling 1098. Your one step could bring change in the society.



Figure 2: Shaheena Ahluwalia, Centre Coordinator, CRC

Later, she opened the floor for speakers and invited Hon'ble Justice Mridula Mishra, Vice Chancellor, CNLU for the opening remarks.

Hon'ble Justice Smt. Mridula Mishra, Vice Chancellor, CNLU

She began her address by mentioning the work of the CRC. She said that the objective of the CRC is to engage with child rights with multi disciplinary perspectives and to provide integrated technical support to different institutions through knowledge and system management. CRC is all about

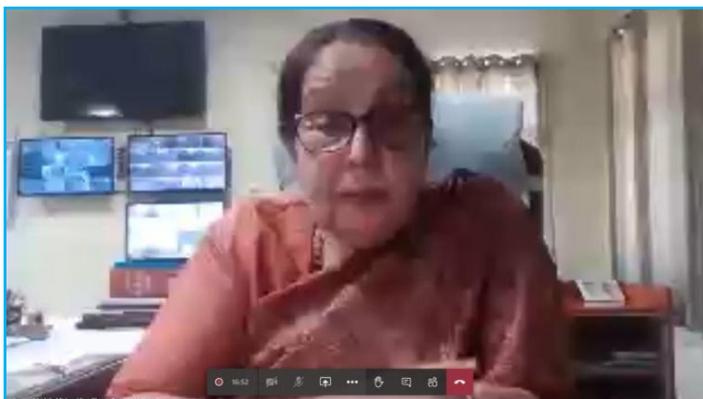


Figure 3: Hon'ble Justice Mridula Mishra, VC, CNLU

children, their family and the community. It works as a centre to lobby with state and civil societies and to enable realisation of rights of the children and to contribute to policy and law practice that compliance with the constitution of India and other normative works. One of the prime focuses of CRC is to facilitate orientation and training of various stakeholders including ADJ, special public prosecutor, members of JJ Board and CWC. Another objective is to train students of CNLU and other universities so that they can contribute in facilitating child rights and in all these matters, UNICEF and Bihar State Legal Authority has helped CRC. If the students have interest to do something related to child rights then they should have skills of advocacy.

Talking about advocacy, she said that Advocacy is the pursuit of influencing outcome through public policy. Advocacy refers to efforts of an individual or a group of people to effectively communicate, convey, and assert the rights of an individual or

institution. For advocacy, we must have confidence and adequate knowledge about the subject. We all know that our children are most precious asset of our country. Till the day when they are innocent and mature, they do not know what is good or bad for them. During this period, we and students who are the educated persons of the society should take the initiative for their welfare because they are the future of our country. To do this, advocacy is important. We know that how a policy, act and law is going to affect children in future, so my dear students who are participating in this program, I wish you all a successful training. To help children, you must develop skill of advocacy. Skill of advocacy has power to influence people.

Session 1

In her address, **Nipurnh Gupta, Communication Specialist, UNICEF Bihar**, said that I welcome you all on behalf of UNICEF. “It gives me immense pleasure to have a session on advocacy with youths. Justice Mridula Mishra ma’am and other officials of the CRC have made my work easy. UNICEF is 75 years old but heart is young and we are actively engaging with adolescents to guide and empower them”. Mentioning Mahatma Gandhi’s famous quote - *Be the change you want to see in the world*, she said that we need to make a better world for every child.



Figure 4: Ms Nipurnh Gupta, Communication Specialist, UNICEF Bihar

What does advocacy mean?

- ◆ **Engaging people and organizations to make a difference**
- ◆ **Putting a problem on the agenda, providing a solution to that problem**
- ◆ **Seeking support for action on problem and solution**

Figure 5: A slide of Nipurnh Gupta’s presentation

She gave a detailed overview of advocacy through a power point presentation. Starting from the work of UNICEF, she touched upon a number of topics like life cycle approach, sphere of influence, advocacy influencing policy making decisions, public advocacy, media advocacy, advocacy and activism, etc.

Defining advocacy, she said that advocacy broadly refers to engaging people and organisations to make a difference, putting a problem on agenda and providing solution to that problem and seeking support for action on problem and solution. It

involves many specific, short-term activities to reach a long-term vision of change and plays a key role in influencing decision making at the organisational, community, sub-national, national and international level. Most importantly, it facilitates the participation of people in decision making which affects their lives. For advocacy, message as well as the messenger is important. She also urged to use the #BachheAageBiharAage to do child rights advocacy on social media. She mentioned about the charter of demands drafted before the assembly elections last year which was shared with political parties. She urged participants to keep these things continue and remind policy makers of their promises relating to child rights.

