

## **Victim Compensation**

It was one afternoon of March 2019 when one of our legal associates received a call from her friend regarding her 6 years old cousin Ayesha, who have been molested by her neighbour in Vasai near Mumbai. The mother of the survivor was courageous enough to report the incidence to the police lodge the FIR under POCSO Act.

After receiving the information, team from Vihaan immediately went to visit the family to ensure that the child and family is safe and to extend all required support to the survivor and her family. The team assisted the police to file for interim compensation before DLSA Palghar, which was newly constituted. Later due to issue over the jurisdiction the application was handed over to DLSA at Thane.

After few months the team visited the DLSA to understand the progress of the compensation application but no satisfactory response was given by the authorities, it was then we decided to file a RTI Applications to sought correct information. Having failed to receive any response in August 2021, we visited Thane DLSA with our RTI Applications that was filed. The officials informed that they have compensation applications only for 2018 onwards and have no information about applications filed before the period. We than requested them to give the receiving of the RTI they refused to accept the RTI on the grounds that we were a third party and do not have the authority to seek such information. We than got Ayesha's parents to file the application to seek the information through the RTI. After 30 days we were informed by the public information officer that only the survivor of the family members can file for the compensation.

After having wasted almost seven months we got Ayesha's parent to file the application to expedite the compensation process in November 2021. On 20th December 2021, the family informed us that they were approached by concerned Police who informed that their application had been allowed and that they needed to open a SBI bank account. We followed up with the parents for account opening and assisted them for the same.

On 16th Feb, 2022, the survivor finally received the compensation of INR 3 lakhs and as per the victim compensation guideline, out of the amount received, INR 75,000 was made available for immediate use and INR 2,25,000 as a Fixed Deposit for 10 years.