

# Toolkit for Piloting Bal Panchayats

A Model of Child Governance



unicef   
unite for children



Content Developed by:  
District Administration, Guntur, Andhra Pradesh, and the A.P Alliance for Child Rights (APACR)

Compiled by:  
Vijay Burgula

Conceived and published under the joint partnership of the A.P Alliance for Child Rights (APACR), the British Deputy High Commission (BDHC) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), Hyderabad.

December 2013

Book Design by T2 Information & Design LLP  
[www.t2info.com](http://www.t2info.com)

## Table of Content

1. Introduction .....	7
2. Defining Bal Panchayats .....	8
3. Preparing to Roll Out a Bal Panchayats Pilot .....	9
4. Rolling Out Bal Panchayats .....	14
5. Pilot Project of Bal Panchayats in Guntur District .....	18
6. Way Forward for Bal Panchayats Pilot .....	30
7. Some “Do’s and Don’ts” while implementing the Bal Panchayats Pilot .....	31



## Acronyms & Abbreviations

ANM	: Auxiliary Nurse Midwife
APACR	: Andhra Pradesh Alliance for Child Rights
ASHA	: Health Worker
CBOs	: Community Based Organisations
CDPO	: Community Development Officer
CWOs	: Child Welfare Officer
CWC	: Child Welfare Committee
CRPs	: Cluster Resource Persons
DCPU	: District Child Protection Unit
JJB	: Juvenile Justice Board
IEC	: Information, Education and Communication
ICDS	: Integrated Child Development Services
MPDO	: Mandal Parishad Development Officer
MEO	: Mandal Educational Officer
NGOs	: Non-Governmental Organisations
PHC	: Primary Health Centre
RDO	: Revenue Divisional Officer
RSTCs	: Residential Special Training Centres
RTE Act	: Right to Education Act, 2009
SJPU	: Special Juvenile Police Unit
SMC	: School Management Committee
SHG	: Self-Help Group
OSC	: Out of School Children
WD&CW	: Women Development and Child Welfare
UNICEF	: United Nations Children's Fund
UN CRC	: United Nations Convention on the Rights of Child



## 1. Introduction

The concept of children's participation in governance and development processes has evolved over the last decade but it has been unable to generate an impact on the collective mindset of social and political institutions and the individuals who hold responsible positions in them. Most initiatives and interventions have so far been limited to child rights organizations and activists. While these need to be acknowledged, appreciated and accepted by the mainstream society and the state in order to be scaled up, we also need to be aware of the widespread lack of conceptual understanding and the appreciation of the value and practicability of children's participation. It is hoped that this toolkit for piloting Bal Panchayats will contribute to increased awareness and appreciation of children's role in governance and development.

### **Purpose of the Toolkit**

The purpose of this toolkit pursues the same aims and purposes of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989), and as ratified by the Govt of India in 1992. The four core principles of the Convention are non-discrimination, devotion to the best interests of the child, the right to life, survival and development, and respect for the views of the child. These principles have been enshrined in a basket of survival, development, protection and participation rights.

### **Aims of the Toolkit**

- To present a roadmap for initiating and sustaining the Bal Panchayats process as a model of child governance.
- To increase awareness among local administrative structures and officials, law enforcement agencies, non-governmental organisations about the need to respect, listen to, and include children's voices in development and governance processes.
- To suggest ways in which Bal Panchayats as children's institutions can be linked to administrative structures with formal established processes.
- To suggest ways in which non-governmental organisations and administrative structures can work in partnership to coordinate the formal established processes.

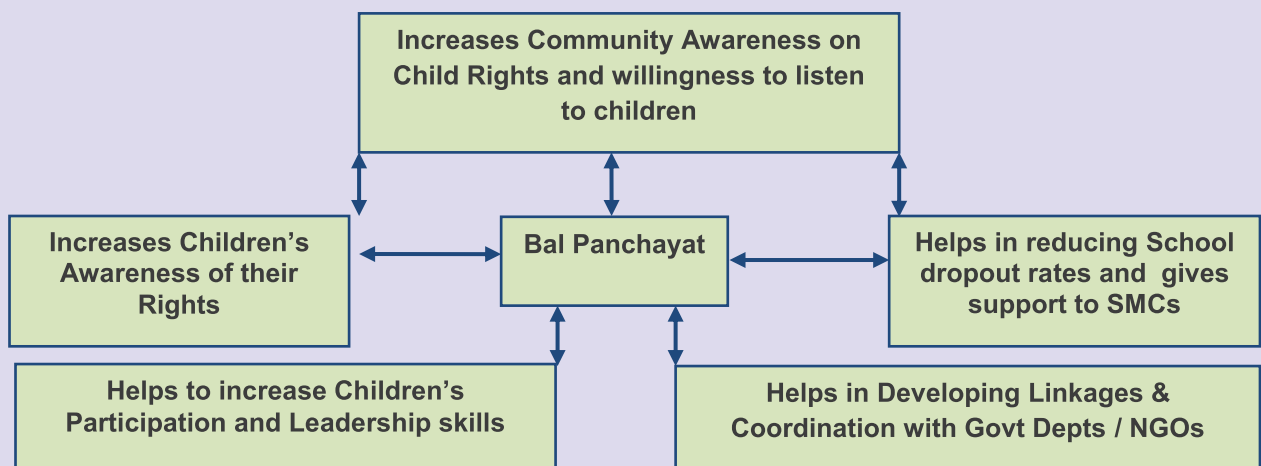
## 2. Defining Bal Panchayats

“Bal Panchayat” is based on the concept of providing children a suitable democratic platform to directly engage with adult duty bearers in order to elicit their attention and action on issues that concern them. This is a two-way process which allows children to directly interact with duty bearers on their issues, and the duty bearers a chance to better understand the needs/rights of children to deliver better results for them, in the true spirit of a democracy.

Bal Panchayats are composed of children from the community and, given proper encouragement and space, can be effective agents of development and change in their community. As a vehicle of Child Governance, Bal Panchayats help build leadership skills among children and encourages them to deal with social issues at home, school and community.

### Purpose/Objectives of Bal Panchayat

- A democratic platform for expression of the voices of children in the true spirit of Child Governance, i.e., participation of children in the decision-making process on issues affecting them and resulting in a better outcome for children and families, and an improved policy process.
- Listening to children develops self belief, confidence and leadership skills in them and empowers them to speak out and challenge their situations thereby making them active citizens of tomorrow.
- Leads to children's involvement, collective participation and gaining experience in a democratic decision making process. It results in an improvement of their understanding of the rights and duties, concepts of freedom, teamwork and the consequences of their actions on each other.
- Contributes to reduction of school drop-out rate, support to School Management Committees as prescribed under RTE Act, identifying child labour, drop-outs and mapping the issues related to child protection in the neighbourhood.





### 3. Preparing to Roll Out a Bal Panchayats Pilot

The Preparatory Phase in rolling out a Bal Panchayats Pilot may be viewed as a 3 Step Process consisting of:

- 1) Mapping the Pilot Project Area,
- 2) Organising District-level consultations with all stakeholders, and,
- 3) Developing a Common Plan of Action to initiate Bal Panchayats.

#### **Step 1: Mapping the Pilot Project Area**

·The purpose of mapping the Pilot Project geography is to generate a comprehensive picture of the area which will aid in designing an efficient process flow for the roll out and functioning of Bal Panchayats.

·The mapping should give a clear picture of the following aspects:

- i) Population and socio-economic situation of the pilot area,
- ii) Number of children - Out of school children, child workers, children in school (both government and private schools), children from minorities, differently abled children, and orphans.

