

Validating the school level safety Based on SS 10000 – National School safety Standard

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ABSTRACT

When we were analysing the school level safety, students' responses, news and reports about the safety of the students, we realised the schools with spiritual values and dedicated professional teacher have better standing. The ACCB has released a standard for National school safety, SS10000. Certification and solution providers training and awareness is going on, premier schools are aiming for such certification. So, we decided to collect the data related to opinion of some representing schools and their views about the school safety. Is the standard adequate to validate the school safety was to be researched. The research methodology was primary data collected from direct interviews and secondary data by authentic websites, with random sampling representative 60 schools pilot were selected, the results are non-conclusive. But the solution providers and standards certifying agency states, it is due to lack of awareness, every school going for certification, will assure the students, parents and all stake holders that the school is a safe learning place for their children. The schools' analysis shows, a system for safety being launched by the ACCAB, the effectiveness is adequate for monitoring, but is not preventive. Technology could be better solution to the process, a virtual connect with a simple devise will ensure the safety is the view of most of the stake holders. However, the researchers feel the prevention is evident if spiritual values are imparted, if not feasible technology and monitoring can be used.

Keywords: SS 10000, ACCB, School Safety, Certification, safety band

1.INTRODUCTION

The elementary purpose of school is to teach students to become both, independent and interdependent while in the pursuit of academic excellence. A school is a unique social institution where teachers create a learning environment for the students helping them to innovate, create and contribute to society. A school serves as a microcosmic model of the society; reflecting all that is good and bad in the society. Every parent hopes that that their ward is as safe, protected and taken care of in school, as is at home.

Parenting is probably the most important aspects of human fulfilment. Parents are required to act as a shield against various adversities faced by the child while dealing with the internal and external situations. One of such

issue is a child safety while at school. As a parent you need to be assured that your child is safe at school. A school should have a positive and well-disciplined environment with the required safety, security and emergency preparedness measures and inclusive intervention programs. Upbringing of a child and education for the masses is a long term national policy although influenced by, cultural values. The changing life style has raised many issues including the quality time with the students, children. The value education is concern as most of the students have been in play group from the day care. We did a survey in a school where in the 90% students have working parents. The work life balance and challenges of upbringing of children becomes multiplied when we read news concerning safety during hostel, picnics, travel or in school itself. A research is essential to find out the students' perception, parents perception, school administration and regulatory authorities and their approach towards such unsafe act or situation. A dedicated questionnaire is prepared and even the local police are interviewed to find out is there any model where in the stake holders can say their children are safe and are getting groomed in the best way.

98% parents wanted technology to be used for better emergency connect during the approach and being in school, for safety, but in case of virtual classes and on-line books, can someone guarantee that during travel or sport the child is safe. The answer needs still further research. The standard has detailed elements and each has dedicated policies. Isolated experiments for new method of learning are going on by Rishi Prabhakar School. Ravishankar School but conventional CBSC, SSC, or ICSC schools are considered for this research, School Standard SS 10000 is considered for validation. Accreditation by ACCAB endorses and enrolled under global standard is mark of safety. This standard aims for early education and child care centres. This not only focus on safety alone but is standard for Quality, health and safety. The standard is deployed with help of, Certified School Safety Professionals. CSSPs are ACCAB's National Safe School Accreditation qualified persons who are expected to demonstrate professionalism and competence while performing their duties related to the school safety.

II.INTRODUCTION TO ACCAB'S SAFE SCHOOL STANDARD

The procedure chart given below is for indicative purpose only. It is expected that the applicant organizations have a specific & assured plan of action for obtaining the ACCAB Accreditation and nominate a senior & accountable person to co-ordinate all activities related to the Accreditation process. ACCAB Accreditation is granted to organizations who have demonstrated that they fully meet the requirements of ACCAB's Safe School Standard SS 10000 which can be obtained from ACCAB free of cost.

