

CHILDLINE

CHILDLINE started as a Field Action Project of the Department of Family and Child Welfare, Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS), Mumbai. In June 1996, the CHILDLINE service proved to be an efficient link between children in need and services that exist for their rehabilitation and welfare, utilizing the existing infrastructure and systems to ensure children their rights. The project involved setting up a 24-hour tele-helpline, manned by Counselors and social activists. CHILDLINE 1098, a four digit toll-free line would land any child's call on the nearest CHILDLINE call centre. 1098 was a well chosen number, in Hindi it became 'dus nao aath', a simple, easy to remember number. Starting steadily, the service grew and soon calls were pouring in.

In June 1998, the Union Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment (MSJ&E) commenced supporting the CHILDLINE project under its integrated Street Children's Program. CHILDLINE India Foundation (CIF) was set up on May 28, 1999. CIF is the nodal agency at the National level responsible for initiating, implementing and monitoring the CHILDLINE service and undertaking research, documentation, awareness and advocacy in the area of child protection. Extending the network based on the unique partnership 'model' and initiation of specialized, innovative need based services, based on trends emerging from analysis of calls is a part of the CHILDLINE India Foundation mandate.

Objectives of CIF

1. To reach out to every child in need of care and protection by responding to emergencies on 1098 and by physically reaching out to children.
2. To adapt and integrate telecommunication technology, linking all districts to the service of 1098 and making it available to all children in need of care and protection.
3. To provide a platform for networking amongst organisations and to provide linkages to support systems that facilitates the rehabilitation of children in need of care and protection.
4. To work together with the allied systems (Police, Health Care, Juvenile Justice, Transport, Legal, Education, Communication, Media, Political and the Community) to create child friendly systems.
5. To advocate for services for children, that are inaccessible, non-existent or inadequate.
6. To create a body of NGOs and Government organisations working within the National framework and policy for children.
7. To be a nodal child protection agency in the country, providing child protection services to children in need of care and protection.
8. To contribute and work towards strengthening and participating in a global movement that addresses issues related to child protection and ensures that children's voices are heard.



Introduction to Meerut CHILDLINE

'We worry what a child will be tomorrow, yet we forget he is someone today'

CHILDLINE is India's first 24-hour, toll-free, emergency phone outreach service for children in need of care and protection, linking them to long-term services for their care and rehabilitation. Any child and concerned adult can call 1098 and access the CHILDLINE service anytime of the day or night.

Who We Are

CHILDLINE operates in 81 cities within the country, with Meerut being the 73rd city running the service. April 2007 marks the beginning of the service in the city. Janhit Foundation has shared the responsibility of running the CHILDLINE service in Meerut. It is a 24 hours emergency toll-free service under

the Ministry of Women and Child Development (Govt. of India). The service focuses on the children in distress such as street children, children who have fled from their homes along with those in a situation of physical, mental and emotional abuse. Apart from it, the service also caters to the need of children forced into illegal and hazardous activities etc. On dialing 1098, the child or an adult on his behalf, can get access to various services that are required by them.

We work with a child-based approach in which children themselves are active and leading participants in their own development.



Mission

Meerut CHILDLINE aims at responding to the emergency needs of every child in need of care and protection throughout Meerut district, ensuring that there is an integrated effort between the government, non-governmental organisations, academic institutions, bilateral agencies, corporates and the community, in protecting the rights of children.

Vision

Meerut CHILDLINE'S vision is a child friendly nation where children are looked upon as the future and every child is ensured of his/her right to a childhood.

Recognition from the Government of India....

CHILDLINE is India's first National level response to the ratification of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). Additionally, the CHILDLINE 1098 service receives special mention in the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection) Act 2000.

Our Children

Meerut CHILDLINE works with the marginalized and excluded children in Meerut district. These include:

Street children, child labourers, abused children, victims of flesh trade, differently abled children, child addicts, children in conflict with law, children in institutions, mentally ill children, children affected by HIV/AIDS, children affected by conflicts and disasters, child political refugees, children whose families are in crisis.