“A problem may not affect you directly but incidents like child marriage, malnutrition affects the society in longer term. And here, advocacy comes into play to influence public mindset. Nine principles, namely Transparent and informative, Voluntary, Respectful, Relevant, Adolescent-friendly, Inclusive, Supported by training, Safe and sensitive to risk and Accountable need to be followed for effective and ethical participation with children, adolescents and young people” she said further.

Talking about adolescents groups like **YuWaah, Bihar Youth for Child Rights**, she said that these are prominent groups of dynamic adolescents who are actively engaged in advocacy of child rights. Our children and youths should strive to be SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time bound).

Session 2

Addressing the second session of the online orientation, **Pragya Vats, Head of Campaigns, Save the Children, New Delhi** highlighted about the use of advocacy to promote the rights of vulnerable groups and the technicalities of a sustainable advocacy campaign with the help of a power point presentation. She started with the journey of Save the Children and then spoke about UNCRC, child rights, social media, inspirational stories, campaigning, etc.

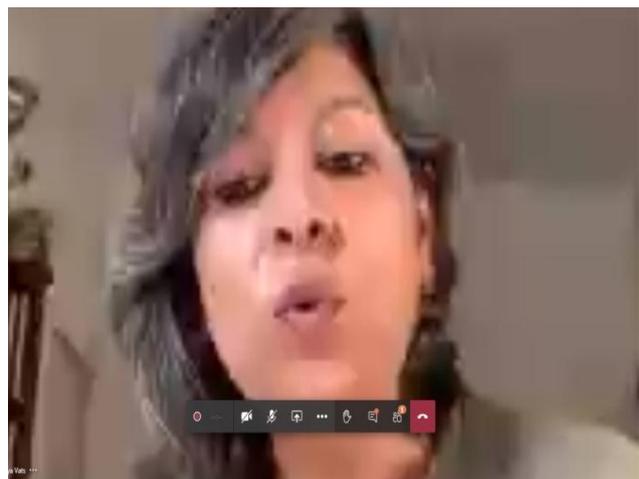


Figure 6: Pragya Vats, Head of Campaigns, Save the Children

She said that children constitute 40 per cent of the country’s population. We can’t imagine future without their participation. It is important that every child enjoys his/her rights. Right to education, right to be safe, right to leisure, right to play, right to be heard are some the rights that every child deserves. Voice of children is non-negotiable. Rights are inalienable part of their life. During the pandemic, over 300

million children missed their classes. Unified voices are required to protect the rights of the child.

To motivate youths participating in the orientation, she shared inspirational story of Anju Rani. Anju Rani is a 17 year old young social activist working in the field of education and eliminating child labour. She found an organisation named “Buland Udaan” and has successfully prevented many child marriages.

On social media, she said that, social media is more about sociology and psychology than technology. Amongst different means of advocacy, social media is the crucial one. It is the new public and the ultimate equaliser that gives a voice and a platform to anyone willing to engage. She mentioned about an online quiz on SOP for street children which got over 1 Lakh views. Among the viewers, half were youths in the age group of 18-24 years.

Later, she played a short video on campaigning. The one minute 24 seconds said that campaigning is to influence, persuade, affecting, ideas, learning, engaging, unexpected event, beginning, engaging.

(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mMhzARhhq0I>)



Figure 7: Snapshot of the video clip

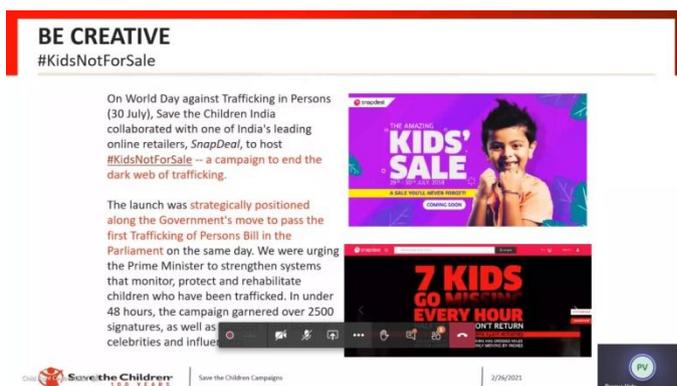


Figure 8: Presentation about # KidsNotForSale

During her presentation, she cited some successful campaign ran by Save the Children to raise the voice of children. Discussing one of those in detail, she said that, to end the dark web of trafficking, a campaign named #KidsNotForSale was launched in collaboration with one of India’s leading e-commerce platforms, Snapdeal on July 30, 2018 which is observed as “World Day Against Trafficking in Persons”. Within 48 hours of the launch, the campaign garnered over 2500 signatures as well as support from leading celebrities and influencers. She also highlighted the importance of creativity for success of an advocacy campaign.

