

- Digital helpdesks at public places to work faster if child has an Aadhar ID



New Delhi: Next time you're in a railway station or bus stand to report a missing child, look for a child tracking kiosk. Similar to the weighing machines of the past, these kiosks are capable of immediately helping in identifying a lost child. If the child has an Aadhar ID, it would be easier to help locate his or her home. These digital kiosks are a brainchild of the Childline India Foundation (CIF), which is supported by the Union Ministry of Women and Child Development under the Integrated Child Protection Scheme.

Explaining their working and conceptualization, an official from Childline said, "We plan to have these digital devices placed at railway stations, hospitals, police stations, shelter homes and other public places. It will provide a mechanism for a child in distress to reach out to us immediately. We didn't want this device to look too intimidating so there are no buttons or handles to operate it. In fact it has a complete touchscreen functioning and is very child-friendly."

The biometrics of the child too can be captured by this machine, which in turn can ascertain the child's identity with their Aadhar Number. The kiosk will also have the facility for live video-conferencing with the child.

These digital helpdesks will be installed in most prominent public spaces. It will have unique features which include presence sensors to automatically detect a person at a booth. Vernacular voice prompts to engage the child and make them feel at ease. "It has taken us two years to develop this technology. The device immediately will sense the presence of a child and start speaking to them, in the local language where it has been placed. If the child responds by for example by saying "hello", immediately the device will connect to the Childline contact center," said the official.

The children who can be rescued by these kiosk's include – street children, child victims of

abuse, children forced into labour, trafficked children, children who are substance dependent, missing children, children in need of medical help, mentally ill children, children forced into child marriage and others. Since its inception a total of 36 million calls have been attended to by Childline. It receives over 9 million calls a year, with over 2.5 lakh cases