The steps are as follows-

School sends initial inquiry

ACCAB responds by sending an information brochure along with an Expression of Interest (EOI)

School sends completed EOI to ACCAB

ACCAB sends Schedule of Fees and Application Form

School sends completed Application Form along with the Fees

ACCAB acknowledges the Application with Recognition of Commitment Accreditation

ACCAB allocates Solutions Partners

Solutions Partners provide training, system documentation and support services with the help of ACCAB's copyrighted material

School does a Gap Analysis with respect to the requirements of the Accreditation program

School implements the program and self-reviews the progress

When school believes it has made sufficient progress Solutions Partner conducts pre-assessment

School takes corrective action on the pre-assessment findings

School continues to implement the system till the time the system and related attitudes and behaviours are sufficiently mature

Assessor conducts the final Accreditation assessment

School takes corrective actions on the assessment findings

Assessors sends the assessment reports to ACCAB

ACCAB Accreditation committee reviews the assessment reports

Accreditation decision is made

ACCAB grants and issues The National Safe School Accreditation Certificate

The Accreditation is continued by continued implementation of the system thereafter supported by annual surveillance assessment and tri annual re-assessment.

Role of Authorities in School Safety

Community Partners for School Safety

Role of Authorities in School Safety

Right to education being a fundamental right, it is one of the most important obligations of the concerned federal, state and local authorities to ensure a safe environment for education.

The school authorities are incumbent to provide: Briefings on the school safety policies and support planning process to the concerned stakeholders, assisting schools with planning and supporting student safety. Providing relevant resources for the successful implementation of school safety planning, policies and processes.

III.Hypothesis

Parents are concerned for safety and suggest devise to have emergency connect is adequate to take care of this aspect.

Standards are secondary assurances and are based on monitoring the condition, yet prevention is possible only with technology or grooming.

Imparting Value education and spiritual values is the method for assuring the safety in school and society.

IV.METHODOLOGY

The data is mostly primary based on one to one interactions, and secondary data is collected from the websites, & reports published. The details of the review are based on the standard SS 10000.The standard includes following elements:

School Climate

School Health & Safety – Risk Management

Building Design & Fire Safety
Information Security
Dress Code
School Access Control
Ergonomics for Students
School Safety
School Event Security
Emergency Management
Bullying Prevention & Response
Positive Classroom Climate
Substance Abuse
Implementing School Safety Management Program
Auditing School Safety Management System

V.OBSERVATIONS & FINDINGS

Following are the responses to the parents' questions. Parents are approached randomly and responses are collected by individual to avoid bias. All of them have admitted, while taking admission to the school the, school's website or promotional material does not refer to safety, but the ranks, awards, and achievements, are highlighted.

Although, safety is assumed to be assured, none of them have checked it explicitly as they were not aware of, whom to ask and what to ask.

The school administrators are not aware of the standards and follow the conventional method and rules and regulations for schools. The pre- primary school has no defined set of controls.

Sr. No.	Point	Response
1	As parent it is your responsibility to check:	Yes – 100%
2	If Your child feels safe in his / her school –	Yes - 28 %
3	If your child's school has safety and security policies and procedures and emergency preparedness plan.	Yes – 32%
4	If the school has emergency preparedness plan tested	Yes -3%
5	If school has its safety and security management system assessed and validated by an external agency.	Yes -0%

Table 1 – Parents Response

Response from the Certified School Safety Professionals, who are (CSSPs) are able to perform the following tasks, due to their training on school safety. List of professionals is available on the website. We have interacted

with them to understand their roles, responsibilities, standard and their opinion about current situation and their roles. As follows.

Sr. No	Point	% Response
1	Promote safety culture throughout school – Current level	awareness is 2%
2	Ensure safe and healthy environment in school;	75 % Not ensured
3	Effectively communicate and consult with the stakeholders including students, parents, staff, community partners and authorities on matters related to school safety;	Safety not discussed, recently. During Swine flu days, some instructions were given
4	Conduct safety training and awareness programs for students, staff, parents and other concerned people;	Not done in past 3 years
5	Ensure periodic safety inspections	Not even once
6	Assess, evaluate and control significant risks and hazards on the school premises; Including biological hazards and hygiene	Our complaint related to hygiene like toilet are still unsolved
7	Prepare and test emergency response plans;	Not aware
8	Ensure fire protection, environmental protection, ergonomics, hazardous material control and regulatory compliance;	It is not required as per school such risk is remote
9	Periodically updating the school management on safety matters;	None is assigned the responsibility
10	Implementing and managing school safety programs. -	Not a priority