Talking about street children, Vats said that, it must bother us when we see a children begging on the street. 2 million children live on streets in India. We need to advocate for this cause. A campaign to garner political support for this cause was

launched and after this, 50,000 street children received Aadhar cards in next 6 months.

After her address, she invited questions.

A participant **Neha Bharati** asked, how can we protect them (children)? We often see those children selling roses, pens and begging for money. Later we find that they are part of a racket.

Answering her question, **Pragya Vats** said that you can individually take action by dialling helpline number of Childline or you can reach out to organisations like Save the Children and UNICEF.

Do you think that UNICEF and its officials should identify such places and intervene? **Neha Bharati** asked further.

In her response, **Vats** said that civil society organisations work with children living in village, slums who are not getting benefits from the government. Whenever, we find some child in need, we help them immediately.

Srishti asked that dreams of many children are dying every day. Why can't we help every child?

Vats said that we have our own limitations. NGOs can't reach out to everywhere at once. It will take time. However, youngster like Anju of Buland Udaan is an example who is working for children's cause. Many more youngsters can also join her.

Later, **Rafay Ezaj Hussain, Save the Children, Bihar** shared his experience while working in Gaya. He said that, during interacting with girls in a village, most of the girls said that they want to become tailor, beautician and teacher. But when two girls of the village got recruited in police, many other girls of the village inspired to get the job which is considered as so called male job. "If girls started playing cricket, then objections are raised. This mentality must be eliminated from the society", he added further. Talking about child labour, he said that children's interest lies in their family. It is the responsibility of the state and the community to ensure that rights of children are not getting violated.

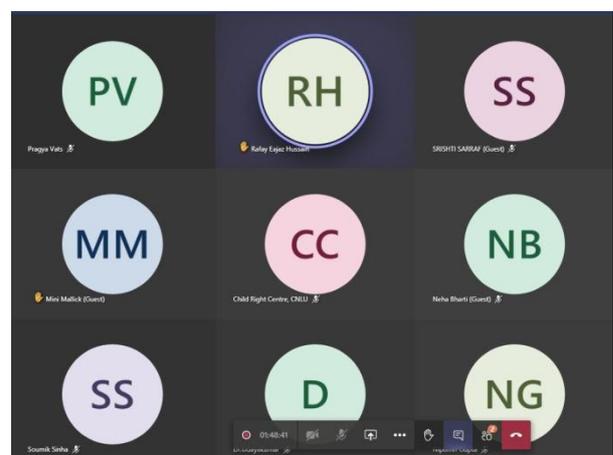


Figure 9: Rafay Ezaj Hussain speaking during the programme

Session 3

In the first part of the third session, **Prassana Ash, Planning, Monitoring, Evaluation Specialist, UNICEF Bihar** spoke on children related indicators such as definitions, sources and usage to contextualise advocacy work. Ash began his address by mentioning UNCRC and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in brief. He said that UNCRC covers all aspects of child's life and set out the civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights that all children are entitled to enjoy.

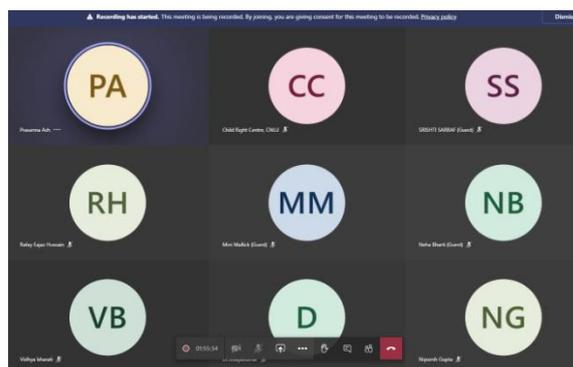


Figure 10: Prassana Ash, Planning, Monitoring, Evaluation Specialist, UNICEF Bihar