·In rural areas, habitations and panchayats, and in urban areas, municipal wards and circles need to be mapped including CBOs/NGOs that may be working in that geography so that they can be involved in the process as supporting stakeholders.

#### **Step 2: Organising District-level Consultations**

The purpose of the District-level Consultations is to listen to the issues affecting children from the children themselves and to respond to those issues with a Common Plan of Action with clearly identified roles and responsibilities. The following are the main stakeholders who need to participate in the District-level consultations.

1. Children
2. District Administration
3. Line Departments
4. Law enforcement agencies
5. CBOs/NGOs
6. Other major stakeholders such as funding agencies etc.

**1. Children** need to be adequately represented and should be representative of the cross-section of the communities within the geographical limits of the project area. The Consultation organisers must ensure that there is adequate representation of girl children, differently abled children, children from minority and socio-economically backward sections.

**2. District Administration** at the apex level might consist of the Collector/Joint Collector/Deputy Collector/CEO among others, depending on the state's administrative set up. Initiatives have to be launched by them to create an enabling environment and develop an attitude in functionaries to take up issues of concern to children by holding regular review meetings exclusively on issues that affect them, and as expressed by Bal Panchayats. The whole concept needs a lot of support from the line departments; hence there should be a lot of motivation that has to be created among the departments.

During the Consultations, the District Administration should very clearly send the message to all the line departments that the Bal Panchayats Pilot will:

- NOT increase their work load,
- NOT supervise the work of one department by another,
- NOT take up others' job responsibilities,
- NOT complain about their work.

**3. Line Departments** are numerous in all District Administrations and not all of them are directly linked with the provision of services to children and communities. The major Line Departments that deal with children include:

- i) Women & Child Welfare - ICDS
- ii) Dept of Education
- iii) District Medical & Health Dept
- iv) Dept of Labour
- v) Police
- vi) Statutory bodies such as the CWC and the JJB
- vii) Dept of Panchayati Raj

Line Department officials are encouraged to interact with Bal Panchayats during their visit to different places so as to:

- (a) Inculcate the habit of listening to children;
  - (b) Take note of issues that are raised in different Bal Panchayats and establish a procedure of carrying the information from Bal Panchayats to the District Collector's office;
- © Act on the inputs received wherever possible and share the action taken with the respective children to instil confidence in the child governance system.

**4. Law enforcement agencies** under the Juvenile Justice Act have to appoint a Child Welfare Officer in each Police Station who will be tasked with the responsibility of interacting with children in Bal Panchayats and listening to their concerns. They will act on the inputs and share the action taken and its results with the Bal Panchayats. They will also be responsible for carrying out IEC campaigns on various penal provisions relating to the abuse and exploitation of children. Similarly, the CWC and the JJB will be tasked with the responsibility of interacting with children in Bal Panchayats and sharing the various issues that come up before them and how they address them. This will also provide an opportunity to members of the CWC, the JJB and counsellors to acquaint themselves with the issues that Bal Panchayat children may be concerned about.

**5. CBOs/NGOs** need to be involved as one of the principal stakeholders in the project and discussions conducted with them for support to the pilot. In the case of multiple CBOs/NGOs, a lead partner can be chosen by consensus amongst them.

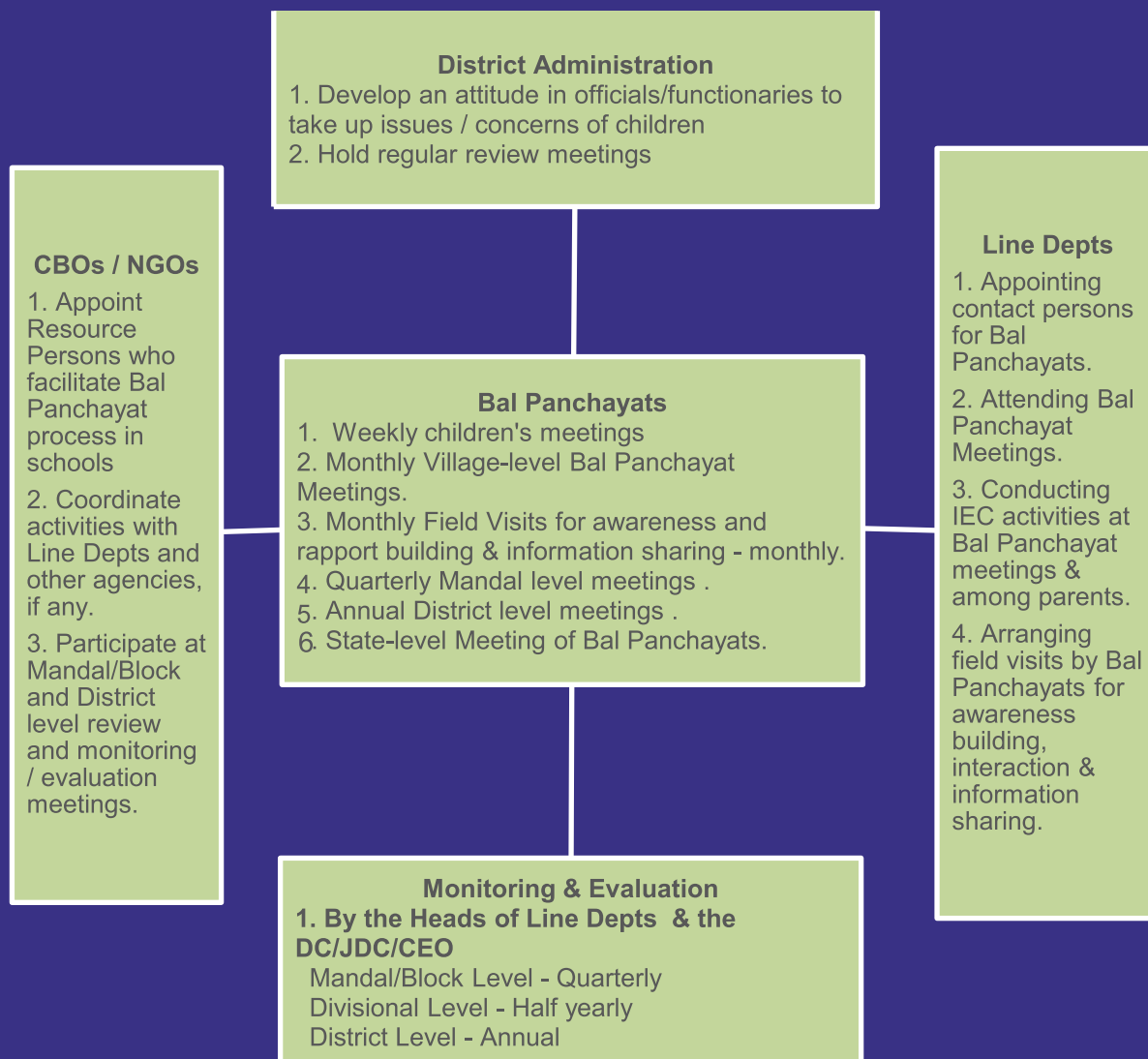
If the local CBO/NGOs are not available, the district administration needs to assign their functions to any one of the Line Departments as the principal stakeholder.

CBOs/NGOs will coordinate the field level activities with the contact persons of the respective Line Departments and monitor the regular monthly meetings and functioning of Bal Panchayats.

