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**Lessons:** Safety measures need to be in place.

# A wake-up call

The Gurugram school incident has made institutions realise that they need to step up their security

■ NEHA RUPEJA

The murder of a minor at a school in Gurugram has left school authorities and the parents in a state of helplessness. In order to ensure the safety of students on school premises, the government and private agencies are coming up with multiple guidelines and precautions.

According to the Central Board of Secondary Education's (CBSE) guidelines for student safety, psychometric evaluation of teaching and non-teaching staff is mandatory, as is a security and safety audit of the school premises. Parent-teacher forums to highlight security problems should also be conducted. While the guidelines are appropriately set, the school authorities lack a plan of action that can be followed.

## Technological assistance

CCTV cameras and other tech-

nological equipment are set up in most schools in India. However, according to Mr. Sunil Udupa, Chairman and Managing Director, Securen Systems, "The responsibility of the schools does not end with the installation of cameras. These cameras can only help to catch the culprit. The aim should be to prevent the crime from happening." In addition, blind spots are the major area of concern for school authorities. "The first step is to map the school premises. Accordingly, cameras should be installed at suitable places. The next step should be proper surveillance of the cameras, so that action can be taken upon identifying suspicious activity," he adds.

## Psychometric analysis

CBSE's guideline to put staff through psychometric tests has not been taken seriously. Psychometric tests are a standard and scientific method used to

measure individuals' mental capabilities and behavioural style. They are designed to measure candidates' suitability for a role based on the required personality characteristics. With an aim to spread awareness about these tests, several private ventures are becoming an active participant in the school safety and security scenario. Ketan Kapoor, CEO & Co-founder, Mettl, a company that conducts the psychometric tests, said, "This guideline has been accepted by many schools. But, there are around 10 lakh employees of schools affiliated with CBSE, hence, it is a time-consuming process. The main targets while conducting this test will include drivers, conductors, maids and other helpers."

In the long run, it becomes essential to plan effective security measures to ensure the safety of school children, both inside and outside the campus.