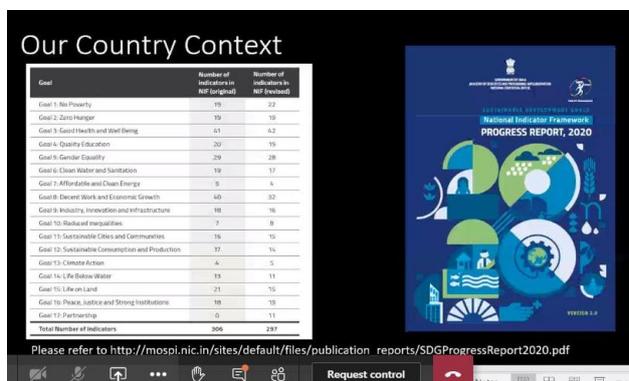


Figure 11: A slide of Prassana Ash's presentation

Talking about four core child rights, he said that Right to Survival covers life, nutrition and wash, Right to Development includes education, Right to Protection ensures for prevention from trafficking and Right to Participation covers children's participation in framing of policies for them. Unless and until, we hear children voices, we can't frame correct policies for them. He also mentioned

about a report released by NITI Aayog on SDGs.

Later, he talked about definitions of various indicators, how to get the relevant information through reliable sources and their ultimate usage for advocacy. He said that NFHS, U-DISE and NARS issued by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare and Ministry of Education, GoI, Census, etc. are some of the important sources to get relevant child related data from. Data is just a number. What is important is how we can convert that into meaningful information and narrate a story in terms of their causes and effects. Average often masks the underlying disparities and therefore there is a need to further unpack and understand the data better.

Speaking on what should be considered while comparing data from different sources, Prassana said that definition of the indicator, sample size and methodology, confidence level and margin of error needed to be kept in mind.

District	in			
	Women age 20-24 years married before age 18 years (%)	NFHS-4 (2015-16)	NFHS-5 (2019-21)	Change
Bihar	49.9	49.9	48.2	-1.7
Ahmednagar	41.5	41.5	40.1	-1.4
Average	41.5	41.5	40.1	-1.4
Chhattisgarh	36.2	36.2	35.0	-1.2
Madhya Pradesh	35.0	35.0	33.8	-1.2
Uttarakhand	32.7	32.7	31.5	-1.2
Uttar Pradesh	28.7	28.7	27.5	-1.2
Goa	27.8	27.8	26.6	-1.2
Madhya Pradesh	26.5	26.5	25.3	-1.2
Goa	25.4	25.4	24.2	-1.2
Karnataka	20.2	20.2	19.0	-1.2
Madhya Pradesh	19.2	19.2	18.0	-1.2
Kerala	18.2	18.2	17.0	-1.2
Madhya Pradesh	17.2	17.2	16.0	-1.2
Madhya Pradesh	16.2	16.2	15.0	-1.2
Madhya Pradesh	15.2	15.2	14.0	-1.2
Madhya Pradesh	14.2	14.2	13.0	-1.2
Madhya Pradesh	13.2	13.2	12.0	-1.2
Madhya Pradesh	12.2	12.2	11.0	-1.2
Madhya Pradesh	11.2	11.2	10.0	-1.2
Madhya Pradesh	10.2	10.2	9.0	-1.2
Madhya Pradesh	9.2	9.2	8.0	-1.2
Madhya Pradesh	8.2	8.2	7.0	-1.2
Madhya Pradesh	7.2	7.2	6.0	-1.2
Madhya Pradesh	6.2	6.2	5.0	-1.2
Madhya Pradesh	5.2	5.2	4.0	-1.2
Madhya Pradesh	4.2	4.2	3.0	-1.2
Madhya Pradesh	3.2	3.2	2.0	-1.2
Madhya Pradesh	2.2	2.2	1.0	-1.2
Madhya Pradesh	1.2	1.2	0.0	-1.2
Madhya Pradesh	0.2	0.2	0.0	-0.2

While early marriage has decreased marginally in Bihar by 1.7 percentage points over the last 5 years, early marriage is reported to increase in the districts of Araria, Banka, Bhagalpur, Darbhanga, Katihar, Kishanganj, Lakhisarai, Purba Champaran, Purnia, Saharsa.

Figure 12: A slide of Prasanna Ash's presentation

Talking about the status and trends of various child related indicators such as infant mortality rate, incidences of child marriages, malnourishment, etc. in Bihar, he explained about effective interpretation of the specific data to support any advocacy campaign. He compared data of NFHS 4 and 5 on child marriages and concluded that child marriage has reduced marginally

by 1.7 per cent but it has increased in districts like Araria, Banka, Bhagalpur, Darbhanga, Katihar, Kishanganj, Lakhisarai, Purnea, Purvi Champaran and Sharasa. "Prevalence of child marriages in Bihar is highest in the country with nearly two third of the girls are reported to be married before the legal marriageable age of 18 years".