What We Do

- Reach out to every child in need of care and protection, by responding to emergencies on 1098.
- Ensure access of telecom technology to the most marginalized in urban as well as rural areas and connectivity of 1098 through the Government telephone exchange as well as private telephone exchanges.
- Work together with the allied systems to create child friendly systems.
- Advocate for services for children that are inaccessible, non existent or inadequate.
- Strive for excellence in quality service to children in need of special care

CHILDLINE India was declared National Winner (medium size category) in the India NGO Awards 2007 which was organized by Resource Alliance and the Nand and Jeet Khemka Foundation. This is an acknowledgement of the great work that CHILDLINE 1098 is doing for children across the nation, good governance practices followed and above all the credibility of the service. The award was presented by the Hon'ble Finance Minister, Shri P. Chidambaram.

and protection and ensure that the best interests of the child are secured.

- Provide a platform of networking amongst organizations and provide linkages to support systems which facilitate the rehabilitation of children in need of care and protection.
- Learn from the experiences of CHILDLINE and the data generated and jointly determine strategies to reach out more effectively to children.

How We Work

- Child/concerned adult contacts CHILDLINE by dialing 1098 or coming directly to the phone receiving center.
- The CHILDLINE team receives and responds to the calls.
- In response to the call, either direct assistance is provided or emotional support and guidance is provided over the phone.
- In case of long term rehabilitation, other agencies providing specialized services are contacted.
- The parents of the child are contacted and involved.
- A volunteer base is formed for the long term follow up of the children.

Annual Activities

The following activities were conducted by Meerut CHILDLINE during this year :

Open House : An open house is organised every month by Meerut CHILDLINE to spread awareness about the toll-free service and involve the local communities to come forward and take initiatives to secure the rights of the deprived children. The open house has been organised by the service at various locations in the city including the railway stations and the bus stands etc. The general activities conducted in an open house include singing songs, skits explaining the service, playing the 1098 theme song etc, all done by the street children.

Canopy : A canopy is put up at various places, again, to spread awareness about the service. The team members display pamphlets, brochures, posters etc. for the purpose of dissemination. They also talk to the slum children who visit the canopy and guide them about the usage of the service. The canopy is set up at regular intervals at places which attract a lot of public like the city railway station, medical college etc.

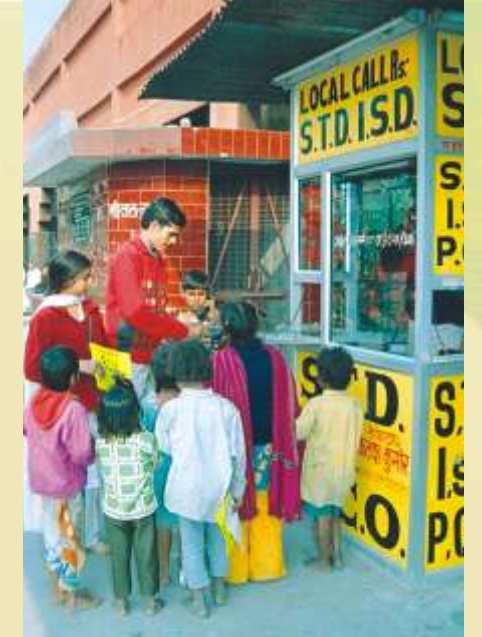


Health Checkups : Health checkups are also organised by the team on regular intervals to keep track of the health status of the children staying in

the slum. The doctors visiting the slum conduct free health checkups for the children. Timely vaccinations for polio, tuberculosis etc. are also provided to the children. The children are also encouraged to maintain proper sanitation and cleanliness.