Table 2- Solution providers responses

Administrators' views, including Police & local MLAs- A school faces various school safety related risks and challenges, to cite a few:

Sr. No	Hazard	% agreement
1	Walk to school safely	Not considered
2	Bicycle rider safety	No bicycle track
3	Student transportation	No vigilance
4	Playground injuries	32% controlled
5	School indiscipline	56% agree
6	Challenges posed by Field Visits, Excursions, Social Programs - Sign off for school driven programs no other control & student planned none is aware,	12% agree that controls are not adequate
7	School violence	18% are aware
8	Youth violence	7% not aware
9	Vandalism	46% not aware

10	Sexual abuse	78% not aware
11	Suicide	Not reported
12	School Health Index	98% not aware
13	Dangerous intruders	Not reported
14	Gang violence	Not reported
15	Bomb threats	Not reported
16	Terrorisms	Not reported
17	Missing person	Not reported
18	Accidents and injuries control and remediation	56 % agree
19	Gas leaks or chemical spills	Not reported
20	Downed power lines	Not reported
21	Floods	Not reported
22	Food & Hygiene practices	Not reported
23	Contaminated food	Not reported
24	Suspicious packages	Not reported
25	Hazardous materials	Not reported
26	Hurricanes/Tornadoes	Not reported
27	Fire	Not reported
28	Earthquakes	Not reported
29	Severe winter storms / ice	Not reported

Table 3 – Stake holders and administrators’ responses.

VI. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

The data is so explicit that we don’t need any statistical tool even a graph to interpret it. Such alarming consistent response shows the need and essence of some solution from all the stake holders.

Although all the elements and questions are not applicable to all schools the responses are consistent and uniform. Parents, are concerns, administrators are aware of the gaps, and solution providers also have verified that some action is essential.

Walk to school safely – It is a matter of dispute whose responsibility it is, but all agreed this is a concern, not only due to road accidents but even sexual abuse, unsecure social conditions.

Bicycle rider safety - Most of the schools do not have bicycle tracks approaching, in the heavy traffic, children travelling is a major risk, although parents agreed to it, they have no choice due to increasing cost of transport provided by school and irregular public transport.

Student transportation — Through private rickshaw, or school bus, is common, most of the parents due to changing working style are not able to take up this responsibility and is subcontracted, with out any major evaluation. Cost is a major concern.

Playground injuries — Quiet a few schools do not have playground, and student join some private clubs, where in the safety surveillance, first aids are not even remotely explored, but transport to such location and molestation, gang bullying and other incidences are also seen in such cases. A case of Swimming pool change room video was much discussed, but such incidence has no concrete solutions, as yet.

School indiscipline– The stake holders, students, parents, staff, and teacher all find it difficult to cope us. No discipline can be forced unless we condition the students and change their attitude and interest, the counselling and mentoring is the solution, but very few school have such facility and very few of them have adequate resources. Even parents find it private counselling is very costly.

Challenges posed by Field Visits, Excursions, Social Programs — With senior students mostly their own groups plan such programs, and school or parents are not even aware of it. Neither have any control on it. Small children joining their siblings is common, and they pick up habits such as drinks, drugs, through such unorganised anti-social – social programs and groups. Blackmailing, exploitation, ragging and uncontrolled exploitation is unavoidable. No other control but value education and spiritual development is the proposed solution with alert society and stake holders to prevent such mishaps.

School violence – Under the carpet some incidences are possible in every school, even some of the teachers and staff is part to such incidences. Parents, volunteers and school authority and the observant alert counsellors at the ratio of 1: 5 is recommended and frequent meetings as every week is suggested, but how many of us are willing to either pay for such extra charges or even to act as volunteers... Every parent spending some time with the child will solve such issues provided, there is no domestic conflict and violence.

Youth violence -Adolescence youth if not mentored can be a social threat, such violence is reinforcing next generation and the ice rolling effect is difficult to detect and individual prefer to succumb than to express and admit the vulnerability.

