

Module 3: Special Juvenile Police Unit

Session 1: Structure and Functions of SJPU

Duration: 6:30 min

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Introduction

Welcome to the third module of the **Child Protection E-Learning Module**. This module will introduce you to the concept of Special Juvenile Police Unit (SJPU), mandated under the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act 2015 that offers guidelines for the police to act in child-related matters.

This section describes the definition and meaning of SJPU, its key functions, the officers and staff involved in it and the actors/stakeholders associated with SJPU and the expected issues and challenges it has to manage.

You will know about the child-friendly procedures and the non-negotiable rights of children that must be upheld while interacting with them. You will know these and the key provisions outlined in the JJ Act 2015, JJ Model Rules 2016 and the POCSO Act 2012 and how to implement them in the day-to-day functioning of the SJPU.

Objective

Before initiating the module let us understand its objectives. For convenience the module has been divided into four sections namely. At the end of the session you will be able to describe

- Structure and Functions of SJPU
- Role of Police in dealing with CNCP
- Procedure in Relation to CCL
- Specific roles and responsibilities of SJPU officials and staff

The objective is to ensure you have attained a good understanding of these topics and are able to apply them in your working.

Session 1: Structure and Functions of SJPU

We will now discuss the Session 1 of the module titled structure and functions of SJPU. The objective of this session is to apprise you about the guidelines for setting an SJPU, its key functions and the functionaries/ team members associated with it.

Before proceeding let us first understand what SJPU is according to the JJ Act 2015.

“Special juvenile police unit” means a unit of the police force of a district or city or, as the case may be, any other police unit like railway police, dealing with children and designated as such for handling children under section 107.

Now let us try to understand the guidelines and who and how can SJPU be constituted, what is the structure of SJPU, and what are its functions enlisted as per Section 107, JJ Act, 2015; Rule 86, JJ Model Rules, 2016.

- According to the JJ Act every police station shall have at least one officer, not below the rank of Assistant Sub-Inspector, designated as the Child Welfare Police Officer (CWPO) to exclusively deal with children either as victims or perpetrators.
- The State Government shall constitute SJPU in each district and city, headed by a police officer not below the rank of a Deputy Superintendent of Police or above.
- It shall consist of all CWPOs, two Social Workers having experience of working in the field of child welfare, of whom one will be a woman.
- SJPU will also be constituted for the Railway Protection Force (RPF) or Government Railway Police (GRP) at every railway station as per requirement. Where a SJPU cannot be set up, at least one RPF or GRP Officer will be designated as the CWPO.

Recap - We can see that a CWPO is the most important person behind the functioning of SJPU also because he/she is the first person in the JJ system with whom a child comes in contact. Each SJPU is provided two social workers of which at least one is a woman, by the District Child Protection Unit (DCPU) as a statutory requirement under ICPS.

Step 3: Now that we know what an SJPU is, let us try to understand what its functions are (as per Section 10, JJ Act, 2015; Rule 86, JJ Model Rules, 2016)?

The functions include

- To coordinate all functions of police related to children.
- In case of CNCP, SJPU will coordinate with the Social Workers and produce before the Child Welfare Committee (CWC).
- As soon as a CCL is apprehended the CWPO/SJPU shall produce the child before the Juvenile Justice Board (JJB) within 24 hours and inform the parents.
- The SJPU will work in close coordination with the DCPU, the JJB and the CWC in matters concerning the welfare of children within its jurisdiction.
- The SJPU may coordinate with the District Legal Services Authority to provide legal aid to children.
- The SJPU will also coordinate with specialised service providers like doctors, paramedics, special educators, counsellors and Childline for immediate support to children