Vocational trainings : An extra effort has been made by the Meerut CHILDLINE team to conduct vocational trainings for the slum children in order to generate prospects for them to earn a living. The team has initiated sewing classes wherein eight girls belonging to marginalized communities are being trained free of cost. Computer classes are also being conducted wherein six girls are being acquainted with knowledge related to information technology. Driving classes have also been initiated for the boys hailing from the nearby slums so that by the time they acquire the age of 18 years, they are already self dependent and capable of earning a livelihood. The team members, responsible for managing the *Gyanashram*, also teach varied skills to the children like candle making, card making, artificial flower making, décor items from waste materials etc.

Outreach : The CHILDLINE team conducts outreach throughout the city and creates awareness about the toll-free service. Special emphasis is laid on contacting all the phone booth owners and informing them about the service, so that they contribute in the success of the service by disseminating the information further and allow the



children in need to use the service without charging anything from them.

Cultural Upgradation : The *Gyanashram* students are also involved in various cultural events organised on the national holidays. During one year of its existence, the team members have celebrated all the important events in the slum thereby inculcating in them our culture and making them aware about the important days celebrated in our country.

Organising Interactive Meetings : Regular meetings are organised by Meerut CHILDLINE to reach out to individuals and institutions who often come in contact with children. It has organised meetings with the railway staff and professionals at the city railway station, child right activists, police professionals etc. A meeting was also organised on January 17, 2008 for the initiation of the CHILDLINE Advisory Board (CAB) in Meerut. The team looks forward to conduct meetings with the child specialist doctors and PCO owners in the near future, to inform them about the service and seek for their cooperation.



CHILDLINE in Action...

Handcuffing Children: Child Rights Violation Case in Meerut

In a rare case of gross violation of child rights, Janhit Foundation made a strong intervention by knocking the doors of the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India. This happened when four children were picked from Ghaziabad district with charges of stealing. They were severely beaten, handcuffed and were being produced in the Meerut Court, bleeding badly. Taking note of the media reports, the organization approached the court for justice. The policemen responsible for this inhuman and illegal act were suspended once the Public Interest Litigation (PIL) was accepted by the Hon'ble Court. The PIL is still with the Apex Court.

Cases of Missing Children

Case 1: Ram Singh, 10 years

10-year old Ram Singh was found missing since June 11, 2007. The Meerut CHILDLINE team found him working at a tea stall six days later. He was abused and ill treated by the shop owner. Due to the efforts made by the CHILDLINE team, he was then reunited with his parents.

When he was interviewed by the CHILDLINE team, he revealed that he and his mother were beaten by his father very often and that his father was a drunkard. It was a case of domestic violence. Ram Singh was provided with counseling by the CHILDLINE team, as a result of which he is studying properly at present and is absolutely fine. Meerut CHILDLINE conducts follow up on Ram Singh at regular intervals. His father was also counseled and strictly instructed to take care of his child.

Case 2: Sachin, 8 years

Meerut CHILDLINE got a call from Mr. Manoj on August 13, 2007. He informed Meerut CHILDLINE that his son had not returned from his school that day. He gave the relevant details about his lost son. Meerut CHILDLINE acquired the relevant information from him which was required to locate the child. After few hours of searching the child was found at his uncle's place. Sachin was handed over to his parents by the team.

Case 3: Farhad, 10 years

Lucknow CHILDLINE contacted Meerut CHILDLINE on August 29, 2007 and informed about a 10 years old lost child named Farhad who hailed from Meerut. The Lucknow CHILDLINE team members had found the child at the Lucknow railway station. They provided the details about the child so that his address could be ascertained. The team members of Meerut CHILDLINE found the address of the child and conveyed it to the Lucknow CHILDLINE team members after which Farhad could be reunited with his family at Meerut.

Case 4: Lokesh, 16 years

Lokesh, a 16 year old visually impaired child, was found by a PCO owner at the Meerut Cantt railway station on February 19, 2008. Being aware about the Meerut CHILDLINE, he directly contacted the team through the toll free number and informed the volunteers about Lokesh. The team members visited the railway station and talked to the child. It was found that Lokesh hailed from Delhi. His parents were contacted by the team and they were reunited the same day.