Vandalism– The will to get noticed and inferiority ego expressed as superiority is so strong that children rebel and express them violently. The vandalism is not restricted to damage of furniture but may also result in breaking the law and values, that may result into unsafe situation, in a school a 12th standard boy who use to be always second put acid on hands of the topper so that he can be first. Such incidences need counselling to both, but it is too late, the prevention of such incidences need value and spirituality, that is part of upbringing, if parents and family is not able to share it, it is our responsibility to be safe to impart such values.

Sexual abuse– The multiple incidences just reflect the imbalance of individual. The abnormal relation and abuses cannot be ignored as individual is minor or otherwise, this is need to ensure not only safety of the victim but also the culprit needs support so that the life is not spoiled in Remand home, or in jail.

Suicide– The extreme helplessness or disparity or depression results in suicide, such incidences are common in or outside the school due to threats associated with school. The marks, eve teasing, or any such reason dos not demand life. The no support helpless feeling if detected early and support extended for correcting the situation may reduce many such untimely death. In such incidences, the family finds it difficult to accept and correct the situation, the main cause can be or may not be school alone. We as society are answerable that we could not detect and prevent such incidence.

School Health Index– A survey shows it is not only low income children but also high income children suffer health issue the BMI and obesity is a growing concern , this could have many attributes, but early detection and correction is a must.

Dangerous intruders– The common incidences like annual social, open days, funfair, external uncontrol participation is allowed, but there is no control to identify dangerous intruders. Even otherwise the access control and security is not adequate in most of the school. Management and even parents think it is a cost burden, and why bother about such rare incidences.

Gang violence– Teenagers typically want to form their own team and seek superiority by association, this may result in gang violence, this need not be in school, but on way to and from or even at some one's farm house or residences. Such gang is detected easily, and their intentions if monitored carefully converting such attention seeking is possible, but dedicated time and attention by volunteers or professional counsellors is essential.

Bomb threats– The school threat incidences are not very common in India, but no one known, such remote possibility can also cause disaster as the impact is very high, the preparedness and drill for rescue and escape is essential.

Terrorisms – Terrorism is unpredictable, but social riots are common and can have religious reasons, such incidences need to be very carefully tackled in the school taking care of the religious issues. The terrorising also be anticipated and the rescue and safety team and escape routes and drills will ensure the minimum loss.

Missing person– Most of the crimes reported are due to late intimation, the missing individual if detected timely and tracked , then some life saving or preventive support can be possible so in such incidences, the technology based emergency connect with GPS, will be a major support, such devise need to be developed as soon as possible, so all the parents and school staff will be able to trace any mishap and the culprit will also be aware, that such tracking will make his escape difficult, controlling such incidences.

Accidents and injuries– Minor accidents and injuries are very common during travel and also in ground, but, first aid and support if timely available, the loss can be minimised.

Gas leaks or chemical spills– Applicable to schools in Chemical zone, typically the colonies.

Downed power lines– Earth leakage detection or any power failure and electrical safety, electrocution and remise are not known to most of the school. Such system is essential as many small children are subjected to this threat, and needs timely checking, detection and correction.

Floods– Pune has witness the Panshet dam breakage resulting in flood like situation , unfortunately all the schools, let the students free in such situation, with out taking care of their safety. In Mumbai, the 26 July incidence has isolated the school and even local connect and we all know the implication, yet no effective control or mechanism is established and no school has any drills and safety supports anticipating such incidences.

Food & Hygiene practices – Some incidences of food poisoning due to food distributed in school are reported, we have yet not established any control on such incidences. But such impact is very high so some controls are essential on all food vendors who have access or whose food is accessible to students.

Contaminated food– The biological hazard related to health hygiene and cleanliness can be minimised if students themselves are aware and act against all such incidences, of contamination, during preparation, storage and distribution.

Suspicious packages – The easiest way to pass on a toy like thing or unnoticeable suspicious package to create major bomb threat.

Hazardous materials– Applicable to all schools as not only the lab chemical, but even children may carry hazardous material, some social and anti-social element may implant such material, so training for school students and rescue plan is essential even for such eventuality.

