



## Desh Ke Mentor Programme: Delhi Government

**For Prelims:** NCPCR, POCSO Act, Schemes Related to Education.

**For Mains:** Significance of Desh Ke Mentor Programme and Issues related to Child's Safety.

### Why in News

Recently, the **National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR)** suggested that the **Delhi government suspend its flagship 'Desh ke Mentor' Programme** till "the time when all the loopholes pertaining to the safety of the children are overhauled.

### National Commission for Protection of Child Rights

- NCPCR is a **statutory body set up in March 2007 under the Commissions for Protection of Child Rights (CPCR) Act, 2005.**
- It is **under the administrative control of the Ministry of Women & Child Development.**
- The Commission's mandate is to ensure that all laws, policies, programmes, and administrative mechanisms are in consonance with the child rights perspective as enshrined in the Constitution of India and also the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.
- It inquires into complaints relating to a child's right to free and compulsory education under the **Right to Education Act, 2009.**
- It monitors the implementation of [Protection of Children from Sexual Offences \(POCSO\) Act, 2012.](#)

### Key Points

- **About:**
  - It was **launched in October 2021, aiming at connecting students in classes IX to XII with voluntary mentors.**
  - People between the ages of **18 and 35 can sign up to be mentors through an app** created by a team at the Delhi Technological University and will be connected with students based on mutual interests.
  - The **mentorship entails regular phone calls for a minimum of two months**, which can optionally be carried on for another four months.
  - The idea is for the **young mentors to guide students through higher education and career options**, preparation for higher education entrance exams, and dealing with the pressure of it all.
  - So far, 44,000 people have signed up as mentors and have been working with 1.76 lakh children.
- **Concerns Raised by NCPCR:**
  - Assigning children to a mentor of the same gender as them **does not necessarily assure**

**their safety from abuse.**

- **Lack of police verification** of the mentors.
- A **psychometric Test is not a full proof assessment of a person** in terms of potential threat to any child.
- Limiting interactions to phone calls also **does not ensure the safety of children since** “child related crime can be initiated through phone calls as well.”
- The responsibility and accountability of preventing children from such situations lies with the Department. The consent of parents cannot be used as a cushion in case of any untoward incident.

**Source: IE**

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