Case 5: Annu, 5 years

On March 18, 2008 Annu, a 5 year old girl, residing in K block, Shastri Nagar, left her home in the morning to buy some colorful

balloons for herself to celebrate the soon approaching Holi. The child being too young, lost her way back home. A medical shop owner found the little girl and contacted Meerut CHILDLINE. The team members took over Annu from the shop owner and talked to her for some time. Annu, being 5 years old could only recall the name of her parents and brother. She could not recall the name of her locality. She also mentioned the name of her school, on being asked about it. The team members met the school authorities, took her residential address from them, after which her parents could be contacted. Annu was then reunited with her family.

Cases of Medical Assistance

Case1: Student of Shri Kishan Lal Angoori Devi School

A student of a school named Shri Kishan Lal Angoori Devi School in Madhavpuram, Meerut was suffering from a serious physical abnormality. She was living a very difficult life as she was the object of ridicule by everyone. Janhit Foundation came to know about this girl. The organization then decided to provide aid to this girl and got her plastic surgery done and provided the required medical support. All the expenses were borne by the organization. And today, she is living a happy and normal life.

Case2: Water problem of Children Residing in Jaibheem Nagar

The strong population of 10,000 people in Jaibheem Nagar (JBN) is forced to lead a life full of miseries since they are denied the human right to water. Children, especially young girls, are the worst sufferers as they have to cover a tiresome journey of 2-2.5 kms everyday to fetch safe drinking water for their families and themselves, leaving no time for

them to pursue their studies. The organization took up the problem and wrote letters to the District Magistrate, Meerut; Nagar Ayukt, Nagar Nigam, Meerut and other authorities concerned to apprise them with the pitiful condition of the residents of the Jaibheem Nagar, especially the children.

It was due to Janhit Foundation's intervention that a project worth Rs. 2 Crores was sent to the State Government in Lucknow for approval. The local MLA of Meerut also raised a question in the U.P. Vidhan Sabha to take care of the issue of Jaibheem Nagar people. Also the engineers of Nagar Nigam and Jal Nigam have started the preliminary work of the installation of the pipelines and have also selected the site where the overhead water tank would be constructed.

Meerut CHILDLINE has handled 120 medical cases so far, wherein the children were diagnosed with problems like physical injuries, vitamin A deficiency, conjunctivitis, skin diseases, stomach disorders, intestinal disorders, polio, reproductive disorders, mental ailments etc. the children have been provided with medical aid as per their individual requirements.



Case of Juvenile Home

A few people of Janhit foundation visited the Juvenile Home at Mansarover. The condition there, was found to be very unpleasant as 107 children were left to adjust in just three rooms having only two attached toilets. They were forced to live a very miserable and unbearable life. Roshan Jone from CIF, Mumbai also visited the place after a few days. It was then that an action was taken. The organisation wrote a letter to the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) and also filed a petition in the Hon'ble Court,

which is still in consideration. It became a media issue, as a result of which, the jail has now been shifted near Jail Chungi crossing with a bigger space and now the children are in a better condition.

Case of Restoring Right to Education

10 children admitted to school

10 children have been admitted to Ambedkar School as their parents could not afford to pay the school fee.

Case of Burnt Child

CHILDLINE came across a child named Rashid who was severely burnt by some miscreants in 2006. Rashid was taken to a government hospital for medical assistance. Janhit took this matter of violation of child's right to the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), on whose intervention the child could be provided proper medical aid.

Case of abandoned child

Case 1: Baby girl found at Daurala railway station

An abandoned two-day old baby girl was found at the Daurala railway station on February 11, 2008 by the station master. He contacted the Meerut CHILDLINE team and informed about the baby. The team members went to the railway station and took over the girl. She was provided with medical-aid for a week at Subharti hospital and later was handed over to the Karna Ashram. The ADM city has proposed to adopt the child.

