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The National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) is carrying out a survey on safe and secure schools in the country, with the data being collected directly from students. The exercise will be conducted in 80,000 private and public schools, which comprise 5 per cent of the total number of schools in the country.

The study has already commenced in Gujarat. A questionnaire comprising of 72 questions has been prepared on different parameters including safety against abuse, social and emotional safety, quality of mid-day meals, school transport, toilets, drinking water facilities, infrastructure like playground, classrooms, fire extinguishers among others.

Students will be required to fill the questionnaires themselves. “We are undertaking this study as the Sustainable Development Goal 4 requires us to ensure inclusive and quality education for all.

Often, we see that girls drop out from schools because of lack of toilets or a safe environment. This survey will help us in addressing some of those concerns,” Priyank Kanoongo, Member, RTE and Education, NCPCR said.

Teachers-in-training at various colleges and universities will be monitoring this exercise as part of their project work and ensure that authentic data is collected through students’ participation. They will be awarded a certificate by NCPCR for their contribution, she said.

Section 13 of Commissions for Protection of Child Rights, 2005 endows powers on NCPCR to review safeguards under any law for protection of child rights. The Right to Education Act, 2009 also requires the children’s rights body to review safeguards under the Act and inquire into complaints relating to a child’s right to free and compulsory education.