Hurricanes/Tornadoes– Applicable to only Coastal area.

Fire– Number of incidences are reported in school due to mid noon serving and preparing of food for the students. Such preparation though banned still there are still some attributes where in fire is feasible, adequate fire audit, safety drills and training is essential for all the school.

Earthquakes– Social authority generally seek support from school buildings to combat the situation. Children are not trained or exposed to rescue operation or safe escape.

Severe winter storms / ice –Generally not applicable in India except area like Kashmir, and snow fall area.

VII. SUGGESTION

The standard addresses all physical hazards, but the major cause of all, the psychological concerns, and control of mind, through Meditation and spiritual values is not addresses. The Yoga, and meditation value education, and close monitoring of actions and behaviours are better control than any other control we feel. If we review incidences and feedback from Sri Sarada Mission and Ramkrishana Mission school irrespective of all odds, the schools are able to perform best with out any safety incidence.

Technology gives the support from external threats, but the internal threats are to be controlled by Spiritual development and mind control.

Experiments where in such efforts are put in no single incidence of school safety has taken place even years together. However, when we talked about the solution and feasibility to validate the solution, all agreed that the Standard is adequate, but is for monitoring, the safety is beyond monitoring and effective use of technology say a handy safety devise, emergency call or connect to all stake holders is a fool proof failsafe solution. Tata has a Wrist watch which has GPS link to show the location so missing individual can be identified, but such watch if removed and thrown away it can be misleading. So, a connect that is remotely monitored and gives alarm even an attempt to remove is done, and all stake holders are intimated need to be established. Such support will also reduce some ragging incidences.

Some other solutions proposed are volunteering counselling by senior team members, house wives, and family members who would act as mentors and students would relate with them and counselling can be provided in a friendly manner like stories, movies, games, to both one who is getting bullied and one who is bullying.

Such volunteers, are welcome by all schools, as this is cost effective solution. This giving back concept if we can spread, will help our next generation and healthy society.

Similar hand holding for staff, teachers and other school stake holders is also essential. We feel if this research can trigger some of you taking up such task and the detection and connect technology being rapidly developed at most cost-effective way, will be of great use.

The spiritual organisation and NGOs typically like Sri Sarada math, Ramkrishana Math are taking up the connect and value add by sending volunteers across the schools for guiding the students. They also run residential schools even in remote area like Arunachal Pradesh, and Jharkhand- Narayanpur. The students are happy that they are getting necessary inputs and also the spiritual values. The Nakhrites in those area protect the mission van as they trust the mission than the police.

This method is more fool proof than any safety certification, but is very difficult to develop. To run a school dedicated Monks, and nuns are required, unfortunately in our country only 18000 such volunteers are available.

Although, renunciation and monastic life is a concern most of the part time volunteers and virtual technology and effective use of media and virtual class rooms, students exchange and value promotion projects are some of the suggestive methods.

The conventional school lack the ancient wisdom, of Gurukul system, so some places such schools are started, and such schools can be integrated with conventional school to have other students to get exposed to such life. The few but effective experiments may trigger few more and proper network of volunteers with technology may give a very effective solution in future, till then monitoring and post mortem seem to be the only solution to validate the school level safety.

VIII. CONCLUSIONS

The researchers conclude, spiritual values, yoga, meditation, mentoring, counselling, with help of technology and some monitoring with SS 10000 can be total solution. Emergency connect technology is a fool-proof solution, but till it is developed, awareness, accreditation, volunteering, and more quality time for society including our family are some of the viable solutions. In absence of such action, we may not be even aware what our children are getting programmed and how they would turn out to be. Parents are concerned for safety and wish a device to have emergency connect is adequate to take care of this aspect. But the real connect is family values and every citizen acting as volunteer to prevent mishaps, any place. Standards are secondary assurances and are based on monitoring the condition, yet prevention is possible only with technology or grooming. Value education and spiritual values if imparted the safety in school and society is reduced. We therefore conclude our hypothesis is validated. And appeal all to insist for awareness and monitoring of SS 10000, and spiritual values till such technology and device is developed.

IX. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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