"All of us are part of an ecosystem, it is important to understand needs for any change in policy. Unless we take step at policy making level, it will not be easy to bring change. Change begins from family and then it spread in the community. Start from yourself and then reach up to policy making level" he added further.

Citing Census of India 2011 data, Ash said that, 10.88 Lakh children in Bihar are reported to be engaged as child labour, accounting for nearly 11 per cent of reported cases in the country. On Government of Bihar's efforts, he concluded that, Bihar is one of three states including Kerala and Assam that publish a Child Budget Document. Despite this, the per capita expenditure on children is amongst the lowest in the country with roughly Rs. 4500 per child per year.

After the presentation, he sought questions from the participants.

Kumar Aditya asked about confidence level while preparing report on any survey.

Prasanna Ash said that we decide a sample size during a survey. As far as the probability of getting right is concerned, we keep in mind that the data is right at what extent? If, I say malnutrition is x% with confidence rate of y% according to one survey and according to another survey, if it is m% with confidence rate of n%. Then, we have to decide that we need to go with which data on the basis of confidence level.

Session 4

In a special session on *Covid-19 Vaccination: Fighting misinformation*, **Dr. Siddharth Reddy**, Health Officer, UNICEF Bihar and **Dr. CM Singh**, Head, Department of Community and Family Medicine, AIIMS, Patna talked about the myths regarding Covid-19 vaccine and also briefed about the different phases of vaccine trial and different strains of Covid-19. Dr. Singh informed that the first dose of Covaxin in India was given at AIIMS Patna. They also responded to several questions asked by the participants.



Figure 13 Dr. CM Singh, Head, Department of Community and Family Medicine AIIMS Patna

Shaheena Ahluwalia asked that there are many rumours about the vaccine. What are the side effects of vaccine taken by people above the age of 50 years?

Answering her question, **Dr. CM Singh** said that whenever vaccine come to the market, ample research and discussion is held between scientists, doctors and other experts. There are three phases in development of a vaccine. Only after the approval of Drugs Controller General of India, vaccine is administered to people. Till date, we have given 8,000 doses of the vaccine at AIIMS, Patna and we have not reported any serious ill effect. People above the age of 50 years need not to worry.

Prince Raj asked that there are new strains of coronavirus, is the current vaccine capable to counter new mutant strains?

Dr. CM Singh replied that current vaccines are effective against the mutant strains of Covid-19 found till date. Those who have received the vaccines have not reported infection again.

Shikha Sharma asked about the reasons behind increase in cases in Maharashtra and Kerala?

In his response **Dr. CM Singh** said that sero-positivity rate is high in states like Maharashtra and Kerala, this is why cases are increasing there.

Kushagra Kundan asked that there is trust deficit about vaccine in our country. How can we mitigate the trust deficit?

Answering his question, **Dr. Siddharth Reddy** said that I will suggest you to raise awareness about vaccines. Infodemic - information spreads more quickly than

pandemic. Therefore, it is of utmost important that people get correct information and don't get trapped in wrong information.

Anushka Gupta asked that recently there was in news that new mutants are increasing. How long these mutants will last?

In his reply, **Dr. Siddharth Reddy** said that at this time, we can't predict that how long it will last. I will suggest you to wash hands, use sanitiser and senior citizens with co morbidities need to be careful. Don't ignore this virus and follow the guidelines issued by the Government of India.

Shaheena Ahluwalia asked about her apprehensions related to manufacturing of vaccine within one year.

Dr. CM Singh replied that we have seen in the past that vaccine manufacturing take 4 to 5 years but covid-19 vaccine is ready in a year. No one needs to be scared, vaccines are approved only after proper research and test. This time vaccine is ready in short time because regulating authorities did not take much time to pass the results.

Vidur asked about the average sample size used in India.

Dr. CM Singh said that generally, 30-35 participants are involved in first phase of a development of vaccine and 100-200 in second phase. In case of Covid-19 vaccine, 350 volunteers participated in first phase, 750 in second phase and 25,800 in third phase. Sample size is bigger in Covid-19 vaccine than any other vaccine test.

