



Breaking the Silence on Child Sexual Abuse in Schools in Bangladesh

Situation

In 2010 the students of Debnogor Begum Rokeya High School, especially the girl students of class nine had complained to the Head Teacher that one of the teachers unnecessarily touches their bodies. They felt uneasy and insulted when the teacher did this. The students felt this was wrong and an instance of sexual abuse. The teacher was also touching the students as a physical punishment for bad behaviour.

The school authority realized that the misbehavior of that teacher was creating a negative impact on the students and hampering their development. The students would isolate themselves, and were afraid when sitting in class. They tried to avoid that teacher's class using various causes and tricks.

Action

Breaking the Silence (BTS) was a programme implemented in schools and with communities to build the awareness of children on child sexual abuse (CSA). The tool is being used called window method describes to open up the window of a room one by one as discussion on CSA gradually unfold. The intervention year in that school was based from 2009 to 2010. The school authority is still continuing the window method based successive session on CR, CSA, Body Boundary, Life skills.

The school authority took the complaint seriously and shared it among the school teachers and the school management committee members. According to the school authority's decision the Head Teacher warned the teacher (abuser) and requested him to give up these practices. The school authority also requested to Breaking the Silence to conduct further training workshop for the teachers including the abuser on CR, CSA and positive discipline to bring a positive change in their knowledge, attitude and practice towards the students. Responding to the proposal BTS organized and conducted a training workshop with the support of Debnogor Begum Rokeya High School. The claimed teacher was one of the participants who received the training.

After participating in the training, the teacher was sensitized about how to behave well with the students and gave up his former practices. The female students of the school also noticed that the behavior of that teacher had changed and he is now acting well with them and the students no longer experience physical touching and misbehavior from the teacher. There had been brought a positive change in the knowledge, attitude and practice of the teacher.

Impact

- The training workshop created a positive environment in the school and increased the understanding of child rights and the harmful effects of CSA among students.
- This training helped to create an environment free from abuse within the school and also empowered children to protect themselves from being victim of CSA.
- The intervention improved the knowledge of understanding on CSA, especially for students.
- The school authority continues to use the window method based successive sessions for students and teachers on CR, CSA, Body Boundary, Life skills with their own initiatives for creating long lasting abuse free environment in the school.