Case 2: Girl found at city railway station

BSP leader Sunil Wadhwa's sister came across

an eight year old girl at the city railway station. The child was weeping profusely. The lady called up on the CHILDLINE toll free number on the March 13 and informed the team that she had brought the abandoned girl at her home and wanted to do something for her. Since the Child Welfare Committee (CWC) members could not be contacted, the team contacted the city SDM. He referred the girl to Subharti and she was handed over to the Subharti orphanage.

Case 3: Lost boy reunited with family

Meerut CHILDLINE received a call from Rahul Chaudhary on December 29, 2007. He had found a 10 years old child, crying and hungry, near his home. He fed the child and not knowing about Meerut CHILDLINE, he left the child under the custody of police at civil lines police station, Meerut. Later, on getting information about the toll free number from some acquaintance he contacted the team members. As soon as the team members of Meerut CHILDLINE came to know about 10 year old Devendra (Chotu), hailing from Unnao (UP) they went to the police station and requested the Inspector to handover the custody of the child to CHILDLINE, so as to produce the child before the CWC. The inspector was not convinced and for that reason the Coordinator had to visit the police station again with all the relevant papers and an application demanding the custody of the child in written. The Inspector promised that the child will be produced before the City Magistrate. She requested the inspector to let a representative from Meerut CHILDLINE be present at that time. The City Magistrate ordered the police to send the child back to his home. Meerut CHILDLINE made sure that police helps the child reach back his home. Devendra, being an orphan, stayed

with his elder brothers and their wives and was very often beaten by them due to which he did not want to go back. To find a solution to his problem his brothers were warned for their behaviour and the case has been followed upon to ensure that no further misbehaviour is faced by the child. The impact of the intervention of the Meerut CHILDLINE was that the child was accompanied by a constable to his home in Kanpur, where he was handed over to his brothers with strict instructions that he is to be properly cared for.

Case of Repatriation

Provided shelter to a dumb-mute child

Meerut CHILDLINE came across an article in the local daily newspaper, Amar Ujala (Dated February 20, 2008) which mentioned about a child who was deprived of the power of hearing or speaking. The child had been staying at the Lala Lajpat Rai Medical College for almost 6-7 months. The CHILDLINE team members visited the medical college and met the Senior Superintendent S.K Jain who told them about this child who had met with an accident some 6 to 7 months back and was found in an injured state and thereby brought to the medical college by some worker of the college itself. Meerut CHILDLINE released a news in the local newspapers about the child's wellbeing and whereabouts, however no response was received and nobody turned up to take him. So we decided to send him to an orphanage. The team approached many orphanages within the city. However, not even a single one extended any help. A nun from the Prem Niwas orphanage was willing to take in the child if the DM approved and

gave it in writing. Considering the need of the situation, the team Coordinator and the Paraprofessional approached the DM and told him about the child. The DM cooperated with us and gave a written consent asking Prem Nivas to take over the child's responsibility. The child could be safely handed over to a respectable and trustworthy orphanage where his future security could be assured.

Cases of emotional guidance and support

Meerut CHILDLINE has handled 48 cases wherein it has provided emotional and psychological support and guidance to children from both urban and rural backgrounds. The psychologists, Dr. Mridula Sharma and Dr. Poonam Devdutt have been associated with Janhit Foundation even before Meerut CHILDLINE was initiated. They have been providing their expertise and guidance to children who come across Meerut CHILDLINE and are in need of certain emotional boost or support. So far they have provided guidance to children who are not doing well in studies, are not interested in going to school, do not respect their parents, do not attend classes regularly, have fallen into bad company, have great potential but do not realise it (like in case of Amit who sings well but does not realise the scope of his talent), are intelligent but not laborious, have a bad handwriting, have fallen into wrong habits like drug addiction, give excuses for everything, are hyperactive, partially mentally handicapped etc. The regular counselling of the children has ensured that they not only possess a healthy body but also a healthy mind.