### **Step 3: Developing a Common Plan of Action to Initiate Bal Panchayats**

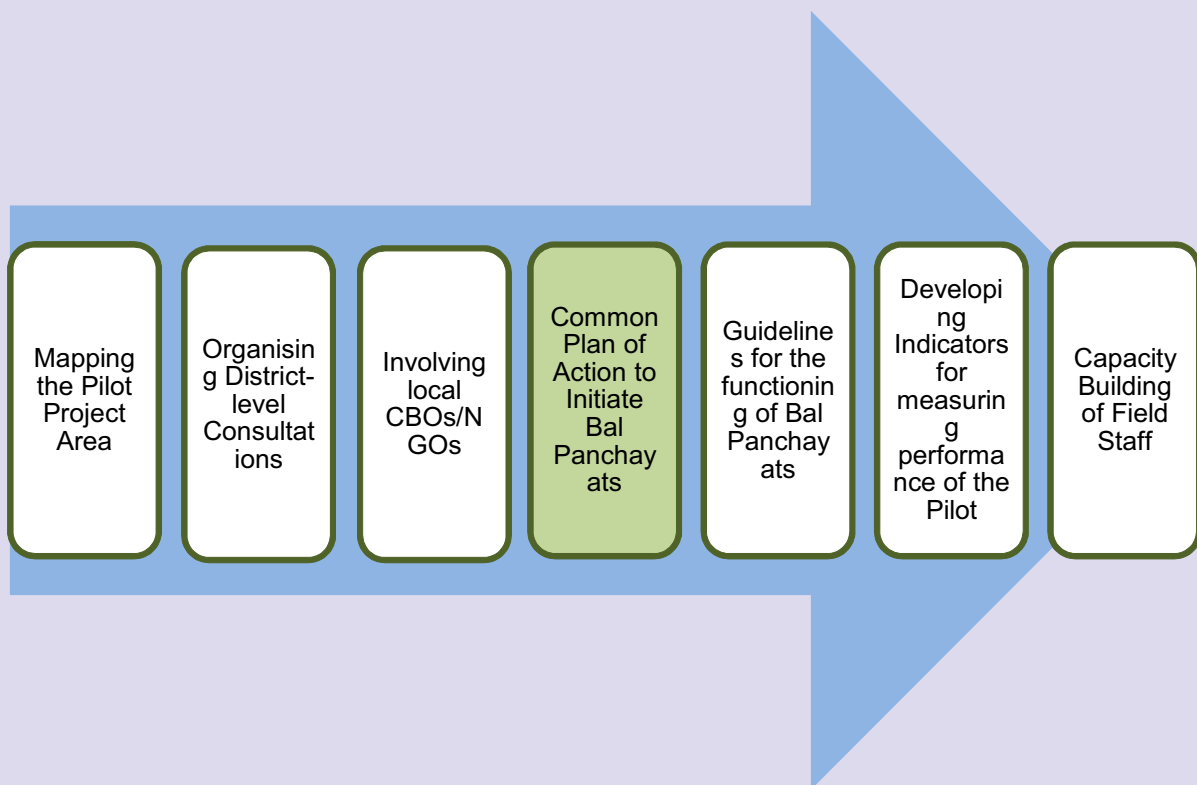
1. A Common Plan of Action is designed to test the convergence of child-related services delivery.
2. The Plan of Action requires the allocation of dedicated personnel by each of the concerned Line Departments who will be responsible for interaction with the Bal Panchayats and community members.
3. They will also be responsible for the coordination of field level activities with NGO staff or the designated Line Department staff and school teachers.
4. The District Administration and Line Departments will develop Performance Indicators that will measure and monitor the impact of their functioning.
5. Guidelines for the functioning of Bal Panchayats have to be developed and approved by the District Administration.
6. Capacity Building of Field Staff working with Bal Panchayats: The participants in these training workshops will be School teachers, NGOs staff, CWOs, ASHA workers, ANMs, Community Organisers from the Education and Labour Departments and the Panchayat Secretaries.
7. The Bal Panchayats can be rolled out at the end of this Preparatory Phase.

## Roles of Different Stakeholders in the Bal Panchayat Pilot Process



**Monitoring and Evaluation** of the Bal Panchayats' functioning and their impact can be undertaken by the Heads of the Line Departments and designated officials from the District Administration. A review process from the village level to the block/mandal and the district level must be drawn up with designated officials from the concerned Line Departments responsible for conducting the review process.

## Summary: Preparatory Phase of Roll Out Process



## 4. Rolling Out Bal Panchayats

### Notifying Field Level Personnel of Activities with Bal Panchayats

All the concerned Line Departments must issue notifications to their field level personnel of their roles and responsibilities with regard to the Bal Panchayats. The reporting formats for the field personnel must be based on the indicators of performance and these can be developed in the capacity building workshop that will be conducted for them. For a sample of Performance Indicators and Anticipated Outcomes, please refer to Chapter 6 which details the roles/responsibilities of various Line Departments in the Guntur Bal Panchayat Pilot.

### Capacity building of Field Level Personnel

The capacity building of Field Level personnel from the stakeholder Line Departments is mandatory for the success of the Pilot. Field level personnel who will be in contact with the Bal Panchayats must familiarize themselves with the following aspects:

- Child Rights,
- Guidelines for the functioning of Bal Panchayats,
- Roles and responsibilities of their respective departments or institutions in the case of NGO staff.

This is particularly vital for the Nodal Teachers in the selected schools, along with CBO/NGO staff if any, or the Field Level Personnel of those Line Departments that may be the designated Principal Stakeholders. These will be the personnel who will be guiding the Bal Panchayats process on a weekly basis and interface with the other duty bearers and stakeholders.

### Functioning of Bal Panchayats

The functioning of Bal Panchayats has to be structured by the District Administration by involving as stakeholders, those Departments that deal with children's issues. The major Departments are typically:

- The Departments of Child Welfare which deal with the ICDS and Anganwadis,
- Dept of Education as one of the major stakeholders,
- Dept of Labour which deals with child labour,
- Panchayati Raj Dept to ground the Bal Panchayats as part of a Panchayati Raj child governance system,
- Dept of Medical & Health which deals with issues of social hygiene, immunisation and health care, and, the Police Department which deals with law and order and in stopping social harm practices against children such as trafficking and early marriages.

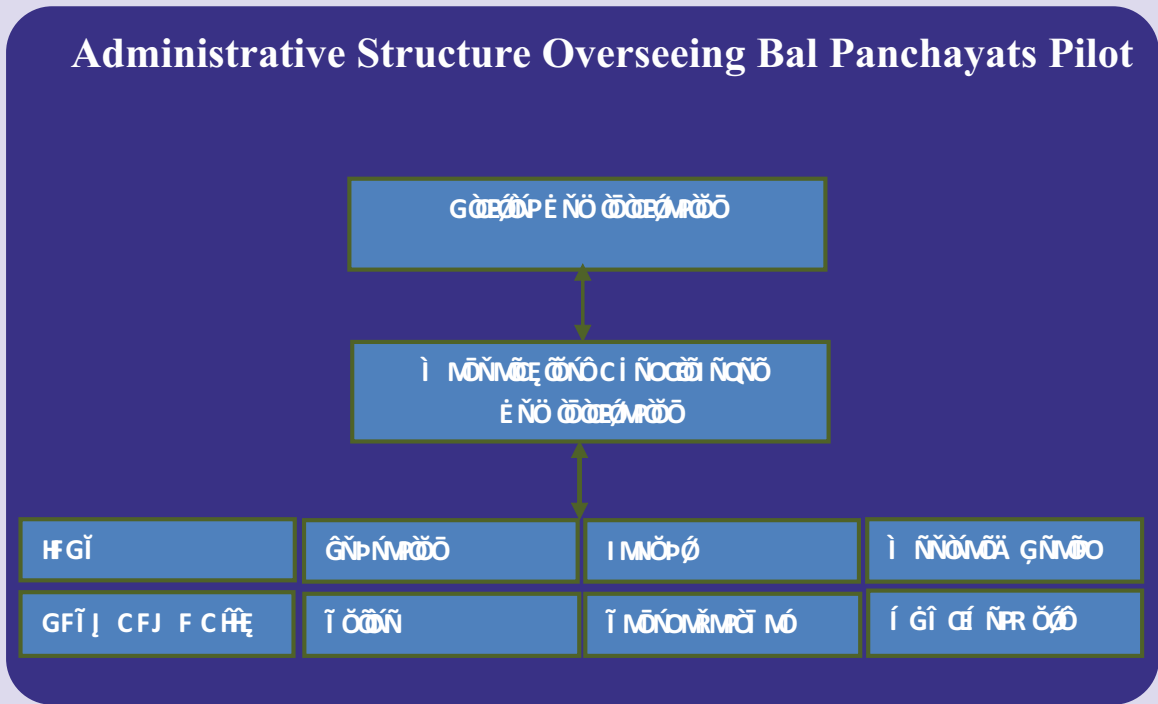
**Facilitation**

The Dept of Education must notify the Principals of the schools in the project area to allocate space and resource persons from the teaching staff to facilitate the functioning of Bal Panchayats. The Bal Panchayats can be facilitated by school teachers and NGO staff that have been allocated the responsibility by their respective institutions. A schedule of activities for the Bal Panchayats can be drawn up by the responsible school teachers and NGO staff and they in turn, can coordinate the activities and visits of the Line Departments and help in community mobilisation for IEC campaigns and other services through the Bal Panchayat activities.

**Which children are the Bal Panchayat members?**

Ideally all children in the village, 8-18 years of age, whether studying in Government or Private School, or out-of-school, can be members of the Bal Panchayats. Bal Panchayats must proactively ensure representation of:

- Differently abled children,
- Girls,
- Children from Minorities,
- Child workers,
- Orphans



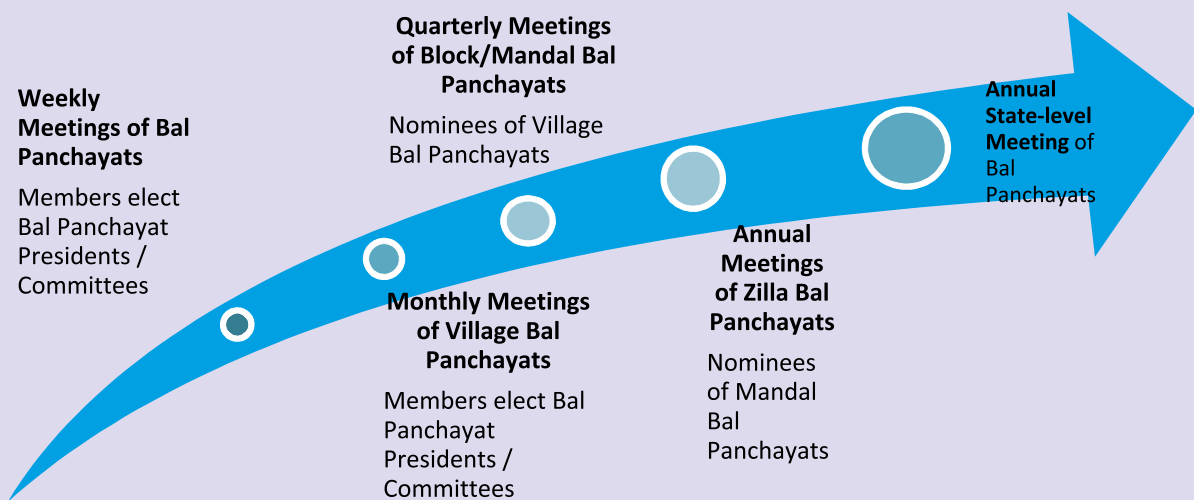
### Number of Children in Bal Panchayats

Membership in a Bal Panchayat must not exceed the capacities of the facilitator(s) to manage and guide a group of children on a variety of issues. Depending on the available resources, there can be more than one Bal Panchayat in each school.

### Frequency of Bal Panchayat Meetings

Depending on the availability of time and resources, the frequency of Bal Panchayat meetings can be once a week, while Village-level meetings with the Panchayats can be organised on a monthly basis. A Quarterly Block-level meeting of Bal Panchayats can be organised for sharing of experiences by the nominees of the Village level Bal Panchayats. Three Quarterly Block-level Bal Panchayat meetings can be followed up with an Annual District-level Bal Panchayats meeting which can generate a reflection and evaluation of the functioning of Bal Panchayats over a year in the District and the feasibility and potential for scaling up the pilot. Finally, a State-level Bal Panchayats Convention may be organised at the State Assembly where members of Bal Panchayats from the pilot district can participate to express their collective voice as children of the state; this will also give an opportunity to scale up to the other districts of the state.

## Frequency of Bal Panchayat Meetings





## Bal Panchayat Activities

- A variety of children's issues dealing with infancy, childhood and adolescence can be discussed from a rights-based perspective in the Bal Panchayat meetings. These are issues that affect the children, positively or negatively, at their home, in their school and within their larger community.
- Interactions with the concerned Line Department officials in the Bal Panchayat meetings on a periodic basis will help the members to gain awareness about the services provided by those departments and to establish familiarity with the officials of the Departments.
- Field visits to Line Departments will help the Bal Panchayat members to learn the procedures followed by the departments and how they can approach them for assistance.
- IEC campaigns and service provisions such as medical and health check up camps and delivery of medicines by the Line Departments can be coordinated by the NGO staff and school teachers.
- Bal Panchayat members can play a proactive role in improving standards of quality education, identifying out-of-school children, identifying the prevalence of social harm causing practices such as early marriages, child labour, violence and abuse of children and trafficking.

## 5. Pilot Project of Bal Panchayats in Guntur District

### Pilot Projects - Purpose and Management

Pilot Projects are small-scale preliminary projects prior to scaling them up in order to evaluate their sustainability, efficiency in terms of time and cost, and the impact of the project.

#### 'Learning to walk before you run'

- The Purpose of Pilot Projects is to merge the planning and implementation stages of project development.
- They serve as a means to 'educate' the project managers and build support for the project.
- They verify estimated costs and benefits.
- They allow for the evaluation of the project design and the processes followed and the available alternatives.

### Management of a Pilot Project

- Objectives must be clearly defined.
- Keep the pilot project on track through regular reviews and monitoring.
- Ensure that the Project Design goals are met.
  - An effective pilot project will have substantial cost.
  - Pilot project must justify this cost as well as the scaling up in future.
  - Geographic scope must be big enough and complex enough to test the robustness of the pilot project.
  - Pilot project must be designed keeping in mind the experience of the duty bearers who will run it.

### Results of the Pilot Project

- Experience in the implementation of Bal Panchayats.
- Established coordination procedures and departmental processes.
- Enhanced implementation plan with District/State-level support.
- Approval of District/State-level authorities to proceed with scaling up the project.

### **The Guntur Pilot Project**

From a district perspective, Bal Panchayats are formed at each panchayat-level, block-level and district-level with the purpose of integrating them with the Panchayati Raj Institutions. The Panchayat level children's collective will meet regularly to discuss and collate their issues before presenting the same before the village Panchayats and other duty bearers/officials. Child representatives, chosen by children themselves, are nominated as members of the Block/Mandal level children's collective, to highlight the issues of the entire block/mandal; and this process is repeated for choosing the District level children's collective, which would present the issues concerning children from across the district before the Zila (district) Panchayat and district administration. The expected culmination would be an Annual Children's Assembly organised during the State Assembly session, to enable a democratic interaction between the children and the state's policy makers, to seek accountability and action on the rights of children. The periodicity of the Bal Panchayat meetings (with adult duty bearers) would be:

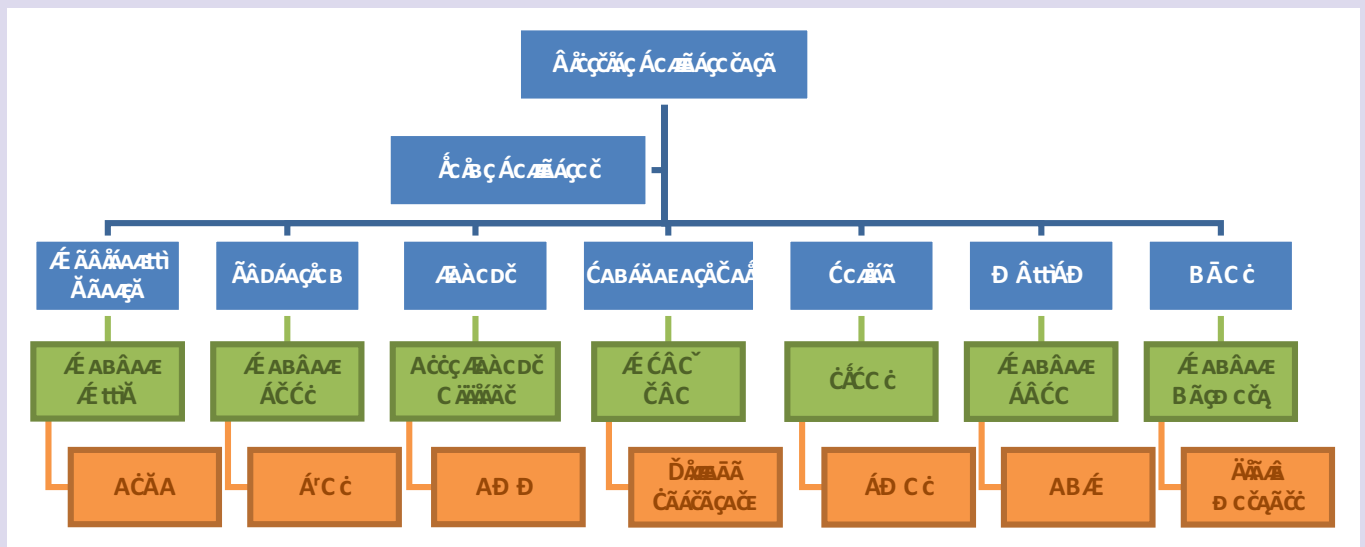
- § Village Level: Once every month
- § Block/Mandal/Tehsil Level: Quarterly
- § District Level: Annual
- § State Level: Annual

### **Role of the District Administration**

- Create an enabling environment and develop an attitude in officials/functionaries to take up issues/concerns of children by holding regular review meetings exclusively on issues that affect children, as expressed by Bal Panchayats. This can be part of the monthly meeting agenda, chaired by the District Collector, or, any official designated by the District Collector.
- District Collector to give official notification to all Line Dept's on their respective roles and responsibilities for piloting the Bal Panchayats process in Tenali, Guntur.
- District officers to be encouraged to interact with Bal Panchayats during their visit to different places so as to (a) inculcate a habit of listening to children; (b) take note of issues raised in different Bal Panchayats and institutionalize a process of carrying the information from Bal Panchayats to the District Collector's office; (c) act on the inputs received wherever possible and share the action taken with the respective children to instill confidence in the child governance system.
- Like the officials attend the Grievance Cells at mandal and district level, every district level officer could make it a point to attend at least one quarterly Mandal-level Bal Panchayats meeting, so as to take note of what the children are saying.
- Document the success and challenges of the Bal Panchayats pilot in Tenali, including successful interactions between children and adult duty-bearers and actions taken on behalf of children – to be shared at state level annually.

The Bal Panchayats Pilot Project in Guntur was launched with the support of the Speaker of the Andhra Pradesh Assembly who represents the legislative constituency of Tenali.

- The roles and responsibilities of Line Departments and the concerned staff were identified at a District-level Consultation.
- Review of the functioning of Bal Panchayats is part of the monthly meeting agenda, chaired by the District Collector or the Joint Collector.
- The Performance and Outcomes Indicators were developed by the District Administration and the Line Departments in consultation with UNICEF-APACR.
- The District Collector issued official notification to all Line Departments on their respective roles and responsibilities for piloting the Bal Panchayat process in Tenali, Guntur.

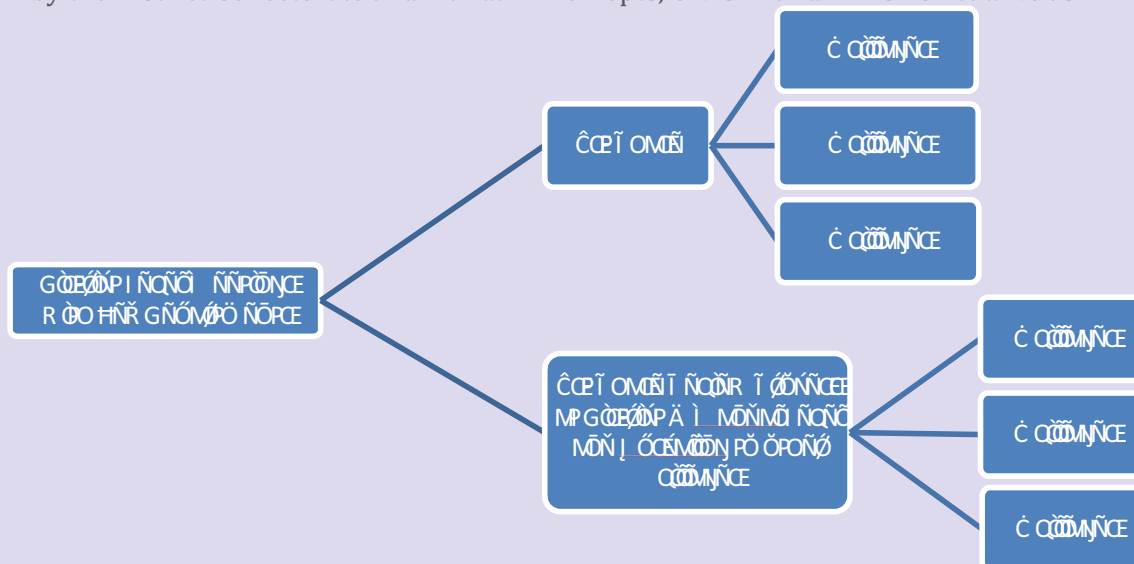


### Two-phase roll out of Bal Panchayats Pilot

A District Level Meeting was held by the District Collector, and the Additional Joint Collector (AJC) was nominated as the Special Officer / District Level Point Person for the Bal Panchayat Pilot. The other officers who participated in this meeting were:

- the District Educational Officer (DEO);
- the Project Director, District Women and Child Development Agency (DWCD);
- the officer representing Rajiv Vidya Mission (RVM) / SSA;
- the Mandal Educational Officers (MEOs) of Tenali Rural Mandal and Kollipara Mandal;
- the Child Development Project Officers (CDPOs) of Tenali and Eemani,
- the Bal Panchayat Mentor (BPM) from SEEDS, the Nodal NGO and its Chief Functionary.

The process of selection of the Pilot villages, nomination of Nodal Teachers, and launching the Pilot in a selected village was completed at this meeting. The proposed 18 Villages have been taken up on a pilot basis. In the first phase 9 villages will have established Bal Panchayats in their schools. A mid-term review of the programme will lead to expansion of the Bal Panchayats to the remaining 9 villages in the second phase. The Pilot will be jointly monitored by the District Collectorate and Mandal Line Depts, UNICEF and APACR's Lead NGOs.



List of Villages Selected for the Bal Panchayats Pilot in Guntur					
S.No	Mandal	Village		Mandal	Village
1.	Tenali	KOLAKALURU	11.	Kollipara	HANUMANPALEM
2.	Tenali	NANDIVELUGU	12.	Kollipara	KOLLIPARA
3.	Tenali	KATTEVARAM	13.	Kollipara	TUMULURU
4.	Tenali	SANGAM JAGARLAMUDI	14.	Kollipara	ATHOTA
5.	Tenali	ANGALAKUDURU	15.	Kollipara	MUNNANGI
6.	Tenali	BURRI PALEM	16.	Kollipara	VALLABHAPURAM
7.	Tenali	PEDARAVURU	17.	Kollipara	A. V. LANKA
8.	Tenali	KHAZIPET (T)	18.	Kollipara	CHAKRAYAPALEM
9.	Tenali	GUDIVADA			
10.	Tenali	KOTHAPETA			

### Roles & Responsibilities of Stakeholders

#### 1) Panchayat Raj Department:

1. Facilitate periodic interaction of elected representatives from Ward Members to the ZP Chairperson with the children:
  - a. Village Level: Once every month
  - b. Mandal Level: Quarterly
  - c. District/ZP Level: Bi-annual
  - d. State Level/AP Assembly: Annual
2. Sharing of information on different schemes and programmes in a child-friendly manner during the above interaction, to enable children gain understanding of development processes.
3. Listen to Bal Panchayats' issues/concerns and institutionalize sharing of this information in platforms like Palli Sabha , Gram Sabha , ZP meetings etc (with or without the physical presence of children) to find resolution/recommendations to improve the situation.

<b>I. Dept of Panchayati Raj</b>			
<b>S.No</b>	<b>Services / Responsibilities</b>	<b>Indicators</b>	<b>Outcomes</b>
1	Integrating Bal Panchayats into the Panchayati Raj system	No. of ZP meetings attended by Bal Panchayats	Children's issues/concerns are heard regularly in ZP meetings
2	All Primary Schools in all villages of the constituency must have Bal Panchayats established.	No of Primary Schools in the pilot villages No of Bal Panchayats in the pilot villages	Increased awareness about Bal Panchayats among school staff, SMC members and community.
3	Child Rights Protection Committees at the village level	Members must consist of: I. Chairperson, Bal Panchayat(s) II. Anganwadi worker III. ANM IV. Sakshara Bharat Coordinator V. Headmaster of the Govt Primary School VI. Secretary of the Panchayat VII. Chairperson, School Management Committee VIII. IKP Village Organisers IX. SHG Presidents	Increased involvement of duty bearers in children's issues.
4	Awareness campaigns must be taken up at the village level on protection of child rights	No of IEC activities	Increased community awareness.
5	Counselling services can be arranged for children or parents on domestic/personal issues or problems that are raised by the Bal Panchayats.	1.No of counselling services offered 2.No of parents/children accessing these services	Increased awareness about impact of domestic violence on children.
6	An officially designated process has to be established in order to deal with the issues and concerns raised by Bal Panchayats.	Process flow chart to deal with issues and concerns raised by bal Panchayats	Greater coordination between Bal Panchayats and Education Dept.

## 2) Dept. of Health

- Institutionalize visit of PHC doctors to visit schools on periodic basis, to meet children and sensitize them on different issuers concerned to the personal health, hygiene and sanitation as well as community health.
- Involve Bal Panchayats in the health campaigns and immunization drives in the village where they could be the communicators and facilitators.
- Participate in the quarterly Bal Panchayats Mandal-level meeting, for active interaction and two-way dialogue with children.

II. Dept of Medical & Health			
S.No	Services / Responsibilities	Indicators	Outcomes
1	Preventive Services For Children below 10 years, the SWASTH Programme can be publicized among Bal Panchayats For Children between 10 to 18 years, "YUVA" Clinics can be publicized Universal IEC activities like 'kala jathas' and medical awareness and health check up camps can be organised.	No of meetings with Bal Panchayats No. of visits of Bal Panchayats to CHCs/PHCs/Hospitals/YUVA clinics No. of patients coming in for treatment / referral / advice No. of IEC activities No. of visits by PHC doctors to schools	1. Increased visits of children and their families to CHCs / PHCs etc. 2. Increased hygiene and sanitation practices. 3. Institutionalize visit of PHC doctors to visit schools on periodic basis.
2	Curative Services Distribution of MDA, IFA and Albendazole tablets can be taken up through the Bal Panchayats. Referral services to hospitals and specialty institutions can be taken up through the Bal Panchayats.	No. of medical camps No. of health check up camps No. of tablets of MDA, IFA & Albendazole distributed in no. of Bal Panchayat schools. No. of referrals from Bal Panchayats	Increased attendance in medical camps Increased referrals to hospitals from Bal Panchayats
3	Social Health Services Involvement of one child from high-risk disease affected families in Bal Panchayats can be considered to address and mainstream social stigma issues. Formation and strengthening of "Arogya" Clubs in schools with "Chinnari doctors". Publicizing 104 and 108 services through Bal Panchayats.	No of children from high-risk disease affected families in Bal Panchayats No of Arogya clubs formed and frequency of meetings and field visits No of IEC activities for publicizing 104 and 108 services	Decrease in discrimination / increased participation of children from high-risk disease affected families. Increase in uptake of 104 services.
4	Contact with Bal Panchayats: Concerned ANM and ASHA workers.	No. of visits by ANM and ASHA workers to Bal Panchayats No. of field visits with Bal Panchayats by ANM and ASHA workers	Increased familiarity of children with Field Staff of Line Depts.

### 3) Women Development & Child Welfare Dept.:

- Service providers from CDPO to Anganwadi workers facilitate access of Bal Panchayats to the service providing institutions like Anganwadi centres without hesitation and restriction. Rather, they should be the generators of information/resource base for children on the respective issues like education, health, nutrition, sanitation, etc., that they deal with, and freely share information about the functioning of CWC , JJB and other institutions set up for looking after the welfare of children.
- Participate in the quarterly Bal Panchayats Mandal-level meeting, for active interaction and two-way dialogue with children.
- The Supervisors/CDPOs of the pilot villages in Tenali should be open to listen to children and take their opinion in right spirit even while sharing all the reasons and factors responsible for the facilitation or denial of service that might be affecting the children.
- They would document the success stories to be shared by them at the monthly meeting with the District Collector.

III. Dept of Women's Development & Child Welfare (WD&CW)			
S.No	Services / Responsibilities	Indicators	Outcomes
<b>Child Welfare Committee (CWC) &amp; Juvenile Justice Board (JJB)</b>			
1	The Village Child Protection Committee must have at least 2 school going children - one boy and girl.	1. No. of VCPCs 2. No. of children in VCPCs	1. Increased awareness that children's voices have to be heard.
2	1. Opinions from the neighbourhood children must be taken for the S.I.R of the CWC/JJB. 2. Opinions from the neighbourhood children must be taken in the identification of the vulnerabilities of juveniles in conflict with law and juveniles in need of care and protection.	1. No. of S.I.Rs with CWC and No. of S.I.Rs with children's opinions 2. No. of cases of JCL & JINCAP with children's opinions	1. Greater self belief and confidence among Bal Panchayat members that their opinions are valued. 2. Increased self confidence in approaching and interacting with officials.
3	1. Make "children's opinion boxes" mandatory in all villages.	No. of villages with "opinion boxes"	Increased ability among children to voice their concerns.
4	1. Spread awareness about the DCPU, CWC and JJB among Bal Panchayats 2. Spread awareness about duties and services of all Depts at the village level as per all child-related acts.	1. No. of IEC activities with Bal Panchayats by DCPU, CWC & JJB 2. No. of IEC activities at the village level on child-related acts and services	Increased ability among Bal Panchayat members to identify service deficiencies.
5	Allot one hour for the redressal of children's grievances on every Monday.	No. of children's grievance hours conducted	Increased attendance of children on grievance redressal days.
6	Conduct elections for Bal Panchayats every year.	No. of Bal Panchayats conducting elections annually	Increased awareness of democratic processes among members.
7	Establish a referral capacity for Bal Panchayats in the case of children in need of care and protection and juveniles in conflict with law to all concerned stakeholders.	1.No. of referrals issued by Bal Panchayats 2.No. of Depts/stakeholders to whom referrals were addressed 3.Type of cases referred by Bal Panchayats	Increased referrals from Bal Panchayats.
<b>Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS)</b>			
1	Parents of pre-school children must be made to interact with Bal Panchayat members on the 3 <sup>rd</sup> Thursday of every month.	I. No. of Bal Panchayats visiting Anganwadis in a village II. No of BP members visiting	Increased awareness of the promise and potential of childhood among young mothers.
2	The 1 <sup>st</sup> of every month must be observed as Nutrition Day in all villages and the Bal Panchayat members must visit the Anganwadis to learn about nutrition and to express their views and suggestions on the state of the food that is being served to them in school and at home. Bal Panchayats can also pass a monthly Resolution on Nutrition.	I. No. of nutrition and health meetings conducted on the 1 <sup>st</sup> of every month II. No. of Bal Panchayats in the village III. No. of Nutrition Resolutions	Increased awareness about health and nutritious diet among families.
3	Monthly discussions can be conducted on a single health or education issue and the schemes and programs that cover them. Resolutions on these issues can be distributed to the concerned Dept officials.	I. No. of Anganwadi - BP meetings on health and education II. No. of IEC material distributed III. No. of resolutions passed	
4	All awareness campaigns conducted by the Anganwadis must contain a section dealing with the health of the girl child, the importance of pre-school and school education, the existing schemes targeted at the girl child, and the dangers of early marriages and child labour.	I. No. of IEC activities by anganwadis II. No. of IEC material on schemes distributed III. No. of IEC material on social issues distributed	Increased awareness in community about harm practices against children.



#### 4) Labour Department:

Participate in the quarterly Bal Panchayats Mandal-level meeting. Share the Acts and steps taken by the department in addressing child labour to build better understanding of children on the issue; receive feedback from children on ground-reality in their villages.

IV. Dept of Labour			
S.No	Services / Responsibilities	Indicators	Outcomes
1	Developing a peer education system of educating OSC and child labour through Bal Panchayats and for motivating the parents of such children to send them to school.	1. No of peer educators 2. No of OSC & child labour identified 3. No of counselling/motivation meetings with parents 4. No. of children in RSTCs	Increase in identifying and enrolling OSC in RSTCs.
2	1. Wide IEC campaign through pamphlets, cinema slides, local TV stations and cable networks on child labour. 2. Penal provisions contained in all child-related acts to be collated and widely publicized.	1. No. of IEC activities	Increased awareness among community members about child labour and penal provisions.
3	1. Quarterly mandal level Bal Panchayat meetings shall be attended by the concerned Asst Labour Officer. 2. Divisional level meetings of Bal Panchayats under the chairmanship of the RDO 3. District level meetings under the chairmanship of Collector/Jt Collector	1. No of Qtrly Mandal Bal Panchayat Meetings 2. No. of divisional level meetings 3. No. of district level meetings	District-level review of OSC and penal provisions applied.
4	<u>Contact Info:</u>	Mandal level officer to be appointed.	

#### 5) Education Dept./SSA-RVM:

- The department at the district level will institutionalize regular meetings of children representing the Bal Panchayats within the school time table (for ALL schools – Govt./aided/non-aided): suggested 2-3 Hours every Saturday. The DEO to issue official communication on the establishment of the process in all schools in the 18 pilot villages. During this time, children will jointly discuss and collate their views on various issues affecting them at home, school and community; which would be the basis of their presentations at village/mandal/district level Panchayat meetings.
- One teacher to be earmarked as Facilitator of Bal Panchayats process in each school.
- MEO to generate guidelines for promoting the teachers, SMC members and others involved in education process to participate in the quarterly Bal Panchayats Mandal-level meeting, for active interaction and two-way dialogue with children.

V. Dept of Education			
S.No	Services / Responsibilities	Indicators	Outcomes
1	Mandal level review of Bal Panchayats every 3 <sup>rd</sup> Saturday of the month will be conducted by the Mandal level Coordinating Committee	Attendance of following members: i. Tahsildar, Chair ii. MPDO, Co-Chair iii. MEO, Convenor iv. CDPO v. PHC Doctor vi. Asst Labour Officer vii. Mandal Sub-Inspector viii. Remaining Dept officers are members	1. Review of the functioning of linkages with Bal Panchayats. 2. Identification of gaps if any, in coordinating with Bal Panchayats and remedial measures.
2	Child-friendly teachers, preferably women, will be nominated as facilitators	1. No of facilitators appointed for Bal Panchayats 2. No of female teachers appointed as facilitators	Increased participation of girls and children from marginalized sections.
3	Information on schools from Bal Panchayats	1. Data on toilets and drinking water facilities in their schools 2. Data on out of school children in their villages.	Increased sharing of school information to Education Dept.
4	Cluster-level Resource Person (CRP) should attend the Divisional Level Monitoring Team meetings	No of DLMT meetings attended by CRP	Increased sharing of information on schools from Mandal to District level.

#### 6) Police Dept.:

- Institutionalize visit of SJPO's to schools to minimize the fear of uniform among children, for children to better understand how children can protect themselves and share information on basic laws, rules and Acts laid down for the proper functioning of the society.
- Participate in the quarterly Bal Panchayats Mandal-level meeting, for active interaction and two-way dialogue with children.

VI. Police Dept			
S.No	Services / Responsibilities	Indicators	Outcomes
1	Bal Panchayat members can visit the nearest Police Station on a monthly basis and interact with the personnel there to apprise them of their security issues and to learn about child-related laws.	I. No. of Bal Panchayats under the PS jurisdiction II. No of Bal Panchayats visiting the PS III. No. of cases referred by Bal Panchayats IV. No. of Action Taken Reports	I. Reduced anxiety among children in talking to policemen. II. Willingness to share information with policemen.
2	The SJPOs should make monthly visits to the villages in their jurisdiction and meet with parents and counsel them not to send their children to work.	No. of villages visited by SJPO in a month	Increased awareness about pro-active role of police on children's issues.
3	2-3 police personnel must be organised into a unit and each one should be responsible for one village, where the police officer interacts with the children and parents on a regular basis.	I. No. of police units organised for the pilot area II. No. of Bal Panchayats visited by the police units	Increased familiarity and rapport between police and community.
4	Factories, mechanic sheds and hotels are the primary employers of children and their owners must be counselled not to employ children.	No. of counselling meetings organised by the PS No. of people who attended counselling meetings	Reduced employment of children in these workplaces.
5	CWOs and Asst CWOs must be available to the Bal Panchayats on a weekly basis to update themselves on the situation in their villages and to give them information of child-related laws.	No. of Bal Panchayat meetings attended by CWs and ACWs	Increased awareness of child related laws among police and Bal Panchayat members.
6	SJPOs must have monthly meetings with all CWs and Asst CWs to review the situation in their areas and to report the same to the district administration.	No. of meetings conducted by SJPOs	Increase in response of police dept to child-related cases.

VII. NGOs			
S.No	Services / Responsibilities	Outputs	Outcomes
1	Govt depts. that are using children for work in their offices must be brought to the notice of the public with the help of all concerned people.	No. of cases of child labour in govt depts	I. Greater awareness in govt depts. about child labour. II. Decrease in child labour employed in govt depts.
2	NGOs must ensure that all children are part of Bal Panchayats.	I. No. of Schools II. No children in schools III. No. of Bal Panchayats IV. No. of children in Bal Panchayats	All schools in the project area have Bal Panchayats.
3	NGOs working on child rights issues must participate in all the programs of the Bal Panchayats.	No. of NGOs participating in BP programs	Increased involvement of NGOs in children's issues.
4	Priority must be given for the membership of SC, ST and BC children in Bal Panchayats.	No. of SC, ST, BC children in Bal Panchayats	Inclusivity of Bal Panchayats.
5	Bal Panchayats must ensure that girls have equal participation and social activists can render their advice and suggestions on ensuring equal participation.	No. of girls in Bal Panchayats	Increased ability of girl children to express their concerns and hopes.
6	Bal Panchayats must have a role at the village level also.	I. No. of Panchayat meetings held II. No. of Panchayat meetings attended by Bal Panchayat members	Increased confidence among children.
7	NGOs must develop a common plan of action in strengthening Bal Panchayats.	Action Plan Note	Increased coordination of activities by NGOs and Education Dept staff.
8	NGOs and the Education Dept and school teachers, all must develop a common action plan to increase awareness about Bal Panchayats for children as well as adults through workshops, kala jathas, seminars or public meetings.	Action Plan Note	
9	Schools must appoint a child-friendly teacher for facilitating the Bal Panchayats.	No. of Teachers appointed to facilitate Bal Panchayats	Increased involvement of school staff in children's issues.

VIII. Bal Panchayats			
S.No	Activities	Outputs	Outcomes
1	Formation of Bal Panchayats	No. of Bal Panchayats formed No. of Bal Panchayats members No. of girls No. of boys No. of differently abled No. of minority, SC, ST children	All school children are members of Bal Panchayats.
2	Monthly meetings	No. of monthly meetings conducted	Increased self confidence and ability among members to express themselves.
3	Awareness activities: a) Issues discussed b) Interactions with Line Dept officials c) Field visits d) IEC campaigns e) Medical camps	a) No. of issues discussed b) No. of Line Dept officials visiting Bal Panchayats c) No. of field visits by Bal Panchayats d) No. of awareness 'kala jathas' / melas e) No. of medical camps f) Type & No. of medicines distributed	I. Increased awareness about child rights and entitlements. II. Increased ability to interact with govt officials and express their needs.

#### Roles of the Partners involved in the Project

- District Collectorate/Women and Child Welfare Department/Education Department/ICPS Unit in Guntur District: Facilitate a district level consultation with participation of key functionaries like RDOs, MEOs, CDPOs, SSA Officials, ICPS in the District Level Consultation for development of the Bal Panchayat's Action Plan.
- APACR (Andhra Pradesh Alliance on Child Rights): Will facilitate the entire process, including organizing the district level consultations with help of its District Lead NGOs for developing a comprehensive and inclusive strategy for addressing all issues related to children in the District. APACR will support the District Administration in roll-out of the Bal Panchayats including monitoring its effective implementation on ground.
- UNICEF, Hyderabad: Overall advisory role in consultation with the Office of the Hon'ble Speaker, APLA, including support and guidance for roll-out the concept as well as finalization of the action plan.
- British Deputy High Commission: Providing resources for the District Consultation, including travel and honorarium for external resource persons for finalization of the strategy and action plan.

## 6. Way Forward for Bal Panchayats Pilot

### A. Action at Village-level based on observations by Bal Panchayat Members

After the first two quarterly Block/Mandal level Panchayat Meetings, Bal Panchayats can utilise the sharing of experiences to develop Village-level Action Plans to address the issues/problems that they have highlighted in the previous Block/Mandal level meetings.

- The facilitators must assist the Bal Panchayat members to identify the list of activities that they will take up in order to resolve the issue/problem they have identified.
- The Govt. Department which deals with the issue/problem must be identified.
- A time-frame and the resources required must be clearly detailed along with the roles and responsibilities of all concerned, to resolve the issue/problem.
- The impact and outcome of such activities can be documented and shared in the succeeding Block/Mandal level meetings, and a compilation of such best cases shared at the annual District/Zila level meeting.

### B. Annual sharing of issues by Bal Panchayat Members

An annual workshop comprising representatives of Bal Panchayats across all project villages will take place before the District/Zilla level Panchayat meeting, to: (a) collate the priority/common children's issues; (b) compile the best case studies of action taken at village level based on the Bal Panchayats' feedback to the Panchayats/duty bearers.

The above will then be presented both at the annual District/Zilla level Panchayat meeting, with the facilitation of the District Collector, as well as before the State Assembly once a year, with the facilitation of the Speaker of Andhra Pradesh Legislative Assembly.

## 7. Some “Do's and Don'ts” while implementing the Bal Panchayats Pilot

### Do's

- Explain to the children what Bal Panchayats and the benefits of Bal Panchayats.
- Use the local language spoken by the children when communicating to ensure their comprehension and encourage them to freely express themselves.
- Mixed gender groups can be good, in particular among younger children, but you may want to consider giving girls their own space.
- Bal Panchayats must be conducted in school premises and must not include outsiders except for designated officials.
- Be patient and respectful. Ask follow-up questions to assure the child that you are listening and to ensure you understand their answers well.
- During field trips, facilitators must keep a watchful eye and ensure the safety and well being of all Bal Panchayat members. Sufficient food and water must be arranged along with transportation.

### Don'ts

- Don't consult a child unless you are prepared to listen and to adjust your perspectives according to what the child has to say.
- Don't talk down to the child - place yourself at his or her level.
- Don't interrupt, stress or laugh at the child.
- Don't persuade the children to talk about social harm practices unless you can follow up with support or assistance.
- Don't take pictures without asking the children for permission, and respect them if they decline.
- Each child has an identity. Do not expose their identity to illustrate issues that have affected them.

# Toolkit for Piloting Bal Panchayats