Workshop Session on advocacy plan on Child Rights Issues

After session 3, a workshop session on advocacy plan on child rights issues was held. During this session, participants shared their learnings and experiences. Link of a Google quiz was shared and all 287 participants took the quiz. The quiz had questions related to the topics discussed like UNCRC, population of children, Sustainable Development Goals, campaign ran by Save the Children, rights of children, etc.

(Link of the quiz - <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSeQ8ghw1mL-tA6f6DWE0aD23q2yZSWPDDmy82MKdbYnCibaQw/closedform>)

The objective of this session was to get feedback from the participants and hear from them about the cause. They also talked about their future plans of designing and launching their own advocacy plan based on the learning and wisdom they received from listening to the experts.

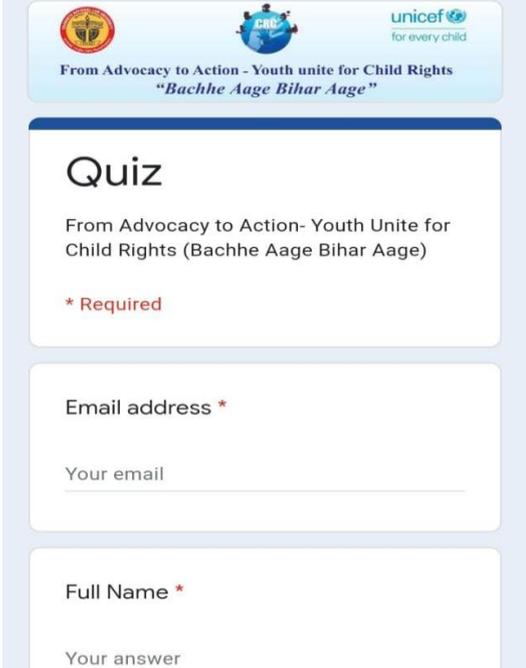
Neha Bharati, a master's degree holder in Criminal Law, shared that, she conducted a workshop on good touch and bad touch. She found that initially, many girls were reluctant to share their grievances related to bad touch. Later, many girls shared that they have witnessed such incidents and most of the perpetrators were to them known. She suggested change should begin from own home.

Nipurnh Gupta suggested forming groups of college students. These groups will raise awareness on child rights in the community. "An idea could be converted in to a campaign. With # (hashtag) one can share story about their work as well as positive stories of others. It may inspire more people to join the cause. In the end, she thanked all participants for active participation.

Mini Mallick of Bihar Bal Bhawan Kilkari suggested to organise such workshops with the underprivileged children regularly. These workshops help children in understanding their rights and also guide them.

Kriti asked that it is common to see children engaged in labour. What should we do in those cases? To whom should we contact?

Answering her question, **Shaheena Ahluwalia** said that it is important to sensitise common people about the cause. You should contact child line 1098 or other agencies engaged in protection of children. Your small attempt could bring a change.



The image shows a digital quiz form. At the top, there are logos for the Ministry of Women and Child Development, the Child Rights Cell (CRC), and UNICEF. Below the logos, the text reads "From Advocacy to Action - Youth unite for Child Rights" and "Bachhe Aage Bihar Aage". The main heading of the form is "Quiz". Underneath, it says "From Advocacy to Action- Youth Unite for Child Rights (Bachhe Aage Bihar Aage)". There is a red asterisk and the word "Required" indicating that the following fields are mandatory. The first field is "Email address *" with a sub-label "Your email" and a text input line. The second field is "Full Name *" with a sub-label "Your answer" and a text input line.

Figure 14: Snapshot of the quiz

Vote of Thanks

Vote of thanks was proposed by **Mr. Chandan, Program Co-ordinator, CRC, CNLU**. He said “I would like to thank Hon’ble Justice Mridula Mishra ma’am for her time in this online orientation from her busy schedule. I would also like to extend my gratitude to Miss Nipurnh Gupta ma’am not only for spending her time here but also for encouraging us. I sincerely thank resource persons Pragya Vats, Head of Campaigns, Save the Children, New Delhi, Mr. Prassna Ash, Planning Monitoring Evaluation Specialist, UNICEF Bihar, Dr. Siddharth Reddy, Health Officer, UNICEF Bihar, Dr. CM Singh, AIIMS, Patna. I would also like to thank Mr. Soumik Sinha, IT expert, UNICEF Bihar, moderator Shaheena Ahluwalia, Preety Anand, Sugandha ma’am, students of CNLU and all other who made this orientation possible”. He thanked all the students who successfully participated in the online orientation.



Figure 15: Mr. Chandan, Program Co-